# THE ANTHROPONYMIC WORLD IN THE TEXT OF THE ANGLOPHONE JOKE

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**Abstract:** Being a complex study of the anthroponymic properties of modern British and American jokes this paper substantiates their specific comic functions as well as the means of comic effect creation. The analysis is underpinned with the methodological principle of anthropocentrism within the framework of which correlation between various groups of anthroponyms grounded on the basic cognitive mechanism of incongruity is ascertained.

**Key words:** anthroponym, joke, anthropocentrism, incongruity, pragmastylistic function, deviation from a norm.

## 1. Introduction

The modern world cannot possibly be imagined without *Homo Communicens* – a person who communicates, *Homo Artifex* – a person who creates, *Homo Ludens* – a person who plays, and *Homo Ridens* – a person who laughs. They are the four anthropocentric pillars on which humour is based and due to which humorous communication is possible (Самохина 2016a). That is why the issue of all-round research of humorous communication, as well as humorous texts, engendered in this communication, acquire special topicality nowadays (Attardo 1988; Berger 1977; Brock 2004; Davies 2004; Raskin 1987; Sacks 1974). Those texts integrating certain language elements make it possible for people to communicate, which leads to mutual understanding, intimacy, and contact. For all that, these are the so-called non-serious

forms of communication that are emphasised (Самохина 2016b; 2017). One of the varieties of the latter is the joke as a type of a small-form humorous text, which can regulate society members' activities.

The article is relevant due to the increased interest of contemporary linguists in the issues of the playful potential of language and requires a fundamental examination of the mechanisms of comic text creation and comprehension. The **novelty** of the work lies in the research of the Anglophone joke as a textual-discursive creation. The specific nature of the joke manifests itself by the existence of two statuses: that of a folklore text and that of a speech genre. This peculiarity determined the theoretical and applied aspects of its analysis.

The **theoretical-and-methodological** base of the article is the postulates of linguistic anthropology, which takes into account the role of the human factor in communicative processes (Ильясова & Амири 2016; Кубрякова 1995; Панасенко 2013; Смущинская 2000; Суперанская 1973; Golubkova & Zakharova 2017; Prihodko 2016).

The introduction of the joke into the circle of contemporary linguistic investigations makes it necessary to adopt a functional-communicative approach (Васильев 2013; Кухаренко 1988; 2004; Тураева 1999; Фролова 2007; Stashko 2017; Vorobyova 2017) to examining the peculiarities of the functioning of language units in text and discourse.

The joke is a situational and verbal unit of the non-serious mode of communication, which is a means of speech influence on the communicative behavior of the participants of communication. Being a discursive entity, the joke represents a unity of textual, genre, and communicative aspects. The joke is a fragment of humorous communication (in dynamics) from a communicative perspective; the joke constitutes

a static result of humorous communication (actual text) from a textual perspective; the joke is a speech genre (abstract form) from a genre perspective.

All the categories of the text are inherent in the joke (that of completeness, coherence, information value, modality, intertextuality, etc.), which are in line with the global objective of achieving comic effect.

As a speech genre the joke is characterized by a set of genre-forming features: a small size, unexpected denouement (pointe), incongruence, which is found at every level of the joke, stereotyped compositional model, and simple syntax.

Genre-discursive characteristics include dialogueness, associativeness, and playful elements of communication, failed expectation, and communicative purposes. The joke is based on a dynamic comic scenario that forms communication partners' social roles. The main objective of the joke is to amuse the recipient or set him laughing. The joke self-regulates, develops historically, and has social features.

An inherent feature of the joke is a cognitive mechanism of incongruence, the essence of which lies in the violation of norms (ontological, logical-conceptual, value-based, genre, discursive, linguistic, and verbal) that is the source of the situation and manifests itself in paradox: deviation creates a new norm of the joke and is the norm of humorous world perception. The effect of the cognitive mechanism of incongruence is reflected in the composition (the contradiction of the beginning and the end), speech tactics etc.

Incongruence is based on conflict that is evident at both the macro- and the microlevel. At the macrolevel, conflict has extralinguistic manifestations (laughter, anger) and may be either resolved or not; at the microlevel (within the text of a joke), a conflict situation involved in the plot reaches resolution in the pointe and culminates with an emotionally-expressive interpretation of the joke.

There are the following typical stylistic characteristics of the norm of the text of a joke: comic, modernity, anticipation, genre model, intertextual remake, irradiation of expressiveness, mimesis, failed expectation, seriation, evocativity, instantaneity of perception, carnival consciousness. The functional-communicative spectrum of the joke covers pragmatic functions: entertaining, that of speech production, attractive, switching, phatic, regulatory, concealing, and therapeutic.

The narrative joke is the most widespread type of Anglophone joke, in the genre structure of which groups of narrative and expressive elements are distinguished. Narrativeness is associated with theatricality, performance, and play. Comic effect is achieved through the conceptual disclosure of the compositional model of the joke, which is realized in blocks, as well as through the explication of linguosituational and lingual ambiguity. The narrative joke is considered within the framework of macrocontext (as a discursive phenomenon), where, besides the text itself, all the elements of the extralinguistic situation are distinguished, and of microtext – conditional, playful context within the text of a joke, where the speaker and the recipient are introduced into a communicative space.

The major role in the narrative genre is played by anthropocentricity markers – anthroponyms (spheres of their usage, nomination of personages, formation of comic associations and connotations to ensure specificity, vividness, and comic of the joke) – and their functions (creation of a comic image or situation, expressive-emotional, deictic, culturological, orientative, emphatic, allusive). Humorous proper names contain humorous charge that creates incongruent humorous associations, which function as a decoder of the comic situation in the joke.

The aim of our research is to reveal and describe the functions, pragmalinguistic potential and the means of comic creation of the anthroponym in the modern Anglophone joke as a production of the intentional linguocreative activity of

individuals. The choice of jocular texts as a target was conditioned by their being unique material for decoding and interpretation by the hearer of the comic information based on his or her background knowledge. The work is focused on the postulates of functional-communicative (Самохіна 2015) and dialectic-dialogic methodology. The development of the anthropocentric paradigm finds its direct implication in the analysis of anthroponyms specificity, and their functioning in comic works of minor folk genres. Their role in texts of Anglophone jokes has become the **target** of the research for the first time.

The **subject** of the analysis is anthroponyms as means of comic effect creation in a joke, underlying in the process of deviation from standard norms.

Issues that deal with the comic world perception in Anglophone linguoculture are in line with the linguistic interpretation of the Anglophone joke, where mentality peculiarities of the British and American national comic cultures were traced. Therefore, humour and the joke have a strictly anthropocentric character: in them, *homo ridens* and *homo ludens* (a person who plays) are the anthropocentric pillars. The analysis of the Anglophone humour specificity promotes better understanding of national psychology, national character, social shades of humour, and their links with history, together with the national moods.

*1.2 Materials and methods*

The **material** of the research is presented by 20, 000 modern Anglophone jokes that are found in authentic sources, namely in modern Anglophone collections of the XX-XXI centuries and internet resources, that account for 12 000 pages.

The integrative character of the research determines the application of several interrelated methods. The general systematic method was used for the systematization and classification of anthroponyms. The method of intent-analysis served the purpose

of revealing the speaker's intentions when he/she begins communication in a joking manner. Elements of cognitive modelling were applied while determining the cognitive mechanism of incongruity. The method of interpretation and text analysis was used when confirming the existence of intertextual links between Anglophone jokes. The stylistic method provided the opportunity to throw light upon the stylistic devices that make Anglophone jokes work. The ethnolinguistic method gave a possibility to distinguish the ethnocultural peculiarities in the British and American mentalities in terms of their comic cultures and to trace the impact on the discovery of the national humour specificity and on spotting the comic in Anglophone jokes.

## 2. Specificity of the anthroponym and its functions in the text of an Anglophone joke

Form simplicity, wit, imagery, and word power are peculiarities of the comic microworld in the text of the joke. Comic images are created not only with the help of linguistic means but also through the usage of comic situations. The joke has its specific devices to produce a comic effect. The most general ones include the skilful and artful applications of figurative means of verbal folklore, and live national colloquial speech in an attempt to realise these or those shades of the comic. The joke is a bright illustration of language spontaneity and its richness in different means to convey people's emotions.

The folk art is basically anthropocentric, thus the anthroponym in the joke plays an important part in the text of the joke. It is topical in the light of scientists' rising interest as "a person being the centre of the world" (Кубрякова 1995: 212), when the research paradigm is altering, and in all fields of scientific knowledge, including linguistics, pivots are changing towards anthropocentrism (Зорина 2006; Мудрова 2008; Ніколенко 2015; Сидоренко 2000; Тураева 1999).

It is widely known that anthroponyms used as literary characters' names are capable of playing a crucial role in the embodiment of the author's ideas (Васильев 2013: 112). Researchers of various texts note that wordplay is achieved through anthroponyms:

(i) with political leaders' names and surnames (the nucleus of the anthroponimicon is represented by top public officials' names);

(ii) concerning sportsmen's and musicians' private lives, etc.;

(iii) in the creation of playful foreign anthroponyms (Ильясова & Амири 2016: 73-76).

The development of the anthropocentric paradigm of scientific knowledge is particularly based upon analysis of the anthroponym specificity, their functioning in comic works of minor folk genres.

According to Smuschinskaya, "anthroponyms act as special markers of the anthropocentric category, … carrying the meaning of subjective modality not only due to their semantics but also to their functioning in literary context" (Смущинская 2000: 252). As in any other folk genre, the joke is anthropocentric. It reflects events, current for the particular people that created this joke, because their characters are those with whom those events are connected. Anthroponyms contribute to the vertical coherence of the text of the joke, being its emphatic lexical components. They establish the base for a comic action in the joke acting as text-creating factors.

Onomastic lexis provides for all the spheres of the joke – the character nomination, geographical space, etc. It frames cultural, daily-life, and historical backgrounds of situations, creates associations and connotations, assures that the joke be concrete, realistic, and certainly comically fulfilling its onomastic "comic" paradigm.

Among what is used in the Anglophone joke there are: 1) anthroponyms (proper names – names, surnames, nicknames) that form the anthroponymy of a particular people; 2)

toponyms (names of geographical objects); 3) chrononyms (names of historic events, periods, processes that take place over particular time spans); 4) chrematonyms (individual names of objects and products of spiritual and material national cultures, including newspapers, magazines, books, and films, etc.); 5) ethnonyms (names of peoples and nationalities); 6) zoonyms (names of animals).

*2.1 Basic comic functions of anthroponyms in jokes*
In the texts of jokes proper names can carry out such comic functions as:
i) **Communicative function**, when a name, known to speakers, serves as a basis for humorous communication (e.g., the former US President B. Clinton, who is a hero of jokes conjoint into a jocular cycle):

*(1) Hear about **Hillary Clinton's** new book?*
*"It takes A Village ... To Keep My Husband Satisfied"* (Alvin 1999: 40);
*(2) What's the difference between **Bill Clinton** and a gigolo?*
*A gigolo can only screw one person a time* (Wilder 1907: 40)

Jokes (1) and (2) are based on referential links with the present: the claim on veracity as it is connected to real figures, with the former US President Bill Clinton, in particular. In these jokes the president's voracious appetite for women is hyperbolically reflected.

ii) **Function of comic image and / or comic situation creation**:
*(3) "I say, **Tom-ass**, how are things?" asked one smart aleck of his acquaintance named Thomas.*
*Unfortunately, the smart aleck had forgotten that his own name was Samuel, for Thomas retorted:*
*"I'm fine, **Sam-mule**; and you?"* (Gachechiladze & Passek 2004: 113).

