

International conference

Creativity and Tradition in Polish and Estonian Cultural Communication

Programme
Abstracts

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This collection of abstracts features presentations scheduled for the conference
“Creativity and Tradition in Polish and Estonian Cultural Communication”

Kronso, Poland, 28. - 29. Oct 2011

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Conference programme

28 October (Friday)

Ethnicity and Stereotypes

Chair: W. Chlopicki

9-9:30

A.Lubecka – L. Vesik (online link*) National identities and display

9:30-10

D.Brzozowska – A. Krikmann Stereotypes in three-nation jokes

10-10:30

D. Brzozowska – I. Ojam, L. Laineste Gender stereotypes

Different Genres and discourses I

Chair: D. Brzozowska

10:30-11:00

K. Sikora Pragmatic and cultural aspects of lullabies

COFFEE BREAK

11:30-12:00

W. Chłopicki – L. Laineste – I. Piirimagi (online link) – Stand-up comedy

12:00-12:30

M. Wojcicka – E. Kalmre (online link) – Urban legends

12:30-13:00

G. Strządała – M. Lõhmus (online link) – PC discourse

13:00 pm – 13:30

M. Iżykowska – M. Kalda (online link) – Money in culture

13:30 pm – 14:00

W. Żarski – E. Annuk (online link) – Culinary discourse

LUNCH

Different Genres and Discourses II

Chair: Liisi Laineste

15:30-16:00

A. Lubecka – M. Kõiva (online link) – Ritual year

16:00-16:30

M. Poprawa – M. Rebane – Political discourse as folklore

COFFEE BREAK

Chair: Arvo Krikmann

17:00-17:30

G. Szpila – P. Voolaid - Grafitii, proverbs, riddles

18:00-18:30

D. Popa – Grafitii, proverbs, riddles (Romanian case)

New Media

18:30 - 19:00

M. Wojcicka – Risto Järv – Traditional texts in advertisements and news – proverbs in news headlines

19:30 DINNER-PARTY in the cellar of the college building. All participants welcome.

29 October (Saturday)

Chair: Risto Järv

9:30- 10:00

A. Tereszkievicz – L. Laineste – Aggression on the Internet

10:00 – 10:30

M. Piekot – A. Baran – Multimodal texts

10:30 – 11:00

D. Popa - Visual humour in the new media (Romanian case)

COFFEE BREAK

Chairs: D. Brzozowska, L. Laineste

11:30-13:00

General discussion

LUNCH (Royal Hall, Rynek 24)

Abstracts

Stereotypes in three nation jokes

Stereotypes in Polish three nation jokes

D. Brzozowska

The aim of the paper is to compare Polish and Estonian jokes about three nation characters.

The attempt to answer the question about the universal and culturally specific character of those jokes will be crucial. The relationships of the topic with the number three as a folkloric universal will be presented. Stereotypical situations initiating the representatives of different nations to behave in a characteristic for them manner will be described. The share and entwining of ethnic, political, sexual, "logical" and other dimensions of humour in the three nation jokes will be analyzed.

The historical contexts and the role the closest and most relevant neighbours i.e. the Russians and the Germans play for the Polish culture will be presented and compared with the stereotypes and attitudes to other national characters present in jokes (e.g. Czech, American). The question if ethnic stereotypes are still present in contemporary jokes will be answered. The gender issues present in jokes will be studied as well - as it is interesting why they are mainly male characters involved – with some exceptions e.g. of a witch in Estonian jokes versus a devil in Polish ones.

The linguistic picture of all present in collected jokes national characters will be given and compared. The different time strata of the material will be taken into consideration – 1) the Soviet period; 2) the period of transition, and 3) the recent folklore.

Stereotypes in Estonian three nation jokes

A. Krikmann

The presentation is about Estonian three nation jokes throughout three periods: Soviet time, 1990s, and present time.

The introductory subtopics will include an overview of the tripartite structure of Schwanks and jokes, blending of ethnic and political traits, etc., bearing in the mind the specificity of Estonian contemporary punchlined jokes and the older narrative folk humour.

The main attention will be paid to the roles of characters of Estonians themselves and their relationships to their closest neighbours – Russian and Finns – in Estonian three nation jokes as well as in the three nation jokes featuring the Estonian told by Russians and Finns themselves. Some hypotheses will be made attempting to correlate the features of the ethnic characters in these jokes with certain historical, social and political circumstances

The general survey of Estonian three nation jokes will be presented, first of all, considering its changes through the last three periods of the late history (i.e. the Soviet time, the time on transition, and the present-day time).

