

National stereotypes in the context of cross cultural communication (exemplified by British stereotypes)

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Stereotyped thinking has always been an inherent feature of any human creature, being a way of perception the reality. There is not a single person completely free from stereotypes - everyone seems to be under their influence to a certain degree. We may feel it or not, but this system of ideas, cultivated by traditions, upbringing, education, mass media, to say nothing of personal convictions as well as ignorance, finally evolve into the strong preconception of the world, which defines and outshapes a person's outlook. We cannot but agree with G.V. Yelizarova who claims that "stereotypes represent not mere abstractions on the basis of a personal experience, but the abstractions gained by both verbal and non-verbal ways in a certain linguistic and cultural society during a long period of time" [1].

Stereotypes are very meaningful for the realization of cross-cultural communication. The role stereotypes are very valuable for the interaction and mutual understanding of cultures in the process of intercultural communication realization. Quite often in the process of cross-cultural communication and estimation of partners people are guided first of all by the previously prevailing stereotypes.

The classical example of the so-called "national stereotypes" are the British ones. The foreigners tend to mix up the words "British" and "English". George Orwell wrote: "It is very rare to meet a foreigner . . . who can distinguish between English and Scots or even English and Irish" [2].

It should be emphasized that British people have an "acknowledged" code behavior according to which it's better not to express straightforwardly what you think or feel. In contrast to Russian people, who prefer directness, Britons try to detract things. English comments are full of hints, understatements and half-tones. British people do not like to interfere with the other people's personal life and affairs. British people are known to possess the so-called cult of personality, so they usually keep to themselves, and they dislike disturbing other people's privacy. For example, they do like to speak about their personal matters and interests, and when they do, they always do it in an "excuse" manner. While speaking, the British mostly avoid direct questions, as well as strong, dogmatic ones, because the culturally acknowledged mode of behavior does not allow to directly ask people about their personal affairs.

A list of must-have stereotypes includes love for tea and fish and chips, love for pets and horse-racing, flowers and gardening, "the addiction to hobbies and spare-time occupations. The privateness of English life." [2]. To sum it up, the British stereotypes can be a little bit exaggerated ideas, they can be even distorted by personal esteems, opinions and prejudices in a way, like any other ideas. However, they can't be called false, because they evidently reveal the basic national features. They are like caricatures, which show the most outstanding things in an extravagant way, but they do not lie. Frequently this is stereotypes that become the first step on a long stairway of getting acquainted with a new culture.

Источники и литература

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- 2) 2. Orwell, George. England Your England, 2017, Chapter II. - P. 6.