ADDRESSEE'S FACTOR IN THE LIMERICK DISCOURSE

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The article deals with the analysis of the addressee's factor foregrounding in the limerick discourse. The study demonstrates that the limerick discourse is characterised by an addresser-writer's and an addressee-reader/listener's reciprocality via idiosyncratic protagonists portrayed by an addresser-writer. A limerick presents a laconic mini-story that describes a certain comic and ridiculous situation or event that happened in the life of an unconventional character with no less absurd and unexpected outcome. The limerick discourse comprises two types of communication − the one between an addresser-writer and an addressee-reader/listener through the text of the limerick, and the other − dialogues between protagonists. The limerick discourse is marked by a minimum length of phrases, an associative conjecture, varied stylistic devices, which include an irony, a play of words, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, alliteration and others, expressive syntax constructions aimed at producing an anticipated pragmatic effect on an addressee-reader/listener. Socio-cultural, mental stereotypes and an addresser-writer's voiced attitude to the information content are traced clearly in the limerick discourse, though broad context allows various interpretations by an addressee-reader/listener. Besides, rhyme and rhythm play an important part in an addressee's emotional and semantic reception of a limerick. The correct pausation pattern and the right tempo of a limerick enhance an addressee's percipiency.

Keywords: the limerick discourse; an addresser-writer; an addressee-reader/listener; a nonsense verse; pragmatic effect.

Introduction

Modern paradigm of linguistics is characterised by the special attention of scientists to the problems of communication and communicants' discursive behaviour. The focus of the modern linguistic paradigm on the study of the human factor in language and speech contributes to the fact that the addressee, as one of the main anthropocomponents of the communicative act, becomes the object of the contemporary linguistic research.

The recent scientific works analyse the role of an addressee factor in speech communication (Holler, 2011; Wilkin, 2011; Arnold, 2008), pay attention to issues of an addressee's communicative typology (Vorobyova, 1997; Karpchuk, 2006; Kaminskaya, 2009), analyse the categorial and functional essence of addressing (Wolpert, 2017; Mancini, 2017; Caffarra, 2017).

Despite a number of works focused on the research of an addressee, a thorough comprehensive study of the addressee's factor foregrounding in the limerick discourse has not been held so far, that constitutes the topicality of the research, performed within the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm. The aim of the research is to analyse the addressee's factor actualisation in the limerick discourse.

The subject matter of the study is the limerick discourse. The objective of the research is the addressee's factor foregrounding in the limerick discourse.

The conducted research is an account of empirical study results of the addressee's factor representation in the limerick discourse.

Methods

The purpose and tasks of this study determine its methods and methodology. The analysis of speech communication requires a systematic approach and proceeds from the activity understanding of speech communication. The methodological principles of the work are the main provisions of modern linguopragmatics, sociolinguistics, the theory of discourse.

To achieve the aim, the following methods of material processing are used: an inductive method that allows to accumulate and systematise the linguistic material, to highlight the features of linguistic units functioning; the method of pragmatic analysis, with the help of which the means the addressee's status is analysed; methods of implication and presupposition analysis for determining the intentional focus of discursive units; stylistic analysis to identify stylistic devices used by an addresser-writer to produce a desirable pragmatic impact on an addressee-reader/listener.

The research material, that amounts to 230 limericks, comprises both nonsense verses written by the master of this genre E. Lear and modern limericks that are quite often anonymous.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the limerick discourse from the perspective of a pragmatic aspect of communication allows to unveil a complex communicative structure, that represents a specific relational system between the addresser, that is the author of a limerick, and the addressee, who can be a reader or a listener. That compound relational system is, as a rule, intermediated by a limerick's character or characters and can be outlined as the following: an addresser-writer :: an addresser-character ↔ an addressee-character: an addressee-reader/listener.