*The research was supported by ETF8149

Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes in Polish family jokes

D. Brzozowska

The aim of the paper is to analyze the gender stereotypes present in Polish jokes about family life. The research material consists of jokes from books and Internet. The comparison was made to show the difference between the characters from the texts from the beginning of 20th century, the ones circulating in the eighties and the most recent ones that emerged after the transition of 1989. The political situation of the Polish families changed considerably at that time and the subjects of the jokes were altered as well. The aim of the research is also to verify to what extent the concept of family has changed – from the extended family to the nuclear one or lone parent one.

Women are presented in the paper in the roles of wives and mothers, and men in the roles of husbands and fathers. Grandparents, uncles and aunts, parents-in-law are also discussed. The parental attitude to children is taken into consideration too. For example, a boy called Jasio [Johnnie] is the main child character in the Polish jokes. He usually appears in texts about school as a witty and cheeky pupil. He is also pictured in a family context, especially as a kind of a handicapped child. The occurrence of different characters was also measured.

The female character in Estonian jokes

L. Laineste, I. Ojam

Family or marriage jokes are usually regarded as clean jokes and have always been distributed without too much censorship. Regardless of feminist objections, jokes with negatively stereotyped female characters circulate on the internet. Also in Soviet times, marriage jokes that described the daily life with its trifles could escape the censorship because they were not straightforwardly about the regime – even if at times in fact they were (in this way, the jokes often referred not to the relationship of the people in a marital relationship but in their daily struggle to survive the absurdness of Soviet life). Keeping that in mind, we think it is justified to analyse the changes and continuities in jokelore about marriage in its present state and expose the stereotypes and beliefs that in turn tell us about the society where the jokes are known.

In the Estonian context, drastic changes in the society must certainly have affected the jokes. To name the most important factors, the model for family has changed (and is still changing) from traditional family to nuclear family; the rate of divorces is rising whereas the number of marriages and births is constantly falling. Secondly, the confusion about traditionally feminine occupations still persists: Soviet policy supported the right of women to do men's work, labouring in factories, driving agricultural machinery and working on construction sites. The common belief that women can succeed on male positions still persists, and women are not afraid of occupying traditionally male posts. At the same time, they have to fight with strong discrimination (including in their wages). In fact, there is a double standard: people recognise the Soviet past as a period with a strong feminist discourse and believe this has carried on to present day, but at the same time foster sexist attitudes. Thirdly, the notion of private and public has changed towards a continuously increasing self-revelation in the media and internet. As the intimate lives of people around us are no longer a private matter, subjects that still tickle the imagination are becoming fewer – so are jokes about women or sex. This situation is similar to other post-socialist countries (Stanoev 2010).

The presentation focuses on jokes about women in Estonian jokelore from 1960s to 2010. Jokes where a woman is either mentioned or present will be analysed. Neutral words for describing the female character were used for search words in compiling the dataset, as this gives an idea how the character appears in jokes about everyday life. A set of 2000 jokes about women and marriage were distracted from a bigger database of Estonian contemporary jokes which was used in the present analysis. We have taken into account that joke-telling has primarily been a male practice (Bing 2007, Kuipers 2006). This has affected the gender stereotypes in the jokes towards more being aggressive and misogynistic. Another aspect that has had a say in shaping family jokes is the overall political undertone of the Soviet jokes.

The study describes the context (setup of the jokes), the characteristics of the targets, and the change thereof through the periods of socialism and post-socialism. The tendencies in placing the female character in either familiar surroundings (home) or outside (e.g. shop) throw light on common beliefs about the suitable context for a woman as well as to who should be accompanying her in those locations. As a result, we will be able to describe the portrayal of gender roles in its societal context.

References:

- Bing, Janet (2007). Liberated jokes: Sexual humor in all-female groups. *Humour*, Vol 20/4, pp 337 – 366.
Kuipers, Giseline (2006). *Good Humor, Bad Taste: A Sociology of the Joke*. Mouton de Gruyter.

Stanoev, Stanoy (2010). Dumb Blondes and Democracy. Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore, Vol 46, pp 43 – 60.

*This research was carried out with the support of ETF 8149

Stand-up comedy

Stand up Tragedy in Poland?

W. Chlopicki

The presentation/article will first describe the background/tradition of Polish comedy, mainly cabarets and other theatre groups, and then look at various forms of stand-up that have been appearing in Poland over the last 20 years, mainly on TV, but some originating in clubs of various sort. The traditional form of comedy which shares some features with stand up is the monologue, which has had a literary, sophisticated, non-interactive nature: the performer did not dress up, did not use any prompts, did not sing songs, and talked of their experiences, without getting involved in the interaction with the audience, and what is quite important – without resorting to the vernacular (no slang, no obscenities).

