Abstract

Graduation Level of Proficiency Paper

(Bachelor's degree)

Title: Semantic and stylistic characteristics of Murphy's laws in the English language.

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Topical Importance: This thesis deals with the study of Murphy's Law, named after E. A. Murphy, Jr., U.S. engineer who formulated the original version (1949), a facetious or satirical proposition stating that if there is a possibility for something to go wrong, it will go wrong. We study the main mechanisms of its creation, its structural and stylistic peculiarities. The emphasis is laid on stylistic analysis of such linguistic units concerning all language levels: on phonetic, morphological, lexical and syntactical level. It is the first attempt of such a complex analysis of Murphy's Law.

Goals: The aim of the thesis is to study linguistic characteristics of new humorous aphorisms, based on the original Murphy's Law, and analyze the ways of creation of peculiar humorous effect. The aim of the work is also in determining the nature and main characteristics of the construction of the studied language units.

Tasks: In order to accomplish this goal the following tasks can be distinguished:

- to define the characteristic features of such a linguistic unit as a murphism;
- to describe Murphy's Laws as new aphorisms based on paradox;
- to describe main cognitive mechanism of Murphy's Law creation;
- to elicit the syntactical structure of Murphy's Laws in comparison with traditional paremiological units in English;

- to analyze the stylistic peculiarities of the investigated units on all language levels;
- to identify the structural and linguistic features of murphisms, which contribute to creation of a comic effect;
- determine the functioning principle of allusions as one of the means of intertextuality mechanism in murphisms.

Theoretical value and practical applicability: Theoretical value lies in making a contribution to studying the main mechanisms of creating a humorous effect in a brand-new kind of aphorisms (murphisms). Practical applicability consists in using the results of the research in teaching theoretical courses on general linguistics, stylistics of the English language, in special courses on the theory of discourse and also in practical lessons.

Results: The whole corpus (828 examples of Murphy's laws) was subjected to a thorough stylistic and comparative analysis on phonetic, morphological, lexical, syntactical level and even the graphic characteristics of such linguistic units were analyzed.

Implementation advice: The theoretical material of the thesis can be applied while studying or teaching courses on general linguistics, stylistics of the English language, in special courses on the theory of discourse and also in practical lessons.