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The Conception of Arrogance
in British Picture of the World

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Abstract

This article considers the concept of ARROGANCE as an element of British national picture of the world. The British mentality and social factors that have influenced its development and formation have been analyzed. The isolated geographical position and the preservation of strict social stratification are considered to be the main factors which determine British mentality. That is also the reason of British arrogance towards other nations. Thus, ARROGANCE as concept has been identified as one of the main elements of the British picture of the world in both past and present days.

The article describes the basic nominative means of the concept, outlines its verbalization on the lexical and phraseological level. The article includes examples of representation of the concept of ARROGANCE in the works of English literature. Based on the research, conclusions have been drawn, regarding the further prospects of studying the concept.

Keywords: *concept, picture of the world, mentality, lexical and phraseological means, verbalization, world picture, mentality, xenophobia*

Introduction

One of the major problems of cognitive linguistics is the problem of a coherent picture of the world reflection in human consciousness by means of language. Picture of the world is one of the fundamental concepts of human existence. Receiving experience, people transform it into some concepts that are logically connected with each other to build a conceptual system. This conceptual system is permanently constructed, modified and refined. Verbal concepts are an important part of any picture of the world, as they influence the thoughts and actions of both – individuals and entire nations (Maslova, 2004, p. 50).

Investigation of nationally marked concepts

The aim of the study is to explore the conceptual position of AR-ROGANCE as the element of British linguistic and conceptual picture of the world. Achieving the aim involves: the investigation of British national mentality and the factors that influenced its formation, the identification of the major causes of the concept of ARROGANCE in the British socie-ty, the detection of lexical and idiomatic means of the concept nomination, the analysis of the concept representation in the works of English authors.

The worldview of every nation is transformed into a national picture of the world. In its turn, the mentality of any linguo-cultural community is lar-gely due to its picture of the world, which represents the vision of the world and understanding of the role and place of its members. Picture of the world can be represented with spatial, temporal, quantitative, ethical and other parameters. Its formation is affected by language, traditions, nature, educa-tion and other social factors (Horodetska, 2003, p. 3-5).

A lot of linguists worldwide have dedicated their works to the research of the problems of linguistic and conceptual pictures of the world. Among them are V. Vinogradov, S. Stepanov, V. Maslova, O, Kubryakova, A. V. Hum-boldt, E. Sapir, or B. L. Whorf. However, the national pictures of the world are constantly evolving, changing according to socio-economic and cultural-historical conditions, and therefore there is a constant need for a detailed study of each national picture as a whole and its elements in particular. This determines the relevance of research of the concept of ARROGANCE as a nationally marked concept in the British picture of the world.

Peculiarities of the British national picture of the world

The English linguistic picture of the world is the verbalization of a Bri-tish conceptual sphere that can be represented as a multidimensional forma-tion with a complex structure comprising the notions with different degrees of categorization, including universal and nationally specific concepts. Some universal concepts can get ethnically relevant meaning and reflect the pecu-liarities of national mentality, thus gaining some national designation (Ho-rodetska, 2003, p. 8).

Each specific national linguistic picture of the world is the result of exter-nal world reflection by the collective consciousness of ethnicity in the process of its historical development which simultaneously goes with the process of cognition of this world. The external world and consciousness are two factors

which give rise to a linguistic picture of the world of any national language. The idea that geographical environment, within direct sensory perception of each ethnic group at the stage of their formation and identity, had peculiar effects on physiology, psychology and historical destiny of people, was supported by ancient Greek and Roman philosophers as well as other representatives of the field (Montesquieu, G. W. F. Hegel, H. Buckle).

The national image of the world creates the national nature of culture. Natural languages are treated as national voices of the local community. Sounds of nature have a direct contact with the natural acoustics space. The sounds that make up the flesh of language are in resonance with the content of the national homeland. And now what is known, but not directly perceived, is, in consequence, insignificant from a practical point of view, and is also contained in the periphery of the lexical system. Besides, this not directly perceived area is characteristic of containing the most common words, having no synonyms or hyponyms. Meanwhile, not only lexical gaps and the difference between the amount of meaning of some correlated words exist, but also the difference in connotations, which were fixed to define the same environmental objects in different languages (Hachev, 1988, p. 25).

Thus, we consider relevant to differentiate three components of external world: natural environment, material environment (material culture of ethnicity) and objective connections between objects and ideas of the material world. Each of these components of spacetime continuum, reflecting in the routine consciousness of ethnicity, gets its verbal representation, unique for every language. Everything that is beyond the conceptual basis (all nationally specific details of world understanding, perception and evaluation) is imposed on universal logical and conceptual basis, and forms a part of the national picture of the world that carries national specifics. Each language in its own way points to details of the universals (Hachev, 1988, p. 27-30).