As is seen from this joke there is wordplay at a morphemic level that can be traced in the damaged structure of the proper name, thus contributing to the appearance of a comic effect. The discrepancy between the forms of occasional inputs (Tom-ass and Sam-mule) as compound words and their meanings suggest a playful character of word-formation. Such words are formed according to the word-formation model N1 + N2. Similarly, the source of the comic effect is the combination of the inputs *Tom* and *Sam* with the homonymous suffixes *-as* and *-uel* of the nouns *ass* and *mule*.

*iii) **Emotional expressive function***. Generally, this function is performed by well-known proper names that are gradually being transferred into common names. The emotional expressive function of a proper name in the joke is represented by the fact that a proper name enhances the expressiveness of the joke, adds tone to the main character (as a rule, the tone is humorous) creating the image in mind:

*(4) What's your name?*
**Igiveup Whatisit.**
*What are you talking about – your father's name is Brown – how can your last name be Whatisit?*
*Well, when I was born my father came in and took one look at me and said:*
*"I give up – what is it?"* (Meier & Knapp 1980: 111).

The comedy in the joke becomes clear at the end of it, when the proper name (Igiveup Whatisit) is juxtaposed with the phrase "I give up – what is it?" The repetition of the proper name treated as a phrase (the process of contextual homophony) does create a comic effect.

In the joke cited below the word *mouth* has two meanings: 1) the estuary of a river; 2) a part of human's face. Therefore, a talkative woman is suggested to be called Amazon:

*(5) People should call you **Amazon**.*

*Why?*

*Because you're so wide at the mouth* (Meier & Knapp 1980: 109).

*iv) **Deictic function*** – in this function pronunciation of a proper name is accompanied by the indication of a subject:

*(6) – **Who is that talkative woman** over there?*

*– <u>My wife, Mary</u>.*

*– Sorry, my mistake.*

*– <u>No mine</u>* (King, Ridout & Swan 1982: 10).

The deictic function of the onym that suggests the woman's negative trait of character in the joke above embodies its essence: the man made a mistake when choosing a wife. Compare:

*(7) At the office party, the boss's wife introduced herself to a very pretty girl.*

***"I'm Mrs. Featherstonehaugh, the Managing Director's wife"**, she said.*

*"How do you do", said the pretty girl. **"I'm his secretary".***

*<u>"Oh", said the boss's wife, "were you?"</u>* (King, Ridout & Swan 1982: 12).

Due to the deixis it is possible to create a comic situation: the manager's wife getting acquainted with a beautiful, young secretary easily changes the present tense of the verb *to be* to the past. Here, the comic effect emerges because of the ellipsis, which is based on semantic and syntactic contrasts. Structural incompleteness of the syntactic construction *were you* makes the hearer guess its semantic implication. The proper name "Featherstonehaugh" is metaphoric and includes image characteristics of the name bearer who is thus presented as stocky, overweight lady, making the interior word form alive, while the word itself is a complex composite: in it, there are three incongruent lexemes such as *feather* (meaning lightness)*, stone* (meaning weight)*, and haugh* (meaning emptiness), which, in turn, create a comic effect.

A typological peculiarity of this function is the characterization of the subject standing before or after a proper name. Compare: the director John, the wife Mary, Mrs. Featherstonehaugh, the manager's wife.

*v) **Culturological function*** characterizes a proper name bearer from the points of view of their professional, historical, national, and social origins: Mark Twain, Mozart, William Shakespeare, etc. In this case the character of a joke acts exceptionally in a comic function:

*(8) What did **Franklin** say when he discovered electricity in lightning?*

*Nothing, he was too <u>shocked</u>* (Alvin 1999a: 503).

The proper name in the joke context here performs a culturological function and is leveraged from a comic side: the usage of the verb *to shock* means: 1) to be psychologically shocked and 2) to be shocked as a result of an electrical trauma. The play on words results in a comic effect. Another example is:

*(9) **Mark Twain** constantly received letters and photographs from men who had been told that they looked like him. One was from Florida and the likeness, as shown by the man's picture, was really remarkable – so remarkable, indeed, that Mr. Clemens sent the following acknowledgement:*

*"My dear Sir: I thank you very much for your letter and the photograph. In my opinion you are certainly more like me than other of my doubles. In fact, I am sure that <u>if you stood before me in a mirrorless frame I could shave by you</u>"* (Gachechiladze & Passek 2004: 90).

The sarcastic answer of Mark Twain, who is a well-known American humorous writer, at the end of the joke contributes to a humorous situation, in which he originally applies the comparative method.

*2.2 Specific comic functions of anthroponyms in jokes*

In the text of a joke there are also merely *specific comic functions* of a proper name traced:

i) *Orientative function* – carried out to achieve a comic effect:

*(10) Ronald Reagan* in "Heaven Can Wait" (Helitzer 1992: 83);

*(11) James Watt* in "To Kill a Mockingbird" (Helitzer 1992: 83).

ii) *Highlighting function* that fosters quicker spotting of a comic action:

*(12) Show-business celebrities' addiction to golf, although their aspirations often exceed their skill.* **Frank Sinatra** *once played 18 holes with golf pro* **Arnold Palmer***.*

*Afterward, Sinatra asked, "What do you think of my game?"*

*"It's not bad", Palmer said, "but I still prefer golf"* (Claro 1996: 212).

iii) *Phatic function* whose objective lies with claiming the hearer's attention to the comic action connected to a proper name in an attempt to intrigue him or her:

*(13) Comic* <u>J. Scott Homan</u> *said he'd been trying to get in shape doing 20 sit-ups each morning.*

*"That may not sound like a lot, but you can only hit that snooze alarm so many times"* (Муратов 1997: 31).

iv) *Allusive function* is carried out when a proper name justifies associations connected with a name and surname, contains information, known to the hearer beforehand in accordance to their background knowledge, life experience, level of education, as allusions are always associated with implication:

*(14)* **Isadora Duncan***, the great dancer, once wrote to* **George Bernard Shaw** *and suggested, or so the wits say:*

*"We two ought to have a child, so it could inherit my beauty and your brains."*

*Shaw reportedly wrote back:*

*"Madam, I am flattered – but suppose it turned out to have my beauty and your brains?"* (Lieberman 1965: 209).

Bernard Shaw's answer is ironico-evaluative: there is a hint dropped concerning Isadora Duncan's narrow-mindedness.

The more *specific functions* of a proper name are also to be mentioned:

    i)    It actualizes the meaning that expresses a hero's personality and characteristics becoming his or her symbol in a way:

*(15)* **Humorist Robert Benchley***, while visiting Venice, sent a telegram to actor David Niven. The telegram read: STREETS FILLED WITH WATER. PLEASE ADVISE* (Claro 1996: 140).

ii) It expresses the speaker's attitude (often, in pseudodefinitions):

*(16)* **VAN DAMME** *=Violent Action Never Decreases A Major Movie's Earnings* (Christing 1996: 47).

iii) Helps create an authentic situation that is described:

*(17) As* **Vincent Van Gogh** *said after he cut off his ear, "Don't shout!"* (Berle 1989: 250).

iv) Enhances a comic effect:

*(18) "The Russian Rabbi" by* **Ikan Kutchadikoff** (Funny words).

An anthroponym, which is popular in Anglophone jokes, is realized either in one-member or two-member anthropoformulae (compare *Mary, Mary Brown, Sir Thomas,* etc.). Very often in a proper name the bearer's character realizes itself and connotative information is included (Bielitska 2000: 14). It concerns the hero of the joke and is

strengthened by motivational implication. Often, anthroponyms are built under the principle of secondary indirect nomination as a metaphor, metonymy or irony:

*(19) Upon a reception of the Marquis Lafayette in Philadelphia, during his last visit to America,* **Colonel Forrest**, *one of the Revolutionary officers, upon being presented, burst into tears, upon which Judge Peters, who was standing at the side of the marquis, dryly observed:*
*"Why, Tom, I took you for a* **Forrest tree**, *but you turn out to be a* **weeping willow"** (Pocheptsov 1982: 220).

In this text of the joke the principle of associative vividness is applied. In its basis there lies proper name metaphorisation that is based upon comparison between a person and a tree and that includes the hero's image characteristics.

*2.3 Means of comic creation by anthroponyms in jokes*

Having analyzed the comic potential of different anthroponym groups that run in jokes, we are going to distinguish the major comic means for comic effect creation:

i) Play on homonymous meanings of proper names, sometimes using graphons:

*(20) His wife was a Wave; he waved at a Wac.*
*The Wac was in front, but his wife was in back.*
*Instead of a wave from the Wac, it is said,*
*What he got was a whack from the Wave he had wed* (Pocheptsov 1982: 203).

ii) Usage of proper names that rhyme

*(21) Muggins – "Yes, I'm living out in the country now. It certainly has its inconveniences."*

*Buggins* – *"What do you miss most?"*

*Muggins* – *"The last train home at night"* (Pocheptsov 1982: 163).

iii) Usage in line of proper names that do not correlate because of either their roots are from different sources or those people living in different epochs that are separated by a long time interval:

*(22) One night, **Bill Clinton** was awakened by **George Washington**'s ghost in the White House. Clinton saw him and asked, "George, what is the best thing I could do to help the country?"*
*"Set an honest and honorable example, just as I did," advised George.*
*The next night, the ghost of **Thomas Jefferson** moved through the dark bedroom.*
*"Tom, what is the best thing I could do to help the country?" Clinton asked.*
*"Cut taxes and reduce the size of government," advised Tom. Clinton didn't sleep well the next night, and saw another figure moving in the shadows. It was **Abraham Lincoln's** ghost. "Abe, what is the best thing I could do to help the country?" Clinton asked.*
*"Go to the theatre"* (Rosenbloom 1988: 141).

iv) Usage of antonomasia:

*(23) We named out new baby **"Surrender"**.*
*Surrender? What made you call him that?*
*Mother and dad took one look at him and <u>gave up</u>* (Meier & Knapp 1980: 108).

As Lytvyn states, "In word stems semantics, direct motivation straightforwardly performs a socio-characterological function, emphasizes the character's main traits and behavioural patterns. The names that speak for themselves have their place in such genres as satire and humour. They are the so-called nuclei in writers' creative activity

in the background of other types of proper names, and, as a result, they attract researchers' attention, as well as writers' one, by their direct motivation" (Литвин 2001: 126) (see also (Молчанова 2000: 75-81)).

A special type of expressive motivation of a proper name in the text of the joke is traced not due to the content associations but merely sound ones, more often with a character's ironic or humorous estimation. This means includes several types:

a) Sound repetition within nicknames in jocular context makes them comic, as a rule: *Nana, Gaga, Bébé, Mimi, Tatan, Néné, Zizi.*

b) Cacophonous phonetic expression: *Fauchery, Foucarmont, Chouard.*

A made up sound form of a non-model proper name makes it exotic, often comic, especially in a jocular context, releasing it from social connotations. However, the name's bearer's image psychological picture helps save the connection with that reality, which acts as a basis for the speaker's "onomastic" creative work.

All of the above mentioned makes it possible to summarise the functions of anthroponyms and major means that help them produce a comic effect in an Anglophone joke. See Table 1:

Table 1. Anthroponym functions in an Anglophone joke

| Basic | Specific | Concrete | The main means of comic effect creation by anthroponyms |
|---|---|---|---|
| - communicative<br>- creation of a comic image / comic situation<br>- expressive emotional<br>- deictic<br>- culturological | - orientative<br>- highlighting<br>- phatic<br>- allusive | - actualization of meaning that expresses the hero's characteristics<br>- conveyance of the speaker's attitude<br>- creation of an authentic situation | - the homophonous play on proper names<br>- proper names rhyme<br>- proper names from different time periods or sources<br>- antonomasia<br>- comic usage of reference |

| | | - enhancement of a<br>  comic effect | - play on proper names<br>- parody<br>- incongruous mix of<br>  proper names in context |
|---|---|---|---|

In the majority of Anglophone jokes there are anthroponyms that can be classified:

- names of historic and contemporary figures (politicians, writers, composers, artists, scientists, actors, sportsmen, etc.);

- names of literary, biblical, TV characters;

- names-ethnonyms.