Limericks are popular all around the world "expanding significantly the repertoire of adult as well as children's literature" (Tarnogorska, 2015, p. 37). Limerick characters, or we can call them inner communicators, are the main transmitters of the addresser-writer's intention. The results indicated that the limerick discourse is characterised by a specific reciprocity between an addresser-writer and an addressee-reader/listener through eccentric, bizarre and weird limerick characters created by an addresser-writer. In the limerick discourse, we differentiate the real communication, that is the communication between an addresser-writer and an addressee-reader/listener via the text of the limerick, and the depicted or fictitious communication actualised via characters' conversations.

An author of a limerick is its first addressee. While creating the limerick the author verifies the limerick structure, the impression of its perception and according to such observations makes changes and edits the text of the limerick. Limerick perception by an addressee-reader/listener is the dominant factor of pragmatic effect attainment. Any text is assessed by an addressee in the first place in regards to the content it presents. The objectivity of perception of any text is based on such objective items as the national language and the objective reality reflected in it. The awareness of this reality, knowledge of the national language specific features gives an addressee-reader/listener the possibility to comprehend the text. But limericks, being classified as nonsense verses, are quite tricky in this aspect, as they have nearly nothing in common with the objective reality. As Lecercle (2017) mentions, "words often fail us, that is, fail to express what we mean; or conversely, they express too much, more than we mean: they utter what we refuse to recognise, what we would rather left unsaid" (p. 6). Associativity, emotionality, figurativeness, semantic dual progress of the limerick discourse not only suggest but anticipate its creative apprehension by an addressee. The latter depends not only on the addressee's personal-psychological parameters, that is his/her intellectual, emotional and ethic development, but on the insight of cultural context factors as well. Addressee's specifics in the limerick discourse is in his/her ambiguity and changeability. A limerick has no particular addressee – anyone can become one. An addressee's variation can be stipulated by 1) difference in background knowledge of specific addressee-readers/listeners who comprehend a limerick at the same period of time; 2) constant changeability of background knowledge of each separate addressee-reader/listener; 3) changeability of background knowledge of people who belong to different generations of addressee-readers/listeners.

Identifying typological representation of an addressee-reader/listener of the limerick discourse, we rely on the classification offered by Vorobyova (1989) and Karpchuk (2006, p. 131), and differentiate:

1) According to communicative-text parameters and in compliance with the type of foregrounding in the communicative act and the mode of the actual addressing – a *real* or *hypothetical*, that is visualised by an addresser-writer, *personal / impersonal*, *individual / multiple*, *specific / nonspecific*, *direct / non-direct addressee*; and, accordingly, to the level of communicative competence an addressee can be *subordinated* (his/her communicative competence is lower), *parity* (his/her communicative competence is equal to the communicative competence of an addresser) or a *dominant addressee* (his/her communicative competence is higher);

2) According to the social and typological characteristics and in compliance with the national identity – *a national addressee* (formed by a complex of knowledge inherent in each particular culture, combined with mental characteristics and national character of a member of a certain culture) and *a non-national addressee* (who can adequately understand the discourse, abstracting completely from their own nationality); according to gender – *a gender addressee* (an addressee-man, an addressee-woman); and according to age: *an age addressee* (an addressee-child, an addressee-adolescent, an addressee-adult);

3) According to individual and personal characteristics and in compliance with the nature of perception – *an intellectual and logical, rational, emotional and intuitive addressee*.

The limerick discourse as a specific type of discourse, where nonsense and absurd are a must and logic is not welcome, has its own concept of an addressee. On the one hand, the concept is based on a generalised model of an abstract addressee who is keen on this type of discourse which has very strict rules of construction. On the other hand, the concept of the addressee of any discourse as a concretisation of ideas of an abstract addressee can be the basis for discourse differentiation.

A limerick refers to small forms of English folklore, which are inherent in an eccentric outlook, vagary, comic violation of the usual logic, a subtle sense of humour and brevity. Hasset (2017) mentions that Edward Lear's illustrated limerick "raises questions among his admirers and scholars about the internal dynamics linking its components" (p. 685). A limerick is a five line poetic form, written in trimester anapest in the first, second and fifth lines and dimeter in the third and fourth with the rhyme scheme AABBA. The punning nature of the limericks allows for the free variation of linguistic means within the framework of a rigid rhyme.

