

A. A. Savko

*Baranavichy State University, Baranavichy, the Republic of Belarus,
Savko74@mail.ru*

PECULIARITIES OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH COMMUNICATIVE BEHAVIOUR AND ITS CONNECTION WITH CULTURAL AND VALUE ORIENTATIONS

The positive attitude towards the addressee is closely connected with the linguistic culture of the speakers. The present study used data from comparative socio-psychology, which deals with the problems of ethno-cultural specificity of communicative behaviour. The results of their research are equivocal, but the connection between the value orientations of cultures and their emotional behaviour can be traced. A supra ethnic tendency is the predominance of positive emotional states over negative ones. However, psychology cannot sufficiently account for the active constitutive role of language in shaping ethno-cultural behaviour. Language is able to influence the system of values, the model of behaviour. Psychology does not provide a clear description of how culture affects the expression and intensity of feelings in communication. It seems that more reliable data can be obtained on the basis of ethnomethodological interpretation of speech behaviour, carried out on the material of natural communication.

Key words: American language community; British language community; culture; communicative behaviour; national character; individualism.

A. A. Савко

*Учреждение образования «Барановичский государственный университет»,
Барановичи, Республика Беларусь, Savko74@mail.ru*

ОСОБЕННОСТИ АМЕРИКАНСКОГО И БРИТАНСКОГО КОММУНИКАТИВНОГО ПОВЕДЕНИЯ И ЕГО СВЯЗЬ С КУЛЬТУРНО-ЦЕННОСТНЫМИ ОРИЕНТИРАМИ

Положительное отношение к адресату тесно связано с языковой культурой коммуникантов. В настоящем исследовании использовались данные сравнительной социопсихологии, занимающейся проблемами этнокультурной специфики коммуникативного поведения. Результаты их исследований не однозначны, однако прослеживается связь между ценностными ориентирами культур и их эмоциональным поведением