Within the last twenty years, the new form of stand up in its American variety has been slowly moving in. The characteristics of this new genre included precisely the topics which were excluded from the old form as well as the focus on the vernacular. Young performers found a venue in the well known HBO show called “*Na stojaka*” (running for ten years now), as well as other venues such as the standup competition called *Zabij mnie Śmiechem* (Kill me with Laughter) broadcast by Polsat commercial channel since 2010 where the winner is rewarded in a trip to an American standup school.

The stand up does not meet with universal appeal, as one comment found on the internet clearly shows: Standup Tragedy. The Polish audiences largely believe that the performance must be first of all funny, and only then “strong”, while some young performers seem to play mainly on obscenity and forget the need to amuse.

Double, O. (2005). Getting the joke: The art of stand-up comedy. London: Methuen.

ComedyEstonia: local stand-up, global tradition

I. Piirimägi, L. Laineste

Post-socialist Estonia shows important changes in humorous folklore. The main changes have accompanied the re-establishment of democracy in Estonia which brought along the possibility to talk honestly about any shortcomings in the society, different from the secretive mode of interaction in the Soviet times, but also globalisation and the spread of internet has had its share in shaping contemporary humorous tradition.

The presentation will describe a relatively new phenomena in Estonia, that of stand-up comedy. It has been developed during the past one and a half years by a team of enthusiasts consisting mostly of foreigners residing in Estonia. The immigrants from various English-speaking countries (e.g. USA and Australia) organise regular stand-up events in English in the course of the year. They also invite guest performers from other countries (primarily Scandinavia, but also other parts of Europe). The events take place in the pubs, theatres, and nightclubs of Tallinn and Tartu.

We will first present the social and cultural background of short form comic (stage) shows in Estonia: the Soviet cabaret / parodists / radio and live performances, comparing it to the contemporary meaning of stand-up. The next step is to describe what ComedyEstonia represents to the society at large, to its audience, and what are the reasons for the format's success / failure in the country under surveillance. The emergent subculture interacts actively in online and offline environment, and the number of fans and regular audience members is growing constantly. The study will analyse material from 6 stand-up evenings that took place in Tartu, Estonia in 2010 - 2011. Content analysis of the subject areas will give insight into the main thematic hotspots, and performance analysis will cast light

on the interaction between the artist and his or her audience that has an effect on the former, the thematic aspect. We will also take a closer look at the audience, as this genre of humor presumes a witty interaction between the audience and the performer. We will describe the structure of the event which, as spontaneous as it seems, has its strict rules and communicational logic.

In conclusion, insights into an evolving tradition will inform us about the wider context of introducing of and adapting to new phenomena on the cultural arena. The performing immigrants and their guests use the stage to present their experience as a foreigner living in / visiting Estonia while the interaction with the local audience allows for a relief in the possible tensions inherent in the culture contact. The stand-up artist is actively performing an interaction with the surrounding culture and wants to be recognised within this new environment.

*The research was supported by ETF8149

Urban Legends

Urban legends as a structure

M. Wojcicka

In the first part of paper, we examine the genre called 'urban legend', a name used by D. Czubala and J. Rydzewska. The genre is also labelled 'thriller' (D. Simonides i J. Hajduk-Nijakowska), 'modern myth', 'gossip', 'rumour' (J. Hajduk-Nijakowska), 'sensation', 'gossip', 'hearsay' (D. Czubala), 'urban tale' (J. Rydzewska). In the paper, we aim to determine the genre pattern of texts categorised as urban legends in the synchronic perspective. In so doing, we use Marię Wojtak's criteria for genre description. They include the criterion of structure (structure model, more specifically the issue of text frame), pragmatic aspects (communication-related problems such as speaker/hearer images, their aims in communication); cognitive aspects (the range of topics and how they are presented with reference to the notions of perspective, point of view, values, linguistic worldview), as well as stylistic aspects. The main aim of the paper is to provide a definition of the genre in question. In our view, it might be achieved through comparing and contrasting it with the closely related genre, i.e. religious folk tale, constituting a traditional folk genre.

Rumours and legends in the process of creating identity

E. Kalmre

The second part of contemporary legends topics is going to discuss how rumours and legends work together in creating national and personal identity. The subject matter is a narrative cycle centered around so-called stories of descent. According to these stories, a number of famous people are Estonians or have Estonian ancestors. Following these stories through many different sources and material (archival texts, memories, diaries, literature, media, pop culture) we can observe how vibrant this discourse has been and is also today. We may take these stories with a grain of salt, but these legends and rumours certainly do articulate the beliefs and wishes of Estonians as well as provoke debate about the depicted events, their credibility and interpretation.