We are going to look into these anthroponym pragmastylistic functions in the following chapter.

## 3. Names of historic and contemporary figures as nuclei of jocular cycles

In Anglophone jokes the majority of famous people's names is represented by politicians' names. It can be explained by the fact that the subject of a joke is usually chosen by people according to what they believe to be topical and that is the straightforward element of social practice. Politics and politicians, indeed, make up an indispensable part of life. A joke is called for revealing social drawbacks and fighting against them, as even the most fearless are known to be afraid of laughter. That is politicians' criticism and criticism of their personalities and actions are characterized by most effect.

Proper names of historic and modern individuals that are used in Anglophone jokes show that these anthroponyms become representatives of the heroes who are the *nuclei of jocular cycles*. These heroes have certain reputations, and their names acquire certain connotation.

The most well-known anthroponyms in this group are:

i) **Political leaders and relevant individuals:** *Donald Trump, Bill Clinton (Baba Clinton, Billy Boy), Hillary Clinton, George W. Bush, Monica Lewinsky, Abraham Lincoln, Barack Obama, George Washington, Henry Kissinger, Bibi Netanyahu, Madeline Albright, Yasser Arafat, Tony Blair, Indira Ghandi, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Saddam Hussein, Newt Gingrich, Ted Kennedy, Thomas Jefferson, Winston Churchill,* etc.).

ii) **Writers:** *William Shakespeare, John Milton, George Gordon Byron, Edgar Alan Poe, Oscar Wilde, Mark Twain.*

iii) **Actors / singers:** *Madonna, Schwarzenegger, Clint Eastwood, Ricky Martin, Frank Sinatra, Claudia Schiffer, Marilyn Monroe, Pamela Anderson, Hugh Grant, Michael Jackson, Sharon Stone, Stallone, Van Damme.*

iv) **Composers:** *Mozart, Chopin, Bach.*

v) **Scientists:** *Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung.*

vi) **Painters:** *Pablo Picasso, Gainsborough, Rembrandt, Titian.*

vii) **Sportsmen:** *Michael Jordan, Antoine Walker.*

As in a joke the emotive factor is the leading one, connotations of anthroponyms claim special attention. For example, because of Bill Clinton's scandals with Monica Lewinsky and further lawsuits, he is represented in jokes as a person who is characterized by a voracious love appetite. His name reminds the speaker of the entire jocular circle that is united by that characteristic of Bill Clinton:

*(24) Why does Hillary Clinton always climb on top?*
*Because **Bill** can only fuck up* (Alvin 1998b: 98);
*(25)What game did **Bill Clinton** play with Monica Lewinsky?*
*Swallow the Leader* (Alvin 1999b: 41).

In these jokes a humorous effect is connected with sexual connotations: *Bill* is both a proper name and a man's sex organ.

The heroes of jokes are usually famous political leaders of the past. People often ascribe various achievements to them, and their names are associated with the idea of "a great ruler" with whom the current politicians' activities are compared. For the USA such figures are President Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, and for Great Britain – Churchill, Lloyd George:

*(26) How do we know Abraham Lincoln was Jewish? He was <u>shot in a temple</u>* (Alvin 1999c: 67).

This joke goes back to the tragic historic fact – President Lincoln's murder. Its main mechanism of a comic effect is pun: *temple* is both part of one's forehead and a holy place for worshipping. Lincoln is known to have been assassinated both in a Jewish temple in his temple.

*(27) Why isn't **Washington's** birthday celebrated in Washington, DC? Because a man who can't tell a lie isn't worth remembering* (Alvin 1998b: 106). Presupposition of the joke is the following: all politicians lie, but the reference is made to the fact that Washington was considered to be an honest politician.

Except for the correlation between these jokes and jocular series they refer to, proper names serve as a signal that informs the hearer about the importance of using their background knowledge. If a hearer does not have this information, he cannot identify what person the name refers to, so this joke becomes senseless in their view, loses its comic value. In American "black" humour names of real people are used. They include killers, villains, and criminals. Compare:

*(28) **O.J. Simpson** is taking a ride in his chauffeur-driven limo. Passing a farm, the chauffeur runs over a pig and kills it. O.J. says, "You'd better go up to the farmhouse and offer to pay them for the pig."*

*The chauffeur does. An hour passes, then two, and the chauffeur fails to reappear. Finally, five hours later, the chauffeur comes back.*

*O.J. asks him angrily, "Where the hell have you been?"*

*"Well," the chauffeur says, "I went up there and explained, and they feed me this great seven-course meal. Then the farmer gives me some twenty-year-old whiskey. Then the farmer's beautiful daughter takes me upstairs and fucks my brains out."*

*"Why'd they do all that?" O.J. asks.*

*"Beats the shit of me," the chauffeur says. "All I said was, I'm O.J.'s driver, and I just killed the pig"* (Alvin 1999c: 55).

This joke is exemplary because it expresses the communicants' social and linguistic experience and turns the hearer to the referential situation: ignorance of who O.J. Simpson is robs the joke of its sense. Meanwhile, O.J. Simpson is a criminal of whose name Americans are scared to death. The linguistic means used in the joke is antithesis, sharp contrast –juxtaposition of the sentences *I'm O.J.'s driver, and I just killed the pig* with all the previous sense, – the implication of which is connected to Simpson's serial murders.

In a speech situation it is important to take into account the speaker's attitude towards the object. The estimation "can be reflected with the help of special word formation means. Frequently, it does relate to proper names" (Суперанская 1973: 233). The form of a proper name itself usually has a connotative meaning, thus serving for the adequate perception of the idea of a joke. In the joke cited below the form *"Billy Boy"* used in relation to Bill Clinton suggests a disrespectful and familiar attitude to the president:

*(29) President **Billy Boy** arrived back at the White House after a visit to Arkansas with two razorback hogs under his arms. A Secret Service Agent commented on what nice razorbacks they appeared to be.*

*"Thanks", said Bill. "I got one for Hillary and one for Chelsea".*

*"Good trade, sir", the agent replied* (Joke Directory).

An innuendo is applied in the joke. It is a veiled hint about Clinton's sexual "appetites". The phraseological unit *good trade* means "a good exchange", so the agent does accentuate this fact.

A negative attitude, which is expressed by the form of a proper name, is clearly traced in jokes about American President George Bush who is called *Bush, Bush Jr., George W., George W. Bush,* but never introduced as *President Bush* or *Mr. Bush:*

*(30) Over 5000 years ago, Moses said to the children of Israel, "Pick up your shovels, mount your asses and I will lead you to the Promised Land".*
*Nearly 5000 years later, Roosevelt said, "Lay down your shovels, sit on your asses, and light up a Camel; this is the Promised Land!"*
*Now Bush Jr. wants to steal your shovels, kick your asses, raise the price of your Camels, and mortgage the Promised Land* (Joke Directory).

Here, repetitions are used to intensify a comic effect, but they are realized with the help of contrast and a purposeful exaggeration of the heroes' actions in jokes. This is a variant of grammatical parallelism, whose function is to intrigue the hearer with a joke, getting them understand the comic outcome as quickly as possible. The brightest form of G. Bush's negative perception is *George W.*, which looks like a nickname *Dubya* he got from rivals:

*(31) **George W. Bush, Albert Einstein** and **Pablo Picasso** have all died. Due to a glitch in the mundane / celestial time-space continuum, all the three arrive at the Pearly Gates more or less simultaneously, even though their deaths have taken place decades apart.*

*The first to present himself to Saint Peter is Einstein. Saint Peter questions him. "You look like Einstein, but you have no idea the lengths certain people will go to, to sneak into Heaven under false pretences. Can you prove who you really are?"*

*Einstein ponders for a few seconds and asks, "Could I have a blackboard and some chalk?"*

*Saint Peter complies with a snap of his fingers. The blackboard and chalk instantly appear. Einstein proceeds to describe with arcane mathematics and symbols his special theory of relativity.*

*Saint Peter is suitably impressed. "You really are Einstein! Welcome to heaven!"*

*The next step up is Picasso. Once again Saint Peter asks for his credentials. Picasso doesn't hesitate. "Mind if I use that blackboard and chalk?"*

*Saint Peter says, "Sure, go ahead."*

*Picasso erases Einstein's scribbles and proceeds to sketch out a truly stunning mural...bulls, satyrs, nude women, etc. He captures their essence with but a few strokes of the chalk.*

*Saint Peter claps. "Surely you are the great artist you claim to be! Come on in!"*

*The last to present himself is **George W. Bush**. Saint Peter scratches his head. "Einstein and Picasso both managed to prove their identity. How can you prove yours?"*

***George W.** looks bewildered, "Who are Einstein and Picasso?"*

*Saint Peter sighs..."Come on in, **George**"* (Alvin 1997: 48).

In the example cited above the interrelation of time dimensions can be observed. It means that the fact that heroes lived in a different time epoch leads to stylistic incongruity, discrepancy. G. Bush's question "Who are Einstein and Picasso" is ironic – through his ignorance Bush sets himself as different from outstanding people. Threefold syntactic and lexical repetition adds to the comic effect of the joke.

In a joke that usually features brevity and content richness all language means are used to create a comic effect. Proper names can also be integrated to the group of so-called "funny words". In the joke (31) a comic effect is based on homonymy of the proper and common names:

*(31) A coke machine and Monica Lewinski have one thing in common: they both say "Insert <u>Bill</u> here"* (Alvin 1997: 121).

The word *Bill* in this context has a negative connotation. Here, the principle of associative conclusion is applied, which lies in the basis of metonymic nomination. The proper name *Bill* is metonymical, so it compares the machine with Clinton's body part.

Names of writers, painters, composers, actors in jokes are also symbolic in a way: Byron is a great poet, Mozart – an outstanding composer. These and other well-known names more often serve as a means to throw light upon the ignorance of those who have no idea of who these people are, which leads to embarrassing situations setting people off laughing. In other words, for deciphering those symbols background knowledge is of high importance.

In the jokes cited below the effect of failed expectations is used. It is built upon an ignorance of the heroes that have no encyclopaedic knowledge about famous people:

*(32)* Bill*: "Well, what did she say when you proposed to her?"*
Jim: *"I didn't propose. Before I got a chance she loved **Byron, Poe** and **Longfellow**, and what chance did I have with the girl <u>who is in love with three other guys</u>?"* (Lyons 1998b: 13);
*(33)* The first lady: *"My husband called me from Paris on my birthday asking whether he should buy me a **Rembrandt** or a **Titian**. Now which would you have?"*

The second lady: *"Well, as far as that goes, any of those <u>French cars</u> are pretty good"* (Alvin 1999c: 18).

A comic effect occurs when a usual badly-known name is accompanied by a surname of a famous, brilliant person. In the example cited below ambiguity is connected with confusion about the surname *Mann:* it turns out that the outstanding person in this case is not Thomas Mann, the famous German writer, but a person from a philharmonic society who wrote out a cheque and who is Thomas Mann's namesake:

*(34) An American tourist in Tel Aviv was about to enter the impressive Mann Auditorium to take part in a concert by the Israel Philharmonic. He was admiring the unique architecture, the sweeping lines of the entrance, and the modern décor throughout the building.*
*Finally, he turned to his tour guide and asked if the building was named for **Thomas Mann** world-famous author.*
*"No," his guide said, "It's named for **Frederick Mann**, from Philadelphia."*
*"Really? I have never heard of him. <u>What did he write</u>?"*
*"<u>A cheque</u>," replied the guide* (Alvin 1999c: 56).

The comic effect of the joke lies in polysemy of the word *to write* – 1) to put something down and 2) to draw a cheque, which leads to a comic effect.

