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THE VERBALIZATION OF THE NATIONAL WORLD PICTURE

©*Fayzullaeva M.*, ORCID: 0000-0002-4557-912X, Uzbekistan State University of World Languages, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

ВЕРБАЛИЗАЦИЯ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ КАРТИНЫ МИРА

©*Файзуллаева М. Р.*, ORCID: 0000-0002-4557-912X, Узбекский государственный университет мировых языков, г. Ташкент, Узбекистан

Abstract. The article deals with the study of the national world picture and its role in reflecting culturally colored aspects of different national elements through language. The national world picture is the vision of the world from the point of lifelong experiences of particular nations, which have been traced due to nationally specific biases. This type of the vision of the world is represented by nationally specific means such as national mentality, character, values, myths, traditions and others. The article is particularly concerned with the verbalization of the national character and mentality in the representation of the English national world picture. On the basis of the analysis, the article illustrates the representation of national character and mentality through the application of particular linguistic units in the literary text.

Аннотация. Статья посвящена изучению национальной картины мира и ее роли в отражении культурно окрашенных аспектов различных национальных элементов через язык. Национальная картина мира — это видение мира с точки зрения опыта отдельных наций на протяжении всей жизни, который прослеживается из-за национальных предубеждений. Этот тип видения мира представлен национально-специфическими средствами, такими как национальный менталитет, характер, ценности, мифы, традиции и другие. Статья, в частности, включает в себя изучение вербализации национального характера и менталитета в представлении английской национальной картины мира. На основе анализа иллюстрируется репрезентация национального характера и менталитета посредством применения отдельных языковых единиц в литературном тексте.

Keywords: national world picture, national character, national mentality.

Ключевые слова: национальная картина мира, национальный характер, национальный менталитет.

The national world picture reflects the culture and experience of a certain national community. Nationally specific concepts having a cultural sense are based on archetypes. They express values and principles of the culture of a certain ethnic group and have a national form, characterized by national coloring and are connected with the national way of life. The person feels the world, beholds it, comprehends, learns, interprets, and reflects it in accordance with his national perceptions and preferences. The national world picture is presented via a number of nationally specific notions which have penetrated into the lives of people [1-6]. They are national mentality and character, a national myth, national values, traditions, and customs. Particularly, significant are the notions of national mentality and character, as they are found to be predominant constituents,

which shape the national world picture. These components of the national world picture are represented in the language in different forms, which is common for the representatives of this or that nation. National Character reflects prototyped personal characteristics and patterns that are prototype which are peculiar to a certain national community.

The assumption is that virtually all individuals behave in conformity with the prescribed norms of their society. To illustrate, the specific features of the national character of the Englishmen are presented in many texts. It is well-known, the English are well-disciplined people and they are considered to be one of few nations with probably the best manners in the world. Furthermore, Englishmen are said to be very proud and reserved, and jealous about privacy matters. As the English are very polite, the verbal representation corresponds to their courtesy. They express their politeness by a variety of linguistic means. For example, the Englishmen are very careful while making requests, as they try not to sound dictatorial. Their requests are usually constructed with the usage of modal verbs – could and would. They say, “Would you mind locking the door when you leave?”; “Could you please open the door?”; “Could I possibly have another cup of tea?”; “Would you mind if I put off sending you the file till tomorrow?”. Moreover, the politeness of the Englishmen can be expressed via the use of conditionals too. In such a case, ‘will’ is used after ‘if’ or inversion is used: “If you will wait for a moment, I’ll go and ask the manager”; “If you will excuse me, I need to bring more plates”; “Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask”. Additionally, It is expedient to note that the Englishmen even try to disagree in a polite way so that their interlocutors do not get offended. For example, they may use the following phrases and expressions to state their disagreement: I’m afraid I disagree; I see what you mean but I’m not at all convinced that...; I respectfully disagree; True, but I’m afraid I disagree (with)...; I understand what you’re saying, but if you ask me, I think...; It sounds interesting, but....

The national character of the Englishmen is characterized by their good manners too. They live by the belief that men are appreciated and respected for their gentleness and courtesy. The very phenomenon of the English character is illustrated by the following proverbs and sayings: “Meat makes, and clothes shape, but manners make a man”; “The purest people are the ones with good manners”; “Good manner is the greatest friends”; “Learn good manners from those who don't have them” and others.

Ironical speech is another peculiarity of the national character of the Englishmen, as they are accounted to be rather ironical than categorical. They prefer using ironical expressions and euphemisms during communication. They use irony in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words [2].