Multimodal texts

Visualisation of phraseology in new media

M. Piekot

The analysis of a new media is a serious problem for logocentric communication studies. Usually, only the verbal aspect of genres is described, while other qualities are seen as marginal phenomena. In my paper I will focus on new media genres as multimodal texts. In particular I will investigate a process of visualisation of phrases and idioms in different domains of a new media communication (political, humorous, etc.). In this purpose it will be necessary to use both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis especially content analysis and semiotic analysis.

On the Role of Visual Imagery in Comprehension of Phrases

A. Baran

In my paper I will focus on the role of visual imagery in language understanding.

Not all so-called traditional expressions have disappeared from active use – instead, they continue their “life” in a slightly different form. But what lies behind these changes? It is commonly held that the use of phraseologisms is most characteristic to spoken language. However, today we are faced with a situation where thanks to computers and the internet, written language usage and oral language usage have blended (e-mails, online communication, and social network). Creative use of expressions, even if demonstrated by their inappropriate use, leads to somehow unexpected results.

I am going to concentrate on the so-called intended use of expressions first of all in the internet environment: blogs, forums, communication portals, and contemporary new media. Clearly, it is the creative and convenient environment of the internet that created new life of figurative expressions. They are interpreted somehow differently in a spontaneous communication. That's why it is possible to confirm that phraseological units are remarkably more complex phenomenon than simply a reproducible linguistic unit. The iconic nature of the motivation of a figurative expressions makes possible analyze phrases as mechanisms of visualisation. That's why it is possible to confirm that phraseological units are remarkably more complex phenomenon than simply a reproducible linguistic unit.

* The research was supported by ETF8149

Aggression on the internet

Verbal expressions of aggression in Polish online media

A. Tereszkievicz

The analysis encompasses a cross-linguistic comparative study of the phenomenon of online aggression with the aim of analyzing the scope of this phenomenon as well as its reflection in the language behaviour of internet users. In particular the research focuses on the analysis of verbal expression of aggression, hostility and criticism. The study involves content analysis of online media from two different sources: forums and social media. Specifically, the discussion concerns the nature of online aggression in (1) open anonymous forums (2) sign-in forums and (3) social networking media. The study investigates the most frequent instances of impolite, vulgar and aggressive behaviour in these modes of communication online. A further aspect of the analysis concerns the relation between aggression and irony in language.

Verbal aggression in Estonian Internet

L. Laineste

The focus of this paper is the nature and role of online aggression in larger scale societal tensions and its interaction with the use of humor. The study will analyse expressions of online aggression in different online environments. We aim to describe the phenomenon in general: its extent, content, and context. Particular attention will be given to how verbal aggression in the internet goes hand in hand with banter, or friendly teasing. An overview of the flaming/joking patterns in the commentaries of an online interaction leads to the questions of humour embedded in internet flaming, and finally to the dynamics of “us” and “them” in the material. In the light of societal upheavals and tensions between minorities (primarily Russians) and Estonians in Estonia, attempts to censor the media have been made, as politically delicate issues are often touched in jokes which is in their very nature. Censorship will be discussed in the paper, describing when and why xenophobic jokes exist or are shared (in this case, in online environment), and how they are strategically used in intergroup/ -ethnic power struggle.

The paper touches upon the very narrow and hard-to-define line between aggression and humour. If, of course, there is a line: according to some theories, humour is verbal aggression (Gruner 1997). In these, humour is sometimes even claimed to possess the most effective means to intimidate the opponent. The study involves content analysis of online media from discussion boards / forums and less regulated social media like blogs and such. The material was

gathered for a research coordinated by the Ministry of Justice in Estonia, and it covers the time span of seven years: 2000 – 2007. Additional material has been retrieved for this paper concerning social media like Facebook which did not exist during the time the initial research was made. Specifically, the discussion concerns the nature of online aggression in (1) open anonymous forums (2) sign-in forums and (3) social networking media. This allows for some insights into how the feeling of being anonymous affects the contents of electronic utterances, including the degree of aggression in them.

References:

Gruner, Charles (1997). *The Game of Humor. A Comprehensive Theory of Why We Laugh*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers

*This research was supported by the Estonian Science Foundation grant No 8149

Money in culture

Money in Polish culture

M. Iżykowska

Subjects to be explored: different names in use to describe money in Polish language, money as a desirable item, the role of a hidden treasure in the folklore stories, social meaning of being poor or rich, stingy or generous – values and attitudes connected with money.