The fact that the heroes of jokes are usually actors can be explained by the fact that people show interest in their favourites and pursue the aim to accentuate or make fun of certain drawbacks of theirs. In Anglophone jokes, actors are usually badly criticized: for example, the actress Audrey Hepburn is compared to "*A Walking X-ray*" (Steele 1999: 70), and Marlon Brando is often criticised like that:
*(35) "Most of the time, Marlon Brando sounds like he has a mouth full of toilet paper"* (Steele 1999: 71).

In these examples the comparative method of parody is used.

Famous people's names of the past and present perform different functions in Anglophone jokes: correlate the text with jocular series that are united upon the character image central to this series; make the hearer use their background knowledge; express the author's attitude and accentuate the idea conveyed by a joke; foster the creation of an authentic situation being described; enhance a comic effect; gain an additional connotative meaning that expresses a hero's main characteristics.

## 4. Names of biblical, literary, and TV characters in the creation of a second semantic perspective

In this group the most widely-used proper names are *St. Peter, Adam and Eve, Jesus, Moses, King Solomon, Anakin and Luke Skywalker, Pinocchio, Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, Oprah Winfrey,* etc. For fictional joke characters the function of appeal for the hearer's background knowledge is the most characteristic. The comic can be aroused via the usage in one text of several proper names from different sources. Besides, jokes that contain those symbolic names have the so-called "national cipher" and will be non-discernible for representatives of another culture if they do not know where they come from and what connotations there are. It is particularly true about jokes covering folk and literary characters that are not of high popularity.

Generally known biblical figures appear in Anglophone jokes quite often. Besides, the method of parody, characteristic of a joke, takes place here. Its essence lies in the character's keeping their initial characteristics, but the situation being described in a joke has very little to do with biblical tales that is to create a comic effect based on incongruity (of the "low" and "high"):

*(36) What was the difference between **Noah's Ark** and **Joan of Arc**?*

*Noah's Ark was <u>made</u> of wood and Joan of Arc was <u>maid</u> of Orleans* (Meier & Knapp 1980: 257).

Homonymous usage of pun (*Ark* and *Arc*, *made* and *maid*) is the basis of the comic effect in the example cited above.

Adam and Eve are the most popular biblical figures in jokes whose humour is connected with the effect of failed expectations:

*(37) After a few days, the Lord called **Adam** to him, and said, "It is time for you and **Eve** to begin the process of populating the Earth, so I want you to start by kissing Eve." Adam answered, "<u>Yes, Lord, but what's a "kiss"?</u>" So, the <u>Lord gave Adam a brief description and Adam</u> then took Eve by the hand, behind a nearby bush. A few minutes later, Adam emerged and said, "<u>Lord, that was enjoyable</u>." And the Lord replied, "Yes, Adam, I thought you'd enjoy that, and now I'd like you to caress Eve."*
*And Adam said, "<u>Lord, what's a "caress"</u>? "So the <u>Lord gave Adam a brief description and Adam</u> went again behind the bush with Eve. Quite a few minutes later, Adam returned, smiling, and said, "<u>Lord, that was even better than the kiss</u>." And the Lord said, "You've done well, Adam, and now I want you to make love to Eve."*
*And Adam said, "<u>Lord, what's "making love"</u>? "<u>So the Lord again gave Adam directions, and Adam</u> went to Eve, behind the bush. But this time he reappeared in two seconds… and said, "<u>Lord, what's a '<u>headache</u>'?</u>"* (Joke Directory).

The biblical plot covering the population creation turns into a parody due to the comic sense and usage of triple syntactic repetitions based on the principle of gradation that gradually makes the comic outcome closer: *Lord, what's a headache* – is a reference to mundane life, so the joke is based on associations connected to real life facts. Eve is very often wittier than Adam and deserves the author's approval, so her name can obtain extralinguistic positive connotations – clever, witty.

Another type of parody lies in the juxtaposition of opposites, characters from <u>different sources</u> – the Bible, literature, etc. Usage of their names in the explosive jocular block carries out an effect of false expectations setting people off laughing:

(38) **St. Peter** *stood at the Pearly Gates, waiting for the incoming. He saw Jesus walking by and caught his attention. "Jesus, could you mind the gate while I go and do an errand?"*

*"Sure", replied Jesus. "What do I have to do?"*

*"Just find out about the people who arrive. Ask about their background, their family, and their lives. Then decide if they deserve entry into Heaven."*

*"Sounds easy enough. OK."*

*So Jesus waited at the gates while St. Peter went off on his errand. The first person to approach the gates was a wrinkled old man. Jesus summoned him to the examination table and sat across from him. Jesus peered at the old man and asked, "What was it you did for a living?"*

*The old man replied, "I was a carpenter."*

*Jesus remembered his own earthly existence and leaned forward. "Did you have any family?" he asked.*

*"Yes, I had a son, but I lost him."*

*Jesus leaned forward some more. "You lost your son? Can you tell me about him?"*

*"Well, he had <u>holes in his hands and feet</u>."*

*Jesus leaned forward even more and whispered, **"Father?"***

*The old man leaned forward and whispered, **"Pinocchio***?"* (Youngman 1998: 19).

The joke is based on presupposition that suggests the biblical story of the Crucifixion of Christ. However, in this example, an ambiguous understanding of the phrase *"He had holes in his hands and feet"* can be observed. Each of the characters has their own associations as for those "holes" in hands and feet. The word *Father* is no less

ambiguous. It can mean 1) a parent; 2) God, Creator. The effect of failed expectations is fulfilled as a result of the incongruity of the meanings of those phrases.

Many jocular series are united around well-known literary characters. Besides, their characteristics are often hypertrophied. In joke (39) Sherlock Holmes's shrewdness is parodied and Dr. Watson's ignorance is reduced to nonsense. Their names at the beginning of the joke, regardless of the positive characteristic given to them, remind the hearer of jocular series where the characters already meet with a "changed" reputation:

*(39) **Sherlock Holmes**, that master detective, was sitting in his favourite chair smoking his pipe and reading a book when he heard a knock at the door. It was his loyal friend and assistant, **Doctor Watson**.*
*"Ah, good morning, Watson. Don't you find it a bit warm to be wearing your red flannel underwear?"*
*Doctor Watson was astonished by his brilliant stroke of deductive logic.*
*"Holmes", Doctor Watson said, "How on earth did you guess I was wearing my red flannel underwear?"*
*"Elementary, my dear Doctor Watson. You forgot to put your pants on"* (King, Ridout & Swan 1982: 51).

The humor of this joke is built upon the paradoxical contrast between "high" and "low" ways of thinking. Let us compare: *was astonished by this brilliant stroke of deductive logic* and *You forgot to put your pants on*.

A proper name in the text of a joke becomes enriched semantically and presents a signal that evokes different associations in the hearer's mind. Within the context of a joke the name, as a rule, creates another semantic background; its informative value proves to be very important for understanding the idea of a joke. Thus, it is necessary that the

whole humour context should be taken into account when analyzing the proper names usage peculiarities. This is due to their great semantic potential and their ability to reveal the subtext.

## 5. Ethnicity of ethnonyms in producing a comic effect

Anglophone jokes are often aimed at making fun of nationalities and, accordingly, proper names: Scottish or Irish: *Paddy, Murphy, Mick, Seamus, Pat, McGinty, O'Malley, Sean, Clancy, Cohen, Finnegan, McMaken, McQuillan, O'Connell, O'Connor, O'Day, O'Toole*; Spanish: *Jose, Chinese: Bu, Fu, Chu, Sam, Ting*; French: *Jean, Gaston, Henri, Pierre*; Italian: *Filippo, Giusti, Giuseppe, Tony*; German: *Hans,* etc. There is the so-called "set" of nationalities, which are made fun of by English-speaking peoples. There are some jokes that present features of character and nuances of behavior of representatives of certain national minorities, social groups, and different denominations in an unfavourable light. In this regard, it is worth considering the article by Shmeleva and Shmelev on tolerance as a precondition for the functioning of the speech genre of the joke (Шмелева & Шмелев 2005: 288-296). Most ethnic jokes concern Mexicans, Irish, Scots, Poles, Italians, Jews, and Scandinavians. For example:

*(40) My father was **a Pole**.*
*North or South?* (Meier & Knapp 1980: 120).

The word *Pole* is polysemantic: 1) a Polish; 2) a pole. The choice of indirect meaning creates a pun and arouses laughter, and with it – an element of surprise.

Representatives of the above-mentioned nationalities in jokes usually bear stereotyped names, which have become the most typical symbols for a particular nation, and which are used so widely that their specific denotation "disappears". As such proper names belong simultaneously to a great number of representatives of a particular nation, they

are often found within a synonymous line of ethnonyms: *Paddy, Pat* are Irish, *Hans* is German, *Ivan* is Russian, *Ole, Lena* are Norwegians or Swedes, etc. (Ibid). Such expansion of the denotation of a common name, which results in its entering the category of general notions, may be illustrated by the following example:

*(41) During WW II, the Nazis were having some trouble with the Polish, as hard as you may find that to believe. It seems that, on the lines, it never failed that one of the Polish troops would yell out, "Hey **Hans**, you there?" and that one of the Nazi troops (coincidentally named Hans) would stand up with a big smile and yell back, "Ya, I am here!" and be shot down. Bang!*

*Well, as you can imagine, the Nazi Hugh Command found this to be insufferable, and worked to find a way to prove that they, the Aryan army, were superior to these simple Polish farm-folk. The plan they formulated involved using the same tactics that the Polish had used. So, they gathered some of their crack troops, and prepared them to put this method into action.*

*The next day, as dawn broke, the Nazi forces were in high spirits, knowing that their foes were about to receive their comeuppance. As the battlefield grew light, the first Nazi officer selected to have honor (They drew straws the night before, yelled out with all his might, "Hey **Yanosh**, you there?"*

*Silence hung over the scorched earth for several seconds before the reply was heard, "Ya, I am here. That you **Hans**?"*

*"Ya!" said the officer, as he stood up. Bang!* (Lyons 1998a: 30).

This joke is built upon the effect of failed expectations, which is expressed with the help of lingual means: lexical-semantic repetition of the phrases *"Hey…you there? That you…? Bang"*. By entering the semantic line of general notions anthroponyms also gain certain connotations and maintain already formed stereotypes: the Irish are drunkards, the Jews are cunning and shifty, the French are courteous and passionate, etc. For example:

*(42) A cop pulled up two Irish drunks, and asked the first, "What's your name and address?"*
*"**I'm Paddy O'Day**, of no fixed address."*
*The cop turned to the second drunk, and asked the same question.*
*"I'm **Seamus O'Toole**, and I live in the flat above Paddy"* (Lyons 1999: 90).

There is a violation of logical thinking in the joke and a stylistic device of alogism is used – deliberate conceptual non-conformity, meaningless in the other hero's reply.

There is another example:

*(43) **Filkenstein** asked **Goldberg** <u>how his son the lawyer</u> was doing. Goldberg replied, "<u>He's doing fabulous</u> – every young lawyer should do as well as he does. He's so busy at the firm that he can't take on any new cases and they've given him a raise. Very soon they are going to make him a partner." Filkenstein then asked about his daughter, Elizabeth, to which Goldberg replied, "<u>She's a fabulous daughter</u>. She just returned from Israel and won a full scholarship to Columbia Medical School."*
*"Well, "Filkenstein asked, "How's your son Joseph?"*
*Goldberg replied, "Ah, he's still selling schmatas (clothing) in the Bowery. <u>Without him, we'd be starving</u>!"* (Alvin 1998c: 74).

The humour of this joke lies in a paradox: the son and daughter have succeeded in their career only thanks to their brother who sells clothing and helps the whole family. Here repetitions of "false" phrases are used, which helps to easily represent the comic scene incongruent to these phrases.