Therefore, the important factor that influenced the British value system and created its originality is the geographical isolation of the country.

The place of ARROGANCE in British mentality

The researchers of national stereotypes point to the fact that the British consider themselves law-abiding, polite, generous, calm and fair citizens. They are convinced that their nation is one of the most civilized in the world. Recognizing their superiority over other nations of the world, the British believe that all other nations also understand their superiority and will try to

imitate them as much as possible. This notion is supported by geographical location of the UK. For example, the sea environment exerts a strong impact on British mentality, which is proved by the newspaper report: «Fog in the Channel – Continent cut off» (Mayol, 1999). The British have always been proud of their isolated, island location. That is why Shakespeare poetically called the UK a royal island surrounded by silver seas:

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea (Shakespeare, 1597).

Geographical factors influencing the formation of a sense of British national identity contributed to what is called Anglo-centrism. The British believe that their homeland is better than some other lands, and therefore often look down on foreigners with compassion and contempt.

The Greek word 'xenophobia', which means fear of foreigners, took its rightful place in the English lexical system. Though in fact Brits prefer the word 'xenolipi' – pity on foreigners. It is worth to mention the fact that traditional English xenophobia was historically more developed among workers than among the middle class. It was hard for British workers to come to understanding with foreigners because of differences in language, culture, life values. Moreover, those who left school at fourteen, had very few opportunities to learn foreign languages in the mature age, which caused language barriers in intercultural communication. Trips abroad, knowledge of foreign languages were associated with manifestations of snobbery. That is why xenophobia was reinforced by class jealousy (Orwell, 1998).

The manifestations of xenophobia of the British vary, but open hostility is definitely out of the question. British people respect the French, taking into consideration close and lasting relations between the countries. However, the British treat them leniently, believing that the French need to learn a lot from the restrained British. The British have mixed feelings about the Germans: they genuinely respect German punctuality and restraint, but do not understand the excessive seriousness of the nation. As for the Italians, the British criticize them for their excessive emotionality and bustle. Brits do not like Spaniards for the tradition of killing animals in public. They consider Russians to be too gloomy. Americans often annoy Brits be-

ing proud of the fact that they are Americans, despite the fact that they originally come from the British Isles. The British criticize Americans for neglecting British heritage, and believe that under the corrupting influence of Americans the level of English culture is falling. This concerns language in particular, especially that Americans ought to speak "proper English" and not to distort its orthoepy and orthography. The English writer – George Orwell confirms the fact of English xenophobia:

All people who have reached the point of becoming nations tend to despise foreigners, but there is not much doubt that the English-speaking races are the worst offenders. One can see this from the fact that as soon as they become fully aware of any foreign race they invent an insulting nickname for it (Orwell, 1947, para. 8).

Another factor that influenced the formation of the British picture of the world is a rigid social stratification of the British society. England was one of the last countries that tried to keep the external forms of feudalism. House of Lords, which mainly consists of hereditary peers, has real authority. Striving to be an aristocrat, to own and manage the land, gaining income, have experienced all the changes and turns. So, instead of ousting the ruling class, its customs are actively adopted, striving to become closer to it. In Britain, more than in other countries, the willingness to consider the class distinction as constant phenomenon is preserved. Moreover, upper classes are recognized to have the right to occupy the managing position. The word 'sir' is common in Britain, and the person of aristocratic appearance usually is granted increased respectfulness (Mayol, 1999; Orwell, 1947).

Verbal representation of ARROGANCE
in British linguistic picture

Since arrogance is considered one of the main features of the British mentality, ARROGANCE as concept has a wide verbal representation. At the lexical level the concept is represented by the following synonymous lexemes: *assumption, bluster, bumptiousness, conceit, conceitedness, contemptuousness, disdainfulness, haughtiness, hauteur, high-handedness, hubris, huffiness, imperiousness, insolence, loftiness, lordliness, masterfulness, overweeningness, peremptoriness, pomposity, pompousness, presumption, presumptuousness, pretension, pretentiousness, pride, scornfulness, self-consequence, self-importance, superciliousness, superiority, swagger, toploftiness, uppishness.* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, n. d.; New Webster's Dictionary and Roger's Thesaurus, n. d.; Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, n. d.)