The author has so far written the paper that deals with the issue of formulating requests for money in the Roman Catholic Church in Silesia at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. She analysed two parish announcement books (from the years 1879 – 1916) from the village of Szymiszów near Strzelce Opolskie. The language material indicates that there were considerable financial burdens imposed on the parishioners for such purposes as the local parish church and different charity institutions supported by the Church. The clearly specified taxes needed to be paid. However, while determining the amounts, the possessions held by given families were taken into account. There were also very often collected voluntary donations for various purposes. It was usually accompanied by a compulsory registration of such donations on a list, which actually considerably reduced the voluntarism. At the same time, one may also see a cash flow in the opposite direction. In the situation of a lack of any social insurances it was the Church that performed the role of the institution enabling to survive to the elderly or providing a kind of funeral benefit to families of deceased parishioners.

Meaning-making through treasure stories

M. Kalda

Explaining the whole discourse of money in a culture would be a pretentious task for a folklorist. Therefore I am restricted to the study of relevant folklore material only. Based on pieces of treasure lore stored in the Estonian Folklore Archives, some aspects of popular approach to the subject matter can be discussed. In order to highlight what elements of treasure lore and of whole corpus of traditional knowledge are referred to in stories, the notion of traditional referentiality by John Miles Foley is employed. The ideas of acquiring wealth and having control over it are expressed in folk beliefs and imaginations which are retold again and again. My paper focuses on narrators' and folklore collectors' additional comments and elaborations in legends that bring out the relationships and associations between treasure lore in particular and broader cultural context in general. It could be one way to reach the meanings of tradition connected to the goods.

Graffiti, proverbs and riddles

Paremiological insight into the public city space of Tartu

P. Voolaid

The study focuses on paremiological (proverbial-phaseological) elements in the public space of the city of Tartu. The concept of public space is fairly recent and its contemporary meaning denoting certain regions dates to the second half of the 20th century. Within the context of this study, I consider public space to be dynamic space that anyone can enter for free (inc. key elements of urban space, such as shopping centers, cultural and entertainment centres, stations) and which contain values, symbols and other signs of urban life.

The main purpose is to analyse the proportion of paremiological material, its nature and connotations across the following sources:

- 1) anonymous graffiti or (anonymous) drawings, sketches and writings found in public places;
- 2) specific poster texts generated by the international youth group Loesje, pasted onto house walls, electric junctions, streetlights, etc. since 2004 (the poster collection with Estonian, English and Russian versions is available at <http://www.loesje.ee>);
- 3) professional design (targeted and street advertisements, etc).

Text analysis concentrates on the relations between the traditional and innovative paremics, the local and the global. Questions of interest include which social position, viewpoint, expressiveness, identities, platforms and ideas, and which sociocultural reality (specific events, media influences) do these three cultural phenomena reflect.

*The research was supported by ETF 8149

A paremiological approach to national identity. The case of Romania

D. Popa

The present paper would like to bring forth the concept of national identity such as it is reflected by the Romanian proverbs on what it means and what it takes to be Romanian. As many of the proverbs overtly or covertly indicate that Romanians treasure and even rely on their sense of humour to cope with everyday reality, special emphasis will be given to proverbs that highlight this feature that the nation seems to be so fond of.

Culinary discourse

The evolution of culinary discourse in traditional and modern Polish cookery books

W. Zarski

The project aims at analysing the evolution of structure and function of the cookery book understood as a collection of cooking recipes organised according to adopted principles and performing communicative functions. In my analysis I take into consideration two areas of its function: cultural and textual. As a linguistic text of a specific grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, genealogical and visual order it is also perceived as a cultural artefact, a product of culinary tradition. I assume that the analysis of the text and the description of its stylistic and lexical determiners must be preceded by pragmatic reflection referring culinary discourse to the widest scope possible. Analysis of works in semiotics, ethnology and cultural studies prompts a conclusion that acquiring nourishment and producing food have a social dimension permanently rooted in culture. A culinary act is perceived as an intentional activity in the continuum of human behaviour resulting from the effect of perceptive stimuli, ethical and aesthetic norms and behavioural patterns of a given community, comprising selection of nourishing substances, their processing into foodstuffs and their consumption in the form of dishes. Reflection on the history of the cookery book and main trends in the evolution of a culinary act prompt a conclusion that the cookery book, stimulating reader's imagination and triggering his/her creativity, may be one of the last adventures in the civilised world. Culinary habits, stereotypically perceived as a static process, in reality are dynamic processes, susceptible to the influence of cultural, historical, economic, social, religious, geographical and many other factors. The actual function of cookery books may be interpreted solely within

a wide social and cultural context, allowing for the relations between technological progress and changes in culinary customs.

Also in Poland culinary discourse has become very visible in media during last decades. Cooking has been present in newspapers, in women's magazines, in TV and in internet. One may describe it as ever present feature of Polish contemporary media. What to eat, how to cook, cooking as creative experience – are the main culinary discourses. In my paper I will deal with the questions why the culinary discourse has acquired such an important role in Polish media and which are its roles and functions? What is similar and what is different in the new forms of conveying information with preferences and cultural patterns, verified by years of experience. Food and cooking as cultural phenomena contribute to identity, therefore, I will also include in my analysis the problem of the Polish cultural and ethnic identity in the culinary discourse.