Any nation has jokes for which the foolishness of other nations serves as an object of ridicule. Although everybody understands that one cannot call one nation cleverer than the other one and that just mental faculties of certain people are to be compared. As is

always the case with jokes, these heroes are generalized too much and bear names typical for representatives of a certain nation. As a result of such auto- and heterosteoretypization, these heroes' names gain such connotations as "foolish", "narrow-minded", and "leap" with it from joke to joke:

*(44) Two Swedes had hired a boat to go fishing on an inland lake, and had an excellent catch.*
Nels – ***"Swan**, did you mark det place where ve catch all dose fish?"*
Swan – *"Ya bat. <u>Aye make mark on side of boat</u>."*
Nels *"Yu lunked! How yu know ve <u>shall gat dis har same boat tomorrow</u>?"* (Lieberman 1965: 193).

The joke is built upon two paralogous conclusions, which demonstrate nonsense, foolishness, and stupidity of both characters. The phonetic means of shibboleth adds humour.

Proper names – ethnonyms – contribute to authentic atmosphere and vividness in the text of the joke. For example, if the names *Nels* and *Swan* were missed in the aforementioned joke, the situation described above would have seemed less realistic. It is worth mentioning that it is word-symbols whose national affiliation can be easily recognized, which are used for this purpose.

Proper names may seem funny for representatives of other national backgrounds, as the deeper the inconsistency with the norms of a certain language, the more obviously the comic is expressed. Propp states, "If every nation has its own social and inner norms that have been elaborated during development of its own culture, *then everything that does not conform to these norms will be comical* (italicized by the authors). This is the reason why foreigners are so often funny when they stand out, in other words when they differ from their hosts because of their oddities. The greater the differences, the

more probable the comic" (Пропп 1976: 45). That explains why foreign names seem to be funny and can become an object of ridicule, especially if a name bears connotative meaning, that is, the principle embodied therein is one of associative identification. Let us compare:

*(45) What was the name of the guy who was half polish and half Chinese?*
**Sum Dum Fuk** (Alvin 1998b: 68);
*(46)* **Fu, Bu** *and* **Chu** *immigrated to the USA from China. They decided to become American citizens, and "Americanise" their names.*
**Bu** *called himself* **"Buck"***.* **Chu** *called himself* **"Chuck"***.* **Fu** *decided to return to China* (Alvin 1998a: 38).

The comic of the examples (45) and (46) is based on the means of occasional homophony – interlingual homophones and antonomasia – charactonymic proper names. Pronunciation of a lexical unit of one language is rendered with the help of the phonetic form of another language: Chinese surnames have become homophonic to English words (*buck* is slang for "dollar", *chuck* is slang for "food", *fuck* is slang for "curse").

Incongruity that provokes laughter occurs when a proper name is identified as a property of a representative of some nationality, whereas an ethnonym standing next to it indicates another nationality:

*(47) A man was walking down the street and noticed a sign reading:*
*"Hans Schmidt's Chinese Laundry."*
*Being of a curious nature, he entered and was greeted by an obviously oriental man who identified himself as* **Hans Schmidt***.*
*"How come you have a name like that?" inquired the stranger.*

*The oriental explained <u>in very broken English</u> that when he landed in America he was standing in the immigration line behind a German. When asked his name, the German replied, "<u>Hans Schmidt</u>."*

*When the official asked the oriental his name, he replied **"SAM TING"*** (Pietsch 1998: 5).

Phonetic play on the proper name resulting from the Chinese's misspelling produces a comic effect. Comic also appears when a proper name "is not identified" as one and is put on a par with a common name, which sounds similar as in the following joke:

*(48) An airplane takes off from the airport. The captain is Jewish and the first officer is Chinese. It's the first time they've flown together and it's obvious by the silence that they don't get along. After thirty minutes, the Jewish Captain speaks: "I don't like Chinese."*

*The First Officer replies, "Ooooh, no like Chinese? Why ees that?"*

*The Captain says, "You bombed Pearl Harbor. That's why I don't like Chinese."*

*The F.O. says, "Nooooo, noooo… Chinese not bomb Pearl Harbah. That Japanese, not Chinese."*

*And the Captain answers, "<u>Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese… it doesn't matter, they're all alike</u>."*

*Another thirty minutes of silence. Finally the F.O. says, "No like Jews."*

*The Captain replies, "Why not? Why don't you like Jews?"*

*F.O. says, "Jews sink Titanic."*

*The Captain tries to correct him, "No, no. The Jews didn't sink the Titanic. It was an **iceberg**."*

*The F.O. replies, "**Iceberg, Goldberg, Rosenberg**, no mattah. All same"* (Brown 1998: 24).

The humorous effect of the joke is created by the attachment of the morpheme *berg* to the common noun 'iceberg' by association with the proper names Goldberg and Rosenberg.

The group "other names" may include the most common names (according to the frequency of their use): *Joe, John, (Little) Johnny, Smith, Bob, Brown, Jim, Jones, Mary, Morris, Sam, George, Jack, Tom, (Little) Billy, Fred, Bill, Johnson, Steve, David, Jimmy, Mike, Jerry, Jill, Pete, Sherry, Tommy, Becky, Eddie, Jackson, Jane, Jeff, Michael, Paul, Robert, Sarah, Susan, Susie, Tim, Alex, Betty,* etc.:

*(49) Fred's girlfriend was looking for a new car and found an ad in the classifieds. It read: Brand new 1995 Mercedes Benz Slate blue, loaded, etc. Sell for $15.000. Fred and his friend were astonished and decided to call the seller and check it out.*
*The woman selling the car was glad to show it to them. To their surprise the car was in perfect condition. Fred asked the woman, "<u>What's the catch</u>? Why are you selling this car for so cheap?"*
*"Well actually," she said, "<u>it's my husband's car, and he recently ran off with his young</u> <u>secretary. I got a telegram from him last week that read: "In Miami… need money…</u> <u>sell car"</u>* (van Munching 1997: 112).

The humorous effect of this situation is based on the woman's "logic": the sooner she sells the car, the less money there will be left for her husband to spend on his lover. The way the woman is acting reveals deliberate alogism of her behavior (i.e. revenge for the offense) and demonstrates the playful nature of her deeds. There could be another name in place of Fred used in this joke. The use of it makes the situation more true to life, or rather stereotyped. The name is widespread, thus the principle of generalization works here. Such names are often introduced into the joke to make it more authentic.

## 6. Pragmalinguistic potential of anthroponyms

Humorous proper names are a typical feature of texts of the Anglophone joke. These are often proper names that often constitute a specific inventory, which fills the gaps that appear in the denotation of ambiguous situations. The crucial role played by proper names in the text of a joke is especially of great importance, because the text, in itself, is of a small size, and it is not to fulfill the target of further explication of heroes as, for example, in large works of fiction.

Short names, such as *Woody, Bobby, Billy, Goldie* are most frequently used in the Anglophone joke; they are often marked with diminutive-hypocoristic suffixes, which render a special note of ease. As Superanskaya claims, "a speaking situation contains a speaker's attitude towards an object" (Суперанская 1973: 233]. Sometimes the speaker's or hearer's evaluation of a given object "may not have a formal expression. But it may be rendered with the help of special word-formative means. It is often true for proper names" (Ibid). All the language means of the joke are aimed at creating a comic communicative situation, in which polysemy of proper names, their implication may play one of the crucial roles.

Kukharenko considers that "relative independence of properties of an object from the position and peculiarities of the one who denotes provides successful fulfillment of the denotative and pragmatic functions by a proper name in a communicative act" (Кухаренко 2004: 107).

Humorous proper names in a text of the joke often have double meaning, implication, and subtext (e.g., *Pop, Doc, Dick, Bunny, Ace, Penny*). It concerns surnames as well: *P. Standing, Seymour Hare*. They become even more humorous when a proper name with implication completes the content of the text of a joke (for example, the title *"The Hawaiian Prostitute"* allegedly belongs to the fictitious author *Wanna Layohora* (it sounds by analogy with the word *whore*, that is, *"Want a whore"*).

According to the definition given by Kukharenko, "the subtext (implication) is a way of organizing a text that results in dramatic rise and intensification, as well as in change in semantic, emotional and psychological content of a message without increasing volume of the latter" (Кухаренко 1988: 181), which is particularly true for the text of a joke. Understanding the created subtext of the situation of a joke depends on the receiver, as he is the one to be aware of all its manifestations. In this case, the so-called "parallelism of the development of two layers of text" (Ibid: 185), external text level and internal humorous one, takes place. Such implication in the joke is created by a proper name:

*(50) You know **Fatty Johnson**, the butcher. What do you suppose he weighs? – I don't know. What does he weigh? – Meat* (Pocheptsov 1982: 144).

The name Fatty is a charactonym: fat, a fat man. This name is associated with the word 'butcher'. That is why the next question presupposes his weight and not what he weighs. Let us compare the play on the meanings of the verb *to weigh* – to scale something and to weigh oneself. Moreover, in a joke built upon wordplay a humorous tone is intensified with the help of a proper name. At the same time, a characteristic of the hero's image (*Fatty*) is given, which is confirmed by his name.

Humorous proper names may be accompanied by a hero's surname, which contains a humorous note, because there is a funny sound combination and incompatible, incongruent, and ridiculous associations: *Motley Throng* (which is translated as "a miscellaneous collection of people"), *Faith Popcorn* ('faith' and 'popcorn'), *Hortense Powdermaker* (Hortense, which produces powder), *Daphne Kugelmass* (a flower bush "Kugelmass") (Helitzer 1992: 138).

*Geographical names (toponyms)* also serve as an object of ridicule. It is especially the case for small areas, local restaurants, streets, hotels, restaurants, etc. In a joke, they

are often played with and are changed into either lexical equivalents or phonetic combinations of sounds mispronounced by the character as if by mistake:

*(51) Everybody needs someone to ridicule so they'll feel superior, and everybody <u>feel superior to West</u> **Virginians** (Helitzer 1992: 141).*

The comic effect is built upon the play on the word *virginians*, which is homonymous to the word *virgin* (there is a hint of *West Virginians* still being spinsters).

In the following joke a crucial role is played by shibboleth – a phonetic means of creating incongruity and, accordingly, a comic effect (that is, mispronunciation or dialect): let us compare the occasional homophone *ver nize* and *very nice*, which is used here for naming the toponym:

*(52) You know how **Van Nuys** got its name? Well, one day my little <u>old Jewish</u> <u>mother</u> was visiting me, and I took her to the top of the Hollywood Hills and had her view the valley below just at sunset. "Well, mama, what would you call that?" And she said "**Ver nize**"* (Helitzer 1992: 141).

The comic of a proper name may be created by the very comic situation in a joke, the situation of text origination:

*(53) Married Life*
**Mr. Wrangle***: "Why does a woman say she'd been shopping when she hasn't bought a thing?"*
**Mrs. Wrangle***: "Why does a man say he's been fishing when he hasn't caught anything?"* (Муратов 1997: 65).

The source of comic effect is the use of parallel interrogative questions, which are of a rhetoric character, as well as the etymology of the proper name Wrangle – disputer, quarreler. The proper name helps determine the situation as a comic one, which intensifies the comic effect. Knowing the etymology of the proper name, the hearer "becomes charged" with additional comic potential, which "discharges" greatly in the explosive part:

*(54) Joe **Hopplins** was bragging about his deeds of valour to his friends at home. "Telling about my war experience I shall, of course, mention that operation <u>when some other doughboys and me made five enemy tanks run</u>".*
*'How did you manage that brave deed, Joe?"*
*"Oh, it was very simple. **We ran and they ran after us"** (Pocheptsov 1982: 139).*

Here we may observe the violation of presupposition: usually it is tanks that follow the soldiers during a pursuit, not the opposite. By associating the etymology of the proper name *Hopplins* (from *to hopple*) with the explosive of the joke, the hearer obtains the highest semantic humorous potential, having preliminarily got ready for an unexpected denouement.