Importantly, the irony is frequently used in the literary works of English writers too. Writers employ the stylistic devices such as an oxymoron, a hyperbole, an allusion, a metonymy, a periphrasis, a zeugma, a gradation, an epithet, meiosis, an understatement, and paronomasia in order to create an ironic effect in the literary texts.

For example, Shakespeare is one of the prevailing masters of irony. He used dramatic, situational, and verbal irony in his works. To illustrate, in the play “Hamlet”, the main personage exclaims:

King: But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son

Hamlet: A little more than kin, and less than kind.

King: How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Hamlet: Not so, my lord, I am too much in the sun.

“A little more than kin, and less than kind” is Prince Hamlet’s withering assessment of his relationship to the new King of Denmark, his uncle Claudius. Claudius—who has secretly poisoned Hamlet's father—sleazily ingratiates himself to the mourning prince with rhetorical appellatives like

“my cousin Hamlet, and my son”. Hamlet mutters that Claudius is more than “kin”, but definitely less than “kind”.

There are triple meanings of “Kind”. On one hand, Hamlet says that Claudius is less than a direct blood relative, “kind” meaning “ancestral stock”. On another hand, Hamlet refers to what he sees as Claudius’s unnatural lust, “kind” meaning “natural”. Finally, Hamlet indicates his resentment toward the new king for his insensitive haste in marrying the queen. In this case, “kind” has its modern sense: “considerate”. When he says “less than kind”, it is ironic because his uncle is the one who killed his father, so he is paraphrasing his regard towards his uncle in an ironical way. Hamlet pushes the black humor further in responding to Claudius's reproachful comment on his clouded disposition. “I am too much in the sun” presents a stylistic device, pun via a play of words sun/son.

Another illustration of irony is in the play Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare. The play tells what happened in Rome in 44 BC: Caesar proclaimed himself emperor, but he is killed by conspirators, and there is a subsequent war between the political leaders: Brutus, Cassius, Mark Antony, and Octavius. The following quote is told by Mark Antony, a loyal friend of Julius Caesar:

“Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
and Brutus is an honorable man”

This quote said by Mark Antony is an example of irony, because, at this time in the play, he is certainly aware of the fact that Julius Caesar is killed by Brutus, but not all members of the cast know about the crime, done by Brutus, so people consider him as an honorable. Mark Antony, who is Julius Caesar’s friend, swears that the murder of his friend will not be left unpunished. Therefore, he urges the above-illustrated statement, informing people that they are mistaken by admitting Brutus as “an honorable man”, yet he does not express it directly and presents his speech in an ironical way.

The short stories written by O. Henry are also filled with ironical expressions which are aimed at exerting emotional impact on readers. O. Henry is a master of surprise endings and irony is quite prevalent in his works. An examination of irony in short stories confirms the assumption that ironic effect in literary fiction is mostly realized at the lexical level. It is created either by means of neutral vocabulary or by the use of various stylistic devices. For example, in the story, “While the Auto Waits”, the ironic effect is based on an exaggeration of the role of such a trivial conversational topic as the weather in society’s life making it responsible for the world’s unhappiness.

“In a pleasant voice, he risked an inconsequent remark upon the weather that introductory topic responsible for so much of the world’s unhappiness-and stood poised for a moment, awaiting his fate”.

The English character is shown off by the usage of litotes too. In everyday life, it is common to experience litotes in the conversations of the English people. Little is an intentional use of understatement that renders an ironic effect. For example, using the expression “not too bad” for “very good” is an understatement as well as a double negative statement that confirms a positive idea by negating the opposite. Similarly, saying “She is not a beauty queen,” means “She is ugly” or saying “I am not as young as I used to be” in order to avoid saying “I am old”. Litotes, therefore, is an intentional use of understatement that renders an ironical effect. Below are a few examples of litotes from daily conversations:

- They do not seem the happiest couple around.
- Your comments on politics are not useless.
- You are not as young as you used to be.
- I cannot disagree with your point of view.

Another feature of a typical Englishman's verbal representation is the usage of euphemistic expressions in order to replace rude and impolite words and expressions with more pleasant ones. For example, Englishmen do not like using words that humiliate the appearance of women, and consequently, when they are to refer to a woman who is rather fat, they may say: "She's a very curvy woman". The word "curvy" can sometimes be used as a euphemistic way of describing someone who is, in fact, overweight. So the current example presents the fact that Englishmen are very polite people and this phenomenon is the illustration of their national character.