The culinary discourse and the discourse of organic food in Estonia

E. Annuk

Culinary discourse has become very visible in Estonian media during last years. The culinary theme has been present almost everywhere: in newspapers, in women's magazines, in TV and in internet. One may describe it as ever present feature of Estonian contemporary media. What to eat, how to cook both delicious food and healthy food, cooking as creative experience – are the main culinary discourses.

But there has been rising in Estonia also a relatively new discourse about organic food and its advantages over traditional food. This is accompanied by a growing production of organic products by Estonian farmers. Organic products have also become visible in large supermarkets where they have acquired more space. Although the real numbers of organic production are quite small in comparison with the production of traditional agricultural products the theme as such is not any more marginal as it used to be some years ago.

In my paper I will deal with the questions why the culinary discourse has acquired such an important role in Estonian media and which are its roles and functions? How has been presented the role of organic food in this context and which kind of values have been attached to it? Since food and cooking are also cultural phenomena they are connected to identity. Therefore, I will analyze the discourse of organic food also from the viewpoint how it is perceived as a part of the true Estonian identity.

Political discourse as folklore

Polish political humour

M. Poprawa

In the paper universal communication strategies will be discussed which evoke humorous meanings and interpersonal relations in Polish public discourse at the turn of the 21st century. The analysis is meant to isolate pragmatic, stylistic, and generic features of a joke in the political domain in the context of multiple voices and freedom of speech; it will cover texts and genres evoking humorous connotations at the level of conceptualization of politics and media messages which involve the world of politics and its protagonists. The main research issues include:

- types, genres and formats of humour-evoking texts;
- pragmatic and performative properties of a political joke in various communicative situations (e.g. the role of humorous messages in interpersonal and ideologized relations between protagonists of political life);
- function of a joke in creating intertextual meanings (e.g. pragmatic functions of neologisms and winged words)
- situational political humour and the phenomenon of its media presence.

Humour transmission paths in socialist society

M. Rebane

My interest in the transmission of political humour is derived from the fact that in the Soviet conditions, where every bit of information was utterly controlled in the society, there were many political jokes in Soviet Estonia (Krikmann 2009). As Liisi Laineste has stated (Laineste 2008), most jokes during the Soviet era tended to be politically motivated as they mocked social conditions, leaders and other grotesque phenomena in the society. Even ethnic jokes had political subtext.

At first I look into the technical details and theoretical possibilities of the fast transmission of jokes. Some authors who had studied the subject had claimed that jokes were mostly told under secrecy, among good friends etc. This was weakly justified and I concentrated on theoretical possibilities of joke diffusion. My conclusion is that fast transmission was possible only because jokes were often told among people who were loosely connected to each other.

When I started to investigate the details of transmission of political jokes in Soviet Estonia, I expected physical places to be important. Places where people could meet like trains, bars etc. Many such places were also mentioned in studies of political jokes in Romenia and Spain (Brandes 1977; Pi-Sunyer 1977; Cochran 1989).

To gather the information, I decided to conduct qualitative interviews. Of course it is complicated, as people have forgotten about many events that took place about 40 years ago. I did 2 interviews and people are still able to recall joking occasions. Two interviews are not much, but enough to get new ideas and preliminary results.

I managed to collect some evidence that indeed, people met strangers in trains, planes and conferences – and told jokes to each other. But when I started to re-listen and analyze the interviews, I found that though those places were mentioned (perhaps because I asked for them). Jokes were told where people were forced to be together and had to kill time. But my respondents (all 2 of them so far) considered other aspect much more important than a place when describing the transmission of jokes: status of the teller.

Respondents emphasized that they heard most of their jokes from people who had achieved a status in a society. For example the leaders of organization, heads of departments etc. So indeed, they heard most of the jokes from loosely connected people, not from good friends or under secrecy. Joke transmission in Soviet Estonia, at least in 1970s was not a kind of “underground project”.

But what might be the explanation of that? I tend to agree with one of my respondents who hinted that people with status knew the society better, they could allow to balance on the border of what is allowed and what is not. It was hardly a conscious intention to undermine the society, it rather demonstrated the position of those people. Although people mentioned by my respondents had achieved the status in the society, they did not have similar power as their colleagues in democratic societies had. They too had to balance between common sense and idiocy.

Other aspect is that while many people in soviet times were rather grounded, people of higher status traveled a lot within the borders of Soviet Union, they met people like themselves and heard new jokes: they knew the jokes.