The phraseological level of the concept of ARROGANCE is represented by the following phraseological units: *be too big for one's breeches, be too big for ones boots, hoity-toity, get on high horse, mount on one's high horse, ride a high horse, high hat, high and mighty, high headed, high-minded, put oneself on airs, rear one's head, lift up one's head, hold up one's head, toss the head, swollen headed, look down one's nose, to have one's nose in the air, to be with nose in the air, stick nose up, toffee nosed, stuck up, perk oneself up, be uppish, be full of oneself, think one is a lord of the manor, be legend in one's mind.* (New Webster's Dictionary and Roger's Thesaurus, n. d.; New Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language, n. d.)

It can be noticed that the majority of idioms are nationally marked and connected with the peculiarities of the British mentality. As the British have been keeping the signs of belonging to aristocracy, they have been marked in the phraseology to indicate superiority. For example, the idiom *think one is a lord of the manor* indicates the forms of feudalism, land ownership and power that was associated with it, and as a consequence – the arrogant attitude to others.

Phrases *get on high horse, mount on one's high horse, ride a high horse* originates from the habit of noblemen to ride the horses of high breeds. The expression *high hat* – comes from the tradition of wearing high cylinder hats that used to be characteristic of British aristocrats.

ARROGANCE as concept was widely reflected in the works of English literature. Shakespeare indulged to display this characteristics of personality in his works, describing the arrogant behavior of the ruling class, including Henry VIII:

You sign your place and calling, in full seeming,
With meekness and humility; but your heart
Is cramm'd with arrogancy, spleen, and pride (Shakespeare, 1623).

Without using nominative lexemes to represent the concept, Shakespeare describes arrogant behavior as unwillingness to answer, arrogantly remaining silent, believing others to be unworthy communicators:

Why, he'll answer nobody: he professes not
answering; speaking is for beggars, he
wears his tongue in's arms (Shakespeare, 1609).

The phrase *wears his tongue in's arms* in this case metaphorically describes one of the features peculiar to the concept ARROGANCE.

Jonathan Swift in his famous political satire «Gulliver's Travels» uses Lilliputs to describe and criticize the phenomenon of ARROGANCE in European societies at the time. The reaction of giant Gulliver in the Lilliput country, his underlined politeness, in contrast with Lilliputs' confidence in their power, all show the nonsense of pompous manners and exaggeration of their own possibilities: *I confess I was often tempted, while they were passing back and forward on my body, to seize forty or fifty of the first that came in my reach, and dash them against the ground* (Swift, 2008, p. 27).

Swift choses the height of heels, which constantly causes misunderstandings in the party of Lilliputians, to be the symbol of arrogance of the aristocracy at that time. We know that it was actually a metaphoric way to present confrontation between the two ruling parties – the Tories and the Whigs. However, the symbolism may be seen in the fact that high heels allow to look down on the rest of people, thus showing inherent British arrogance even to their compatriots: *...there have been two struggling parties in this empire, under the names of Tramecksan and Slamecksan, from the high and low heels on their shoes, by which they distinguish themselves* (Swift, 2008, p. 43).

R. Kipling condemns unjustified arrogance in his poem The Pro-Consuls:

The clamour of the arrogant accuser
Wastes that one hour we needed to make good
(Kipling, 1905, The Pro-Consuls section, line 3-4).

In the poem Mesopotamia, the writer equals arrogance to such negative feature as laziness, against which it is necessary to fight:

Their lives cannot repay us–their death could not undo
The shame that they have laid upon our race.
But the slothfulness that wasted and the arrogance that slew,
Shell we leave it unabated in its place?
(Kipling, 1917, Mesopotamia section, para. 4)

Usually, arrogance got negative assessment in the works of British authors. However, writers often used arrogance as the main personality trait of their characters. Among the examples of such characters is the Byronic hero who became a typical hero of romanticism and embodies the arrogance and cynicism. Also, arrogance is the feature of the main characters in the works of Jane Austen («Pride and Prejudice»), Oscar Wilde («The Picture of Dorian Gray»), Emily Bronte («Wuthering Heights») or Charlotte Bronte («Jane Eyre»).

Conclusion

Arrogance is considered to be one of the components of the British mentality, which can be explained by the high level of stereotyping of the image of the British, by the British social stratification of society, and partly by the rich history of the country. Today, Great Britain plays an important part in the international relations, and therefore the concept of ARRO-GANCE does not lose relevance and receives new forms of development and representation. Further prospects for research can be seen as the investigation of verbal representations of the concept in different types of discourse, the construction of the concept model, and the studies of its features as the nationally marked abstract concept.

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