Thus, a proper name plays a crucial role in the joke, making the transition from a simple, literal, phonetic meaning to a category of a semantically significant one. Let us also compare:

*(55) **Mr. Babbitt**: (looking at a well-known picture): "**Van Dyke, by Himself**. What a silly thing to put there; anyone could see that there is no one with him" (Pocheptsov 1982: 173).*

The word combination *by Himself* has a double meaning: 1) alone and 2) painted by someone, which is the main reason for the comic effect. The name *Babbitt* comes

etymologically from the noun *babbitry*, and it is the proper name, which produces an expected, additional comic effect of the situation of the joke and adequate understanding of it.

The use of a particular proper name in a joke is presupposed by the speaker's attitude towards the outside world, his way of conducting himself in a certain life situation; it stresses his readiness or, on the contrary, reluctance to undertake some action:

(56): **Willy**: *Did you like the second act of the play?*
**Nilly**: *I didn't see it.* <u>*The program said, "Second act. Two Years Later", and I couldn't*</u> <u>*wait*</u> (Pocheptsov 1982: 102).

This example demonstrates the literal interpretation of the sentence from the programme: *Two Years Later*. The word combination *willy-nilly* (willing or not) is associated with the proper names of this joke. *Nilly* did not see the second act of the performance and the subtext of the proper name (*nil*) gives such an idea to the hearer. But the question asked by Willy suggests that he watched the play till the end, because the etymology of the word *willy* – from *will* or *willing* – the one who wants to do something. Besides, the phonetic expression of the name, an exposed sound pattern, which may subconsciously evoke evaluative associations, creates comic effect. Anglophone jokes are characterized by proper names that rhyme, which is especially expressive for the dialogic form of a joke: *Stan – Fran; Randy- Sandy; Mel – Belle; Nickie – Dickie,* etc.

The plural form of a proper name may also serve as one of the means of creating an associative comic situation in the joke:

(57) *A lady of some beauty whose surname was* **Birch** *was seated at dinner next to a man with a strong sense of humour. After a few polite exchanges the lady enquired:*

*"Are you acquainted with any of the **Birches**?" "Yes, indeed", he replied, "with several of them at school and I can't say I liked them at all!" "And why was that?" she asked curtly. "Well, you know," he said, "they cut me; but I must say I never felt more inclined to kiss the rod than I do now!" And her good humour was restored* (Pocheptsov 1982: 226).

The plural form of the proper name *Birch* – birch rods, makes it a general notion, which is a bright stylistic device of the joke to help properly convey the whole comic of the situation. Thus, both the initial form and the plural form of the proper name serve the purpose of the whole text of the joke – to provide a maximally concise and, at the same time, clear demonstration of the comic situation.

The principle of associative deducibility underlies the phenomenon of metaphorization. In the joke, metaphors are used to describe heroes, natural phenomena, as well as to denominate abstract notions. Metaphorical nominations that function as proper names are of particular interest. In this case, associative deducibility is achieved through the functioning of similar homonyms in the motivational context:

*(58) A celebrated comedian arranged with his greengrocer, one **Berry** to pay him quarterly; but the greengrocer sent in his account long before the quarter was due. The comedian called upon the greengrocer, and, laboring under the impression that his credit was doubted, said: "I say, here's **a mull, Berry**; you have sent in your bill, Berry; before it is **due, Berry**. Your father, the **elder, Berry**, would not have been such a **goose, Berry**; but you need not look **black, Berry**; for I don't care **a straw, Berry**; and I shan't pay you till Christmas, **Berry"** (Pocheptsov 1982: 205).*

The proper name Berry (which means "soft fruit", is compared with other soft fruits: mulberry, gooseberry, blackberry, strawberry) creates the ironically evaluative subtext due to the wordplay (i.e. with the help of homophony). It is these nouns that contain a

metaphorical description and the hero's image characteristics, which is criticized in a playful manner.

In the text of the joke, the description of a character, as a rule, is given in the introduction. This description is usually evaluative and is often negative:

*(59) – **Scoundrel, rascal, jabber**!*
*- Who's this?*
*- This is **avaricious Potsman**!*
*- What did he do?*
*- He called my daughter a whore.*
*- <u>If I had a tommy-gun, I'd hit him in the face with my foot</u>!* (Alvin 1999a: 49).

The hero's further negative description evolves in the complication, where his additional feature (*avaricious*) and his name, which is etymologically charged with negative connotation, are explicated. The hero's last phrase produces the effect of failed expectations – incongruity is created due to the device of the deliberate alogism – apophasis, which lies in the use of pragmatically different things: *tommy-gun* and *hit in the face with my foot*, that is, in contradiction to one's own previous statement.

National and social affiliation is explicated in the joke. Let us compare: ***Mrs. Featherstonehaugh, Lord** Perking* – social status, ***Rabinovich, Potsman*** – national affiliation, etc. Many proper names have double connotations – it provides the opportunity for double semantic attribution of persons with a situation.

The proper name contributes to creating an authentic atmosphere in the text of a joke. Thus, in the following joke, authentic British atmosphere is created with the help of the titles *lord* and *lady*. The syntactic and lexical contrasting repetitions add humour to the situation:

*(60) London. An English lord is having breakfast with his wife.*

*- **Lord Cardigan**, it is rumoured in the society…*

*- <u>These are the problems of the society.</u>*

*- Yes, but it is rumoured that **Lady Jane** has a lover.*

*- <u>These are Lady Jane's problems.</u>*

*- Yes, but it is rumoured that Lady Jane's husband swore to kill the lover.*

*- <u>These are her husband's problems.</u>*

*- Yes, but it is rumoured that you are the lover…*

*- <u>These are my problems.</u>*

*- And what about me?*

*- <u>And these are your problems</u>* (Rees 1971: 201).

In Anglophone jokes proper names that combine incongruent surnames of famous people, which are inconsistent with usual situations are used:

*(61) Golberg was awakened in the middle of the night by a phone call. The voice on the other end asked, "Is this the home of **Sir Thomas Winston Nelson Cromwell**?" – "WOR!!" gasped Golberg. "Have you got the wrong number?"* (Pocheptsov 1982: 158).

The comic of the situation is achieved through the use of amplification – lexical expansion of names. Proper names do not add essential information, but create their incongruity and the humour of the situation by listing the names of the historical personalities Thomas Jefferson, Winston Churchill, Admiral Nelson, and Oliver Cromwell who lived in different periods, as well as incompatible situations, namely, the pronunciation of a deliberately long name (on the phone) at night.

In the following joke, the amplified proper name not only adds humour but also characterizes the politician as a narrow-minded and shallow person, who tolerates no objections (let us compare: *hammer*, *jaw*). He doesn't write, but dictates his name:

*(62) The politician was being questioned about his appointment to the educational board. "What is your full name?" asked the committee chairman.* **"Cadwallader Ingraham J. Hammerjaw***." – "Can you sign your name?" –* <u>"How is that?</u>*" – 'I asked if you could write your name." – "Sir,* <u>I never write my name. I dictate it</u>*"* (Pocheptsov 1982: 163).

The character's contrasting the verbs *to write* and *to dictate* demonstrates his narrow-mindedness and illiteracy, which is opposed to arrogance (his name contains the word *cad*, which means a vulgar, ill-mannered person).

An amplified proper name may be replaced by a short colloquial variant in the explosive as, for example, in this joke:

*(63) Voice (over telephone): "Hello. Hello. This is* **Judge Babington Peterson McFeatherson the Third***. Will you, please, tell my son,* **Cravenwood Rutherford McFeatherson the Fourth** *that I would speak to him." – Frosh. –* <u>"Hey,</u> **Mac,** <u>your</u> **old man** <u>wants to speak to you</u>*"* (Pocheptsov 1982: 117).

Humour lies in the use of one of the means of associative provocation at the lexico-semantic level, i.e. stylistic contrast – contrasting comparison of scientific and colloquial styles, which violates the presupposition of the scientific style of speech. Therefore, the scientific style (the introductive part stands in stark contrast to the contents of the explosive part) produces a comic effect. The funny side consists in the incongruity of the long name with its colloquial variant. Nevertheless, most names in jokes are simple proper names, which are widespread in society and sound familiar to everyone: *Mr. Brown, Nancy, Mary, Johnson, Bobby,* etc. These and other names are found within a synonymous line of general notions: *John* and *Bill* are Englishmen, *Michelle* is French, *Hans* is German. They may have certain additional connotations in a joke: Englishmen are pretentious, Scots are greedy, Jews are cunning, etc.

Thus, proper names function as a "decoder" of a comic situation; they determine connotations, which, as is known, have a double meaning, and intensify a humorous effect:

*(64) A compere is announcing:*
*"A quartette named after "Friendship of People" is appearing. The performers: Pylypenko – Ukraine, Airapetyan – Armenia, Usrepov – Uzbekistan*, **Rabinovich – violin"** (Alvin 1998b: 19).

The contrastive binary opposition – the proper name-country and the proper name-musical instrument – is a punning alogism, antithesis, the essence of which lies in incongruity of comparison of the proper name with the instrument by association. There is also presupposition in this joke: Jews are to be found all over the world, and their professions tend to be non-manual or related with the world of art.

As a rule, proper names used in the joke are stereotyped, they invariably "leap" from joke to joke: *Rabinovich, Pylypenko*, etc. In order to change a proper name into a general notion and vice versa one of the secondary connotations should be intensified to such an extent, so as to join some conceptual list. There can be found well-known proper names in the joke that decode context due to the subtext information, which they contain:

*(65) They are saying to a Jew:*
*"What kind of man you are! You have nothing positive!"*
*"Nothing positive? And what about* **Wasserman's** *reaction?"* (Christing 1996: 72).

It is obvious to everyone that a positive Wassermann reaction or "positive RW" is an indicator of venereal disease. Therefore, the only positive thing the character of the

joke has is the RW. Thus, the paradox is built upon the absence of opposition – he has everything negative, except the RW (which is also extremely negative).

Humorous pseudo-definitions, which are associatively opposed to well-known proper names, are quite widespread in Anglophone cultures. In such cases, the hearer's background plays a crucial role:

*(66) The **Voltmeter** is called after **Voltaire** who invented electricity. **Colombine** is **Columbus'** wife* (Helitzer 1992: 36).

It should be mentioned that an associative occasional creation of comic pseudo-definitions is built upon the wordplay *(Voltmeter – Voltaire; Colombine – Columbus)*.

Humorous pseudo-definitions are also used when a proper name constitutes an associative occasional homonym (often well-known proper names). This homonym splits into components, creating a new humorous surname with a double meaning:
*(67) UN translator: **Polly Glott**; Fashion designer: **Natalie Attired**; Roof designer: **Eaves St. Laurent**; Bone specialist: **Arthur Itis**; Wine expert: **Sherry D. Cantor*** (Helitzer 1992: 71).

In these examples, the proper names are charactonyms (the device of antonomasia): thus, *Polly Glott* is a polyglot translator; *Natalie Attired* is a well-dressed designer; *Eaves St. Laurent* is a roof designer, etc. Such pseudo-definitions become comic as a result of an occasional wordplay, created by association with a general notion.

Proper names are also used as puns for famous names:

*(68) Before she came **Madonna**, she was a **premadonna*** (Lyons 1999: 83);

*(69) A microcomputer that draws geometric patterns on the screen is called a **"Micro-Angle-O"*** (Helitzer 1992: 83).

In this case, the main condition is that the proper name should be easily recognized:

*(70) The Italian-American farmer who erected a tombstone for his beloved wife **Nellie** that read: **"Here Liza Minelli"*** (Helitzer 1992: 83).