The content of a limerick is also strictly defined. The first line represents the main character who can be either a man or a woman whose age is, as a rule, explicitly stated. The first line ends with the toponym that is a hometown or an area the main character hails from. The second line gives some peculiar feature or trait of the main character. The third one introduces a certain event, the fourth – the consequences or outcomes of this event. The fifth line sums up a limerick letting an addressee elicit the ulterior moral.

There was an old person of Pinner,
As thin as a lath, if not thinner;
They dressed him in white,
And roll'd him up tight.
That elastic old person of Pinner (Lear, 1888, p. 35).

It should be noted though that as far as a limerick as a nonsense verse has gained its universal popularity, more and more people try their hand at writing limericks and that leads to the fact that rigid traditional norms become a bit blurred.

As the group of scientists precisely mentioned, a limerick, "being comic verse" is characterised by "exceptionally strong expectations for rhythm, rhyme and semantic pattern" (Scheepers, Mohr, Fischer, & Roberts, 2013, p. 1). Thus, an addressee's emotional and semantic comprehension of a limerick is tightly linked to its rhythm and rhyme. The right tempo of a limerick facilitates an addressee's perception too. A quickened declamation of a limerick should be thoroughly punctuated by appropriate pauses. The traditional pattern of pauses application in a limerick is the following: the short pauses (|) are used after the first and the second lines while the longest one (||) is usually made before the fifth line. Pausation belongs to a potent means of emotional influence on an addressee enhancing the content comprehension.

There once was a young lady named Bright, |
Whose speed was much faster than light. |
She set out one day
In a relative way ||
And returned on a previous night (Anonymous).

A lot of limericks are accompanied by funny pictures to enhance the pragmatic effect on an addressee-reader/listener, as "the image says more than the poem − or allows us to glimpse what the poem might be thinking without quite saying" (Bevis, 2013, p. 35).

Pragmatic focus of a limerick is to amuse an addressee, to provoke an emotional response. In this aspect, a deliberate play of words guarantees an addressee's attention and immediate non-verbal response represented by a smile or laughter.

There was an Old Person of Sparta,
Who had twenty-five sons and one "darter";
He fed them on Snails,
And weighed them in scales,
That wonderful Person of Sparta (Lear, 1888, p. 71).

To save the rhyme the author substitutes the word "*daughter*" with "*darter*", the pronunciation of which can be quite easily deciphered by an addressee as of an implied word "*daughter*". At the same time, the word "darter" has its own semantic meaning leaving an addressee wondering whether that Old Person's daughter was also remarkably good at throwing darts.

An addressee-reader/listener is always ready to track any spelling mistakes intentionally left by an addresser-writer. In some limericks for the sake of rhyme the author can distort the spelling of a word considerably making it absolutely incomprehensible, that is, asemantic, if viewed without a context. Antinucci (2015) emphasises that "in Lear's nonsense world events or a character's destiny seem to be dictated by fortuitous combinations of rhyme and metre which undermine the principle of causality" (p. 301).

A jolly young fellow from Yuma
Told an elephant joke to a puma;
Now his skeleton lies
Beneath the western skies
The puma had no sense of huma (Lear, 1888, p. 12).

As the rigid structure of a limerick foresees the identification of a main character's origin, the correct spelling of geographical names is important in this case. According to a rhythmic organisation of a limerick, the first line should rhyme with the fifth, therefore, to comply with this rule, an addresser-writer has to modify the spelling of the word being fully aware that an addressee-reader/listener will have to decipher that unusual word. As we see in the example above, to meet the rhyme, the word *humour* has evolved into *huma* because of the presence of the toponym Yuma. In itself, the word *huma* is asemantic, its true meaning and primary form become clear only through context.

People are very perceptible to sounds which are certain to trigger a definite emotional response on addressee's behalf. Due to that fact limericks abound on such a stylistic device as onomatopoeia.

There was an old person of Wick,
Who said, "Tick-a-Tick, Tick-a-Tick;
Chickabee, Chikabaw."
And he said nothing more,
That laconic old person of Wick (Lear, 1888, p. 37).