Brandes, Stanley H. 1977. „Peaceful Protest: Spanish Political Humor in a Time of Crisis“. *Western Folklore* 36(4):331-346.

Cochran, Robert. 1989. „What Courage!': Romanian 'Our Leader' Jokes“. *The Journal of American Folklore* 102(405):259-274.

Krikmann, Arvo. 2009. „Jokes in Soviet Estonia“. *Folklore* 43:43-66.

Laineste, Liisi. 2008. *Post-socialist jokes in Estonia: continuity and change*. Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.

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*This research is supported by ETF grant No 8149.

Political correctness

Political correctness in Poland

G. Strzdała

Political correctness and political humor in Estonia

M. Lõhmus

Observing developments in the Estonian public sphere during the 20th century, the year 1940 seems to be the essential turning point. 1940s was the year when norms and regulations for public texts, based on the principles of a communist society back in 1917, were set forth by the Soviet power. The subsequent set of rhetoric started to evolve in the middle of 1950s, embracing the local nuances specific to Estonia.

It is possible to name six distinct periods of political rhetoric from the beginning of 1940s to present times:

1944 – 1955 Physical Sovietisation as well as Sovietised public texts dispersed the public sphere, adapting to the examples and myths set by Moscow and TASS; the control for political correctness was strong and punishments for breaching the norms were severe, ranging from physical assault to deporting, imprisonment, etc. The repertoire of political jokes was dictated by TASS and other official news agencies. Local political jokes or ambiguous texts were published by Estonian journal *Looming*.

1955 – 1979 Mental Sovietisation introduced a divide between official and unofficial public texts. There were different norms and regulations, different degrees of canonisation and mythologisation for these two text types of texts. Political humour developed fast and was mostly channelled into the journal *Pikker*. Professional journalists/humorists emerged.

1980 – 1987 Violent period of mental Sovietisation was followed by constant warnings to and repressions on the journalists. Soviet texts and sign systems had become a playful part of the natural language and had lost their connection to real life and everyday discourse. Political humour prospered, the efficiency of the audience to observe daily life and analyse texts to their tiniest nuances was high.

1987 – 1991 Main keywords were the mental liberation of Estonia, followed by the adherence of public text to real life, end of the Soviet mythology, and publishing the texts written by the members of critical resistance. Political correctness disappeared and collective textual reflexivity was high. Political humour found its way into journalism.

1991 – 2003 As Estonia was de facto and de jure liberated and its society totally restructured, a structural change in public texts and alteration of political sign system was in need. This in turn brought about the introduction of a new discourse. Old Soviet political correctness was shifted into the category of humour itself, whereas new political correctness was being defined. Building a new normative sign system had backgrounded textual political humour. At the same time, picking up – amplifying – developing – travestying humour in the daily flow of public texts was quite usual.

2004 – homogenisation of the Estonia public sphere with European Union and European public sphere, which is slow due to disinterest of journalism. It nevertheless brought about a discussion about the new global and European regulations on political correctness and the principal attitude towards the notion is expressed through analysing and commenting on it. Informal and reflexive texts dominate on the scene; formal texts came to be formulated close to the genre of “political humour”.

The developments in the array of connotations to “Moscow” and “Greece” mirror the changes of political correctness and humour throughout these years.

Ritual year

Ritual year in Poland

A. Lubecka

The Polish ritual year celebrates culturally important events which belong both to Polish religious and lay tradition as well as to global mass culture. Their repertoire has been changing in recent years depending on the cultural policy and the culture-specific values it has promoted. Thus in the modern Polish culture many rituals and festivities have got lost, replaced by others, modified or celebrated as a niche holiday (national holidays, e.g. Independence Day (22 of July vs. 11 of November), 1st of May, October Revolution, the Day of the First Communion, Corpus Christi, *Wianki*). In the last decades of the 20th century some new ones alien to Polish culture were adopted as a result of globalisation or rather Americanisation of national cultures (*Halloween*, *St. Patrick Day*).

Thus the Polish ritual year is rich and varied: on the one hand it is very Polish, even re-enacting old Slavonic pagan traditions, but on the other hand it is also multicultural and international because of global cultural exchange. It is deeply marked with apparently contradictory trends: Poles become global citizens and at the same time local who tend to give some special emphasis to the search and reaffirmation of their global/local and regional identities (*St. Martin's Day celebrated in Poznan*).

The present article aims at presenting Polish ritual year, discussing many changes in celebrations due to the changes in Polish cultural policy as well as the cultural trends of globalisation and glocalisation.