It means *"Here lies my Nelly"* – a punning homophonic wordplay, which produces a comic effect.

A proper name may become crucial in the text of a joke in the denouement of a humorous situation when compared to the general notion by phonetic analogy:

*(71) "In a Sunday school class of small boys the pastor asked one little boy: "Who was the first man?" He promptly answered: **"Adam"**. "Who was the first woman?" The little boy thought very hard and finally answered: **"Madam"*** (Sudzilovskij 1984: 76). The comic lies in wittiness and associative contrast, related to the automaticity of the reply expressed by the rhyme of the phrases *(Adam – Madam)*.

Some characters of Anglophone jokes are so popular that they also become the centre of humorous series, and their names obtain relevant associations. One such character is Little Johnny – a naïve child, who puzzles adults by his straight speaking, showing knowledge not characteristic of his age and being ingenuous at the same time:

*(72) One day, **Johnny** went to school. And during class, they were learning the ABCs. So, the teacher said "This is the letter A. Does anyone know anything that begins with the letter A?"*
*"I do, I do," Johnny replied, "<u>Asshole</u>!"*
*"Johnny! NO! Don't ever say that in class! That's a bad word! Now, does anyone know of a word that begins with B?"*

*...*

*Eventually she got up to the letter R.*

*"Does anyone know of a word that starts with the letter R?"*

*"I do, I do!" The teacher thinks for a second and says, "OK Johnny, go ahead."*

*"<u>RAT</u>!"*

*"Very good, Johnn!"*

*"<u>A big ol' stinky rat this bag</u>!"* (Rissinger & Yates 1996: 22)

In the joke, the device of failed expectations is intensified by adjectives with negative connotations. Let us also compare:

*(73) **Johnny** got separated from his father at Disney World and soon found himself in the hands of a security guard.*

*"What's your father like?" asked the guard.*

*"**Fast cars and football**," came the boy's reply* (Rissinger & Yates 1996: 22).

Humour is created with the help of a contrastive associative image, which is opposite to a traditional description, but is based on the hero's hobbies. Thanks to such an established reputation, the name *Johnny* gains the additional connotation of "unbearable and spoiled", which is so strong that it can be used as a general notion. Jokes about *Little Johnny* have a permanent referent – a teenage boy.

Other examples of common names that belong to English comic characters with certain reputation include the names Brown and Johnson. They are mainly farmers – hillbillies, who are obviously not the wittiest people. In the hearer's memory, their names are associated with humorous series about these narrow-minded heroes of jokes.

*(74) "When are you going to fix that front fence?" the farmer's wife asked Farmer Brown.*

*Farmer Brown answered, "Next week when our son comes home from college."*

*"But what does our son know about fixing a fence?" the farmer's wife asked.*

*"He ought to know a lot. He wrote me that **he was taking fencing lessons"** (Rissinger & Yates 1996: 30).*

A humorous effect appears owing to the double meaning of the lexeme *fence* (let us compare: to fix a fence and fencing lessons). Another example:

*(75) One day a traveling salesman stopped by the old **Johnson** farm in Heartland, Kansas. The man knocked, and Johnson's wife, Fannie, came to the door.*

*"Is your husband home, Ma'am?" the salesman asked.*

*Fannie replied, "Sure is. He's over <u>to the cow barn</u>."*

*"Well, I've got something to show him, Ma'am. Will I have any difficulty finding him?" asked the salesman.*

*The farmer's wife replied, "Nope. You shouldn't have any difficulties. **He's the one with the beard and moustache"** (Rissinger & Yates 1996: 75).*

Contextual opposition or, more specifically, comparison of cows and the man *with the beard and moustache*, creates a visual comic image due to the wife's "mistaken" phrase.

The speaker's attitude is usually expressed in the use of word-building means for a proper name. For example, in terms of jokes about children, the author's positive attitude towards children is expressed by his using their names with diminutive suffixes:

*(76) "Hello, may I speak to **Jimmy**?"*

*"I'm sorry, Jimmy's only a baby. He hasn't learned to talk yet. "That's okay. I'll wait"* (Rissinger & Yates 1996: 19).

The comic element lies in the interpretation of the phrase "I'll wait", which is ambiguous: to hold on or to wait before the child grows up. Let us also compare:

*(77) Teacher: "What have the expeditions to the North Pole accomplished?"*
***Jimmy****: "Nothing except to make the geography lessons harder"* (Rissinger & Yates 1996: 28).

Children's statements are often illogical, which may become the object of the funny side of the situation. Here the teacher's question presupposed the answer that the expeditions have discovered new lands, but not the problems with conduct of geography lessons.

The use of diminutive forms of the name with respect to adults suggests close, friendly, or family relations between characters. They help the speaker make the situation more open and informal.

Anthroponyms have a large comic potential, which can be realized with the help of numerous means, such as, for example, a pun, when a proper name is homonymous to a general notion (for example, *Darling* – a proper name and darling – *dear*), as in the following joke:

*(78) The manager of a large office noticed a new man one day and told him to come into his office. "What is your name?" was the first thing the manager asked the new guy.*
*"****John****," the new guy replied.*
*The manager scowled, "Look, I don't know what kind of a namby-pamby place you worked at before, but I don't call anyone by their first name. It breeds familiarity and that leads a breakdown in authority. I refer to my employees by their last name only –*

***Smith, Jones, Baker*** *– that's all. I am to be referred to only as **Mr. Robertson**. Now that we got that straight, what is your last name?"*

*The new guy sighed and said, "**Darling**. My name is **John Darling**."*

*"Okay, John, the next thing I want to tell you is…"* (Rissinger & Yates 1996: 89).

The comic element is intensified if an occasional homonymous play on anthroponyms is achieved through the use of a graphon, due to which the name gains a phonetic connotation:

*(79) A woman three months pregnant falls into a deep coma. Six months later, she awakes and asks the nearest doctor about the fate of her baby.*

*"You had twins, a boy and a girl, and they are both fine," says the doctor. "Luckily, your brother named them for you."*

*"Oh shit, not my brother! He's an idiot! What did he call the girl?"*

*"**Denise**," the doctor replies.*

*Thinking that isn't so bad, she asks, "And what did he call the boy?"*

*The doctor answers, "**Denephew**"* (Alvin 1998c: 59-60).

Humour of this joke lies in the use of shibboleth – a deliberate phonetic play on the dialectal pronunciation of sounds and their graphical explication – assimilative distortion (*denise – the niece*, *a denephew – the nephew*).

It is worth mentioning antonomastic proper names, or charactonyms, a distinctive feature of which is their semantic content, versatility, overlaying of different content lines in one proper name aimed at provoking the hearer's simultaneous image of the various sides of an individual, creating the image with a certain speaker's attitude in the name. Translators rarely invoke the principle of etymological correspondence and do not decode a meaningful name. That is why information in an antonomastic name, which is presented implicitly, disappears. Let us compare:

*(80) Jim **Shiverly** had not been in his hometown for several years. The first person to meet on his arrival was Bill **Tinkerson**. They got to talking.*

*- Do you remember Sally Jane **Venderly**? – asked Bill.*

*- The one who is as long as a beanpole, clumsy, red-headed, with a freckled nose?*

*- Yes, it's she.*

*- Sure, I remember her. Does anyone forget her? You can never fail to recognize her – she has a mouth like a creel. Why do you ask?*

*- For no special reason. I've married her* (Тупайло 1991: 30).

These names, translated with the help of transliteration, may be viewed as charactonyms only by an aware hearer, who knows that the name Shiverly comes from the English *to shiver*, and the name Tinkerson – from *to tinker*; the name Venderly comes from the verb *to vend*. Unfortunately, the translator missed the opportunity to enrich the joke with convincing "nominal" information about the characters who bear these and no other non-random names: Jim Shiverly shivered when he learned about his friend Bill having got married in haste; the line of Sally Jane Venderly, *who has managed to find a place for herself* by the side of a good-for-nothing husband, is not developed enough.

Antonomasia performs a characterological function, as well as having an emotional influence by which it claims the hearer's attention and provokes an adequate response to the joke. The value of antonomasia in the joke consists in providing a short, laconical, and maximally full characteristics of the hero, as well as in completing and intensifying the characteristics, which are already ascribed to him.

During the actualization of the inner form of a proper name, antonomasia directly or indirectly describes the hero of a joke by means of etymology, which is easily discerned. At the same time, etymology is "discerned" when the name falls within a certain context. The study has shown that context, which elaborates the proper name

and activates its inner form should be taken into account in virtually all cases. A proper name is aimed at realizing its potential in the text of a joke where every word is intended to convey expression.

In the following joke, the character's name – Stumpy Grinder – is a charactonym: stumpy, grinder (the proper name may also be explained by the term stump grinder). The proper name is fully in line with the character's behavior, who turned out to be soulless, as a stump or a machine, and greedy, and who "grained" his wife in order to save ten dollars:

*(81) **Stumpy Grinder** and his wife Martha were from Portland, Maine. Every year they went to the Portland Fair, and every year Stumpy said "Ya know Martha, I'd like to get a ride in that aihplane."*

*And every year Martha would say, "I know Stumpy, but that aihplane ride costs ten dollahs… and ten dollahs is ten dollahs."*
*So Stumpy says "By Jeebers Martha, I'm 71 yahs old. If I don't go this time I may nevah go."*
*Martha replies "Stumpy, that aihplane is ten dollahs… and ten dollahs is ten dollahs."*
*So the pilot overhears them and says "Folks, I'll make you a deal, I'll take you both up for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say ONE word, I won't charge you, but just one word and it's ten dollars."*
*They agree and up they go… The pilot does all kinds of twists and turns, rolls and dives, but not a word is heard. He does it one more time; still nothing… so he lands.*
*He turns to Stumpy as they come to a top and says, "By golly, I did everything I could think of to get you to holler out, but you didn't."*
*And Stumpy replies, "Well, I was gonna say something when Martha fell out… but ten dollahs is ten dollahs!"* (Brown 1998: 44).

Repetition of the phrase "*But ten dollars is ten dollars*" creates a comic situation within the context of this joke, the specific humour of which is expressed in the explosive part by a greedy person.

Antonomastic proper names also create comic situations due to specific presuppositions:

*(82) Mrs. **Gray** – "I like to have a man about, don't you?" – Mrs. **Green** – "Provided I know what he is about"* (Pocheptsov 1982: 209).
Mrs. Green hints that Mrs. Gray's beloved man will be as gray as she is. This role is played by the proper names in the text of the joke.

It is impossible to ignore jokes where the heading and the explosive part are related to a proper name, but are incongruent, which provokes the creation of a comic situation:

*(83) **A Difficult Name***
*How do you spell your name?*
*A-l-e-d-a-s-n-a-d-i-e-d-o-e-s-c-h-e-d.*
*How do you pronounce it?*
***Joe*** (Meier & Knapp 1980: 113).

The mechanism of humour is built upon presupposition: a long name is to be pronounced correspondingly.

Frolova states that "functioning of a precedent and non-precedent anthroponym in the joke is built upon pragmatic presuppositions, which is expressed in *absence* (italicised by the authors) of taxonomic characteristics in the precedent name, as such a name should be familiar both to the speaker and to the hearer" (Фролова 2007: 249).

The author considers that if "the receiver does not know what stands behind a precedent anthroponym, such a proper name cannot be introduced to a joke by the speaker" (Ibid: 250). Instead, taxonomic characteristics of a precedent name is common practice for Anglophone jokes. A well-known proper name may often require identification of an individual to whom it belongs: Let us compare *Gibbon*, **the historian**, *Herr Remarque*, **the author of "All Quiet on the Western Front"**, *Paderevski*, **the famous pianist** (Gachechiladze & Passek 2004: 95, 97, 102), etc.:

*(84)* ***Whistler, the famous artist,*** *once invited Mark Twain to visit his studio to see a new painting he was just finishing. The humorist examined the canvas for some time in silence, then said, "I'd do sway with that cloud if I were you," and extended his hand carelessly toward one corner of the picture as though about to smudge out a cloud effect. Whistler cried out nervously: "God, sir, be careful! Don't you see the* <u>paint is still wet</u>*!"*

*"Oh, that doesn't matter," said Mark. "*<u>I've got my gloves on</u>*"* (Gachechiladze & Passek 2004: 114).