In an addressee's mind clock ticking is always associated with time passing, irrevocability of precious moments in life.

Nonsense neologisms are much welcome in limericks. They are sure to bewilder and puzzle an addressee, his/her attention is fully granted.

There was an old person of Ware,
Who rode on the back of a bear.
When they ask'd, "Does it trot?"
He said "Certainly not!
He's Moppsikon Floppsikon bear!" (Lear, 1888, p. 48).

Alliteration as a literary stylistic device, that implies the use of the same consonant in a string of words in a line, is of great help in grabbing an addressee's attention.

There was a young person of Janina,
Whose uncle was always a fanning her;
When he fanned off her head,
She smiled sweetly, and said,
"You propitious old man of Janina!" (Lear,1888, p. 49).

For an addressee, it is always a challenge to comprehend what an addresser says if that person stammers badly. While perceiving a limerick an addressee is given some clues in the form of a word, which the person is struggling to pronounce. To facilitate the comprehension and enhance the humorous effect, this word comes at the end of the line.

There was a Young Man of Calcutta
Who had a most terrible stutta.
He said, "Pass the h...ham,
And the j...j...j...jam,
And the b...b...b...b...b...butta" (E. Lear, 1888, p. 11).

For the sake of the rhyme, the pronunciation and spelling can be even more distorted amusing an addressee-reader/listener, making him/her an expert in speech and language therapy at least for a short while. Alliteration as a stylistic device of a phonetic level moves to the forefront.

Hyperbole, that is a figure of speech, which foresees explicit and intentional exaggeration in order to enhance the expressiveness and emphasise the thought, constitutes one of the most felicitous linguistic devices to facilitate the creation of a grotesque image or a funny situation in a limerick. According to funny figurality of a limerick different elements of poetic scenario are subject to hyperbole. That could be a character's behaviour, their personal appearance, the way they respond in a certain situation.

There was an old man of West Dumpet,
Who possessed a large nose like a trumpet;
When he blew it aloud,
It astonished the crowd,
And was heard through the whole of West Dumpet (Lear, 1888, p. 57).

An addressee's perception of a limerick may vary from generation to generation. What was considered an ordinary state of things is the 19th century, is viewed as unacceptable in the 21st century.

There was an Old Man of Jamaica,
Who suddenly married a Quaker;
But she cried out, "Alack!

I have married a black!"
Which distressed that Old Man of Jamaica (Lear, 1888, p. 55).

Political correctness nowadays foresees the avoidance of the use of the word *black* and substitution of it with the term *African-American* or other equivalents such as *German-American*, *Italian-American*, and so on.

Irony, as a stylistic device to create a comic edge in a limerick, is a potent means to facilitate an anticipated pragmatic effect on an addressee. A specific feature of an irony is in a twofold meaning. A challenge for an addressee-reader/listener is to unveil the true meaning of an ironic statement in a limerick that, in fact, is the opposite one to the directly expressed meaning.

There was an Old Man on a hill,
Who seldom, if ever, stood still;
He ran up and down,
In his Grandmother's gown,
Which <u>adorned</u> that Old Man on a hill (Lear, 1888, p. 26).

It is quite easy for an addressee to see the point of an irony of this limerick as a gown of an Old Man's Grandmother can hardly be a garment that can *adorn* a man. Moreover, an addressee is expected to make some very basic calculations taking into consideration the age gap between an Old Man and his Grandmother, and he/she is welcome to visualise that old-fashioned, worn out gown.

In a limerick, irony can be expressed both by a verb (as in the example above) and by an adjective that performs the function of an attribute.

There was a Young Lady of Bute,
Who played on a silver-gilt flute;
She played several jigs,
To her uncle's white pigs,
That <u>amusing</u> Young Lady of Bute (Lear, 1888, p. 41).

After reading this limerick an addressee is quite quick in passing the judgment on a Young Lady's poor musical skills as her only audience were pigs.