Euphemistic expressions are often utilized in the literary text too. For example, the current extract from the novel "Party", by a famous English poet Orwell, is encoloured with a euphemism:

The Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education, and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war. The Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs. Their names, in Newspeak: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv, and Miniplenty.

The "Party" is the ruling government organization to which it seems no individual really belongs has created four main ministries, as described in the excerpt above. Each one has a name that is directly opposed to the true nature of the ministry. This is just one way in which the Party uses language to confuse and distort reality. In fact, Orwell's creation of the term "doublethink" has become a well-known euphemism for the types of distortions that many politicians and media personalities use to explain their positions, which may be hypocritical.

The national mentality is a totality of socially psychological facilities, automatisms, and habits of consciousness which forms a way of the vision of the world and concept of people. Eventually, the national mentality of the English is framed owing to their lifestyles, national values, and privileges. The mentality of English people includes tactfulness and reticence. Significantly, the national mentality of English is reflected in the proverbs and sayings. For example, English people are compliant and patient to other people and these characteristics are reflected in the following proverbs too: "Live and let live"; "One cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hounds"; "A cat may look at a king"; "Love me, love my dog; "He that loves the tree, loves the branch". The proverb "Don't change horses in the middle of the stream" hints at the conservatism of English people. They always keep their tradition and they do not want to change their monarchy. They like to repeat: "An old dog will learn no new tricks. You cannot teach old dogs new tricks". "An old dog barks not in vain".

Another peculiarity forming the national mentality of the English is their very high estimation of their residents. It is depicted in the English proverbs too. They say "There is no place like home", "East or West, home is best" or "Englishman's home is his castle".

Additionally, gardening is assumed to be one of the significant attributes of the national mentality of Englishmen too. Garden always has an important place for an English house owner. That is why there are a lot of proverbs and sayings concerning this privilege of English. They say "He that loves the tree, loves the branch". Oaks and roses are traditionally considered by Englishmen as royal symbols and so there are a lot of proverbs with the name of these trees and flowers. "Oaks may fall when reeds withstand the storm"; "There's no rose without a horn. "No roses without prickles"; "Wherever there is a rose, there is a thorn".

Moreover, it is known that the weather is one of the constantly discussed themes and that is why many of the events and phenomena of the lives of the English are compared with it. Samuel Johnson said that 'When two Englishmen meet, their first talk is of the weather.' English weather-speak is a form of greeting, the way the English starts a conversation. Contrary to a popular belief, the English are not obsessed with the weather. The conversation about the weather is treated as a

simple greeting, an ice-breaker, or filler. The most important rule is then to continue the conversation. It must be a reciprocal exchange of ideas.

The admiration towards the topic of weather can be seen in the paroemia of the English too: “One cloud is enough to eclipse the sun”, “After rain comes fair weather”; “Save it for a rainy day”; “After a storm comes the calm”; “Any port in a storm”; “If there were no clouds, we should not enjoy the sun”; “It never rains but it pours”; “Rain before seven, fine before eleven”, “Rain before seven, clear by eleven”.

The theme of weather is frequently used in literary texts too. For example, Bernard Shaw, a famous Irish playwright, remarks the national mentality of the English through the frequent interference of the theme of weather in his play “Pygmalion”:

“... She has been warned to speak about only two subjects — the weather and health (This will be especially comic later when she does indeed confine herself to the topic of her aunt’s health, but her aunt’s health is indeed bizarre). As Eliza is introduced, she greets each person with an elaborate “How do you do”; her pronunciation is uttered with impeccable precision. When the subject of the weather is mentioned, Eliza volunteers her observations in such an erudite and precise manner that it astonishes everyone. To the simple question, “Do you think it will rain?” Eliza answers: “The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation”.

Furthermore, the Englishmen are known as very keen pets and sports lovers too. Love towards pets and sport is the other frequent and common topic urged by this nation.

In brief, the national world picture is described by the phenomenon that has been developed in the accumulation of a certain social experience that is passed from generation to generation in the form of verbal and cultural components representing national traditions, customs, rituals, ceremonies. This type of vision of the world is represented by nationally specific means such as national mentality, character, values, myths, traditions, and others. National character is a set of habits and attitudes, desires and inclinations, views and opinions, motives and standards, beliefs and ideas, and hopes and aspirations of an individual which he shares with other members of his nation. The national mentality is the projection of the outside world referring to ethnic linguistic consciousness and carries in itself the information about the features which are common to different nations.

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