Misunderstanding in the final part of the joke is caused by means of the device of failed expectations: Mark Twain interpreted the artist's remark in an opposite way.

Associative connotations of a proper name that belong to real referents with fictional titles of movies or books produce specifically great humorous effects on the receiver:

*(85)* ***Elizabeth Taylor*** *in "*<u>Once is Not Enough</u>*"* (Helitzer 1992: 83)


The subtext, which the title of this book contains, gives some neat characteristics of the comic character to the real referent.

Associative links between the surnames of two celebrities are frequently found in Anglophone jokes, as a result of which a "new" occasional proper name becomes a comic element:

*(86) If **Isadora Duncan** had married **Robert Denat**, would their child be a **Dunkin' Donut*** (Helitzer 1992: 85).

Homonymous play on the proper name whose components are paronomasia (*Duncan – Dunkin'*; *Denat – Donut*), that is, a similar, but not identical phonetic form together with playful compounding, creates a new proper name based on antonomasia. The new proper name is comic; it is the one that says: "A dunked donut".

The analysis has shown that anthroponyms are most frequently used to create within Anglophone jokes specific playful, comic, onomastic space, which includes various categories of proper names.

## 7. Conclusion

To sum up, having focused the research on the area of functional-communicative text stylistics, we have submitted results of anthroponymic properties in the modern Anglophone joke. The performed analysis testifies to the fact that the choice of the jocular text as a target for investigation is conditioned by its being unique material for decoding and interpreting comic information, which is actualized by the anthroponym as a means of comic effect creation underlying the process of deviation from standard norms. Therefore, as it is stated in the article, humour and the joke have a strictly anthropocentric character.

The integrated character of the research has revealed the speaker's intentions as to the joking mode of communication where elements of cognitive modelling have been applied while determining the cognitive mechanism of incongruity. The results of the study of anthroponyms in the text of an Anglophone joke have proven their specificity and functions, among which we singled out the following: communicative function of comic image and / or comic situation creation, emotional-expressive function, deictic function, culturological function. Specific comic functions of anthroponyms trace

orientative, highlighting, phatic, allusive functions whose objectives lie with claiming the hearer's attention to the comic action in an attempt to intrigue the addressee, expressing the speaker's attitude; enhancing a comic effect actualizing the meaning that expresses a hero's personality and characteristics.

We also distinguished the major comic means for comic effect creation: play on homonymous meanings of proper names, usage of proper names that rhyme, usage in line of proper names that do not correlate, antonomasia, cacophonous mix of proper names in context.

In Anglophone jokes the major part of names as nuclei of jocular cycles is represented by politicians' names, names of contemporary figures, historic names, etc., which is explained by the fact that the subject of a joke is chosen by people according to what they believe to be topical and that is a straightforward element of social practice. These heroes have a certain reputation and their names have certain connotations. Their names are symbolic in a way, which leads to embarrassing situations setting people off laughing. In such cases the effect of failed expectations is used.

The features of characters and the nuances of behavior of representatives of certain nationalities are also investigated in anthroponyms. In this regard we concluded that ethnonyms in jokes bear stereotyped names. As a result of such auto-and heterostereotypization, these heroes' names gain such connotations as "foolish", "narrow-minded", and "leap" with it from joke to joke.

Thus, anthroponyms serve to explore the most paradoxical humorous situations. A humorous piece of work deliberately exaggerates 'colours' by applying charactonyms, deviating from rules, and creating incongruity of form and content. Names are caricatured in humorous works.

Further research in this area considering cognitive modelling, intent-analysis, methods of interpretation and text analysis will specify and confirm intertextual links between Anglophone jokes in the material of anthroponyms. Together with the text of a joke, intertextual anthroponyms will specify a comic effect, which will follow a hero through the whole text.

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**Résumé in English**

The aim of our research is to reveal and describe functions, pragmalinguistic potential and means of the comic anthroponym's creation in the modern Anglophone joke, based on the process of deviation from standard norms. Our study is focused on the postulates of functional-communicative methodology. Anthroponyms contribute to the vertical coherence of the text of the joke, being its emphatic lexical components: they establish the base for a comic action in the joke acting as text-creating factors. In the text of jokes proper names can carry out the following comic functions: communicative, a function of comic image and comic situation creation, a culturological function, and a deictic function. There are also merely specific functions of a proper name traced in the joke: an orientative function, a highlighting function, a phatic function, and an allusive function. We have distinguished basic means for comic effect creation: play on homonymous meanings of proper names, usage of proper names, which are rhymed, antonomasia, sound repetition within nicknames, cacophonous phonetic expression, parody, etc. In Anglophone jokes names of historic and contemporary figures, as well as biblical, literary, and TV characters can be represented as nuclei of jocular cycles. We highlight ethnicity of ethnonyms and pragmalinguistic potential of anthroponyms. Our analysis has shown that anthroponyms are used to create a special playful, comic onomastic space, which includes various kinds of onyms in the Anglophone joke. The most paradoxical funny situations are emphasized in the joke with the help of anthroponyms. Humorous names and nicknames "speak" exaggerating certain qualities of the objects, thus deviating from norms and creating incongruity of the form and contents.

**Key words:** anglophone joke, anthropocentric paradigm, anthroponym, comic effect creation, comic function, deviation from the norm, incongruity, functional-communicative methodology, linguocreativity.

**Résumé in German**

Das Ziel dieser Forschungsarbeit ist es, die Funktionen, das sprachpragmatische Potenzial und die Mittel der komischen Entwicklung des Anthroponyms aufzuzeigen, die im Prozess der Abweichungen vom Standard begründet liegen. Die Arbeit fokussiert auf die Grundvoraussetzungen der funktionell-kommunikativen Methodologie. Anthroponyme tragen als seine ausdrücklichen lexikalischen Komponenten zur vertikalen Kohärenz des Witzetextes bei. Sie bilden die Basis für eine komische Handlung im Witz und sie sind textschaffende Faktoren. Im Text des Witzes können Eigennamen folgende komische Funktionen erfüllen: eine kommunikative Funktion, eine Funktion des komischen Bildes und der komischen Situationsbildung; eine kulturologische Funktion; eine deiktische Funktion durchführen. Es gibt auch rein spezifische Funktionen eines Eigennamens, die im Witz verfolgbar sind: eine Orientierungsfunktion, eine Hervorhebungsfunktion, eine phatische Funktion, eine allusive Funktion. Wesentliche komische Mittel für die komische Effektbildung sind zu unterscheiden: das Spiel mit homonymen Bedeutungen von Eigennamen, die Verwendung von Eigennamen, die sich reimen können, die Antonomasie, die Lautwiederholung von Spitznamen, der kakophonisch phonetische Ausdruck, Parodie usw. In anglophonen Witzen werden die Namen der historischen, zeitgenössischen sowie biblischen, literarischen und TV-Figuren als Kernstücke der spöttischen Zyklen dargestellt. Die Ethnizität der Ethnonymen und sprachpragmatisches Potenzial der Anthroponymen werden hervorgehoben. Die durchgeführte Analyse hat gezeigt, dass Anthroponyme im anglophonen Witz für die Schaffung des besonderen, spielerischen, komischen und namenkundlichen Raums, der verschiedene Arten von Onymen beinhaltet, verwendet werden. Die höchst paradoxen lustigen Situationen im Witz werden so mit Hilfe der Anthroponymen hervorgehoben. Ein humoristisches Werk übertreibt absichtlich mit Namen und Spitznamen, die "sprechen", indem sie von den Normen abweichen und Inkongruenz der Form und des Inhalts schaffen.

**Stichwörter:** Anglophoner Witz, anthropozentrisches Paradigma, Anthroponym, eine komische Entwicklung, eine komische Funktion, von den Normen abweichen, Inkongruenz, funktionell-kommunikative Methodik, Linguokreativität.


**Résumé in French**

L'objectif de l'étude est d'identifier et de décrire les fonctions, le potentiel pragmalinguistique et les moyens de création comique de l'anthroponyme dans la blague moderne anglophone, résultant d'un écart par rapport aux normes généralement acceptées. Le travail se concentre sur les postulats de la méthodologie fonctionnelle et communicative. Les anthroponymes contribuent à la cohérence verticale du texte de la plaisanterie, en étant ses composantes lexicales expressives: elles créent la base de l'action comique dans une blague, agissant comme les facteurs de formation de texte. Dans le texte des blagues, les noms propres peuvent effectuer les fonctions comiques suivantes: fonction communicative; fonction de créer une image comique et une situation comique; fonction culturologique; fonction déictique. Il existe également des fonctions spécifiques du nom propre: orientation, fonction de sélection, fonction phatique et allusive. Les principaux moyens comiques pour créer un effet comique sont identifiés: jeu sur les significations homonymiques des noms propres, utilisation des noms propres qui riment, antonomase, répétitions sonores dans les surnoms, expressions cacophoniques, parodie, etc. Dans la blague anglophone, les noms des personnalités historiques et contemporaines, ainsi que des personnages bibliques, littéraires et télévisés, sont représentés sous forme de noyaux de cycles comiques. La spécificité des ethnonymes et potentiel pragmatique des anthroponymes sont mise en évidence. L'analyse a montré que les anthroponymes sont utilisés pour créer dans la blague anglophone un espace onomastique comique particulier qui comprend différents types d'onymes. Ainsi, les situations les plus paradoxales et amusantes se révèlent à l'aide d'anthroponymes. L'humour exagère délibérément, en utilisant des noms et des surnoms qui "parlent", s'écartant des normes, créant un écart entre la forme et le contenu.

**Mots-clés:** plaisanterie anglophone, paradigme anthropocentrique, anthroponyme, création de l'effet comique, fonction comique, déviation de la norme, incongruité, méthodologie fonctionnelle-communicative, linguocréativité.


**Résumé in Russian**

Целью нашего исследования является выявление и описание функций, прагмалингвистического потенциала и средств создания комического антропонима в современной англоязычной шутке, в основе которой – отклонения от общепринятых норм. Наша работа основывается на постулатах функционально-коммуникативной методологии. Антропонимы способствуют вертикальной связанности текста шутки, являясь её эмфатическими лексическими компонентами: они создают основу для комического действия в шутке, выступая текстообразующими факторами. В тексте шуток имена собственные могут выполнять следующие комические функции: коммуникативную, функцию создания комического образа и комической ситуации, культурологическую и дейктическую функции. Мы выделяем специфические функции имени собственного в шутке: ориентирующая, функция выделения, фатическая и аллюзивная функции. Мы выявили основные средства создания комического эффекта: игра на омонимических значениях имен собственных, использование имен собственных, которые рифмуются, антономасия, повторы звука в прозвищах, какофонические выражения, пародия и т.д. В англоязычных шутках имена исторических и современных личностей, а также библейских, литературных и телевизионных персонажей могут быть представлены в виде ядер шуточных циклов. Мы установили специфику этнонимов и прагмалингвистический потенциал антропонимов. Проведённый нами анализ показал, что антропонимы используются для создания особого игрового, комического ономастического пространства в англоязычной шутке, которое включает в себя различные виды онимов. Наиболее парадоксальные смешные ситуации выделяются в шутке с помощью антропонимов. Шуточные

имена и прозвища становятся "говорящими", преувеличивая определенные черты объекта, таким образом отклоняясь от норм и создавая несоответствие формы и содержания.