Many limericks contain short dialogues between the characters. As a rule, they are comic, but sometimes the implied message of these dialogues is quite grim and reflects the severe reality of life.

There was an Old Man on some rocks,
Who shut his wife up in a box;
When she said, "Let me out!"
He exclaimed, "Without doubt,
You will pass all your life in that box" (Lear, 1888 p. 53).

The relationship between a husband and a wife is one of the favourite topics of many writers. In a limerick it takes a grotesque form. Seeming funny at first, it provokes a much deeper consideration on an addressee-reader/listener's behalf. It raises the issue of domestic violence that existed in previous centuries and still thrives in the new millennium. The response of an addressee-husband to his wife's plead *"Let me out!"* is an expressed threat: *"Without doubt, You will pass all your life in that box"* foregrounded with the help of the imperative. It demonstrates the dominant status of the addressee-husband. Moreover, the choice of the verb *pass* is not random in any case. Along with such verbal associations as *to pass time*, *to pass life* triggered in an addressee-reader/listener's mind, an idiom *to pass away* is sure to come to mind. The implication is quite obvious: that poor woman will be suffering humiliation and abuse till the end of her life.

The author of a limerick is usually quite tolerant to his characters, his humour doesn't have overt negative features and acid ridicule. In many limericks, which describe the comic and unusual appearance of a character, his fellow citizens are either surprised or simply turn away, or make jokes about it, or do not respond at all. That is, they demonstrate tolerance towards the droll fellow. A totally different reaction takes place if the character behaves in an unusual eccentric or unacceptable way, standing out among the rest. Such kind of behaviour is sure to break the composure of the British, who equal the unwritten rules of behaviour to other laws of society, and believe that their violation deserves punishment.

There was an Old Person of Buda,
Whose conduct grew ruder and ruder;
Till at last, with a hammer,
They silenced his clamour,
By smashing that Person of Buda (Lear, 1888, p. 32).

The results indicated that one of the most important features of a limerick is its belonging to the folk culture and its reflection. Making fun of his eccentric characters, the nonsense verse at the same time teaches

how to behave, so as not to become the object of ridicule or even condemnation in real life. Rules of conduct, that are the reflection of the ethnic group traditions, are given to an addressee-reader/listener in an encoded form, as a direct imperative edification is alien to the representatives of this culture.

Conclusions

The conducted research shows that the specific feature of the limerick discourse is the reciprocity between an addresser-writer and an addressee-reader/listener through eccentric characters depicted by an addresser-writer. Addressee's specifics in the limerick discourse is in his/her ambiguity and changeability. Two types of communication are inherent to the limerick discourse, that is the communication between an addresser-writer and an addressee-reader/listener via the text of the limerick, and the fictitious communication foregrounded via characters' dialogues. The limerick discourse bears peculiar characteristics of the national English humour. Wide context gives the possibility for diverse interpretations by an addressee-reader/listener. Paradoxicality, that is the essence of the limerick discourse, is of great appeal to an addressee-reader/listener. A wide range of stylistic devices are employed to reach an addressee-reader/listener, such as a play of words, an irony, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, alliteration and others. Moreover, an addressee's emotional and semantic comprehension of a limerick is tightly linked to its rhyme and rhythm. The right tempo of a limerick facilitates an addressee's perception too. While reading or listening to a limerick an addressee experiences the ability to see the absurdity of life and to smile at it. The clash of common sense and rationality, on the one hand, and the eccentric manifestations of a strong personality, on the other, largely determines the English national character, that the addressee is welcome to get acquainted with. An addressee as an interlocutor of the dialogues, presented in the limericks, is never an ordinary person. He or she is mostly an individual who intentionally violates the generally accepted rules of conduct, is never afraid to be himself/herself in any circumstances, does and says what he/she really thinks. A thorough study of the limerick discourse demonstrates that an addressee-reader/listener's perception of a limerick may vary from generation to generation.

The perspective for the future research we see in the thorough analysis of a limerick as a modern constituent of the 21st century political poetry in terms of its structure, word choice and stylistic devices employed.

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