Calendar feasts in Estonia: politics of adoption and reinstatement

M. Kõiva

During the end of 19th century at the early 20th century the structure of feasts in Estonia largely changed. Major changes were made in structure of state and national feasts, as the importance of church feasts constantly decreased under the influence of secularised society. Also the changes in economics as well as urbanization process at large minimized the need for agrarian rituals and festivities. The early 20th century many new feasts (Mothers day, Labour Day) invented.

Major changes were made in the feast structure during the socialist period, mainly after 1946. New regulations excluded the previous state / national feasts and Christian feasts from the public holidays, invented feasts from stabilised communist calendar (Women's day, the Red Army days), later also international (professional) days (Children's day, Teachers' day, Museums day, Theatre day, etc).

In 1980s to early 1990s a change of legal and political feast system took place in Estonia. It was also the time of media newcomers, feasts like Valentins Day, St Patricks Day, Halloween, reinvention of Walpurgis Night (*volbripäev*) and Mothers Day. After 50 years there was also a change to the previous structure of feasts.

My aim is to discuss the changes, adoption and reinstatement politics in the celebration of May Day, as the the labour-related holiday, and the dual dynamics of Walpurgis Night / May Day – both as a holiday of student corporations and as the witches' sabbath.

Traditional texts in modern media

Traditional texts in advertisements and news – proverbs in news headlines

M. Wojcicka

In the paper, I aim to present patterns for text structuring used in today's advertising. The patterns are based on traditional oral text structures. At the superstructure level, the patterns common to both oral and advertising texts include the following: chain structuring, structuring in terms of grouping, contrast, formula, dialogue, and collections.

At the macrostructure level, stereotyping is used most frequently. The above mentioned patterns are employed in the various codes used in TV commercials. They include oral and iconic codes, depending on the way in which advertised products are presented. Thus, it might be shown that TV commercials make use of patterns of thought typical of oral culture, while being multi-code and multi-sensory phenomena.

Traditional texts in Estonian advertisements

R. Järv

The important common trait of advertisements and oral folklore is being memorable. Due to the need of being memorable, rhetorical means similar to traditional folklore are used in advertising. On several occasions the advertising agencies have, to make their point clearer, used for instance old proverbs or fairytales. Folklorists have pointed out the co-effect of tradition and innovation in modern advertising already in the 70's (Mieder & Mieder 1977). While monitoring the changes and developments in earlier folkloristic tradition, this paper analyzes the advertisements rewarded by the Estonian Association of Advertising Agencies and other Estonian advertising campaigns, in which folkloristic motives or elements have been used. In my paper I have analyzed the "folkloric" strategies used by the advertisement creators.

References:

Mieder, Wolfgang/Mieder, Barbara 1977. Tradition and innovation: Proverbs in advertising. *Journal of Popular Culture* *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol 11, pp 308–319.

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National identities

Visual humour in the new media (Romanian case)

D. Popa

The current study will shed some light on the means of achieving visual humour in the Romanian new media, satirical political blogs in particular. Approaching the issue of visual humour from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective, we shall also try to determine whether such forms overpass traditional verbal humour content or whether they rather accompany them to make a more striking point. Last but not least, we would like to determine whether visual humour on the internet has any effect or at least any impact on the virtual social networks.

National identities on display in Poland and Estonia

A. Lubecka – L. Vesik

The claim that advertisements belong among important facets of the public discourse of post-modern societies is a commonplace statement today. This fact, however, does make the investigation of how they perform the role neither less attractive nor challenging. It seems that their contribution to a national identity discourse represents an especially interesting research area for at least three different, often contradictory, reasons. Firstly, national identity belongs to "hot" topics widely discussed today and continually defined and redefined because its basic frame of reference – nation/state – does not constitute solid explanatory concepts any longer. Secondly, identity communication by means of advertisements tends to create many controversies – advertisements were born to meet consumption- and market-oriented needs of goods producers and buyers and as such dealt mainly with materialistic values. Consequently they do not seem to be fit to discuss traditional concepts of national identity whose core underlying values belong to the so-called higher order spiritual culture, which also demands a lofty form – its language. Thirdly, underlying socio-cultural changes (above all the homogenization of culture together with the domination of pop-culture) insisted for a

change in both the conceptualization of national identity and the choice of new efficient communication channels to reach young people.

The article discusses the role of advertisements in communicating Polish national identity by means of the socially engaged and social advertisements. The first ones do it within the Corporate Social Responsibility scheme but as they aim at enhancing the positive image of the company, identity becomes a peripheral and often instrumentally treated issue e.g. the campaigns by the Tyskie Ducal Breweries. The second ones are directly concerned with civic values which constitute identity bases, eg. the campaigns "The disabled – the abled in the workplace". With the campaign "We are a national team" by *Biedronka*, a chain of food supermarkets has been chosen for a detailed examination to show how a modern version of patriotism is promoted by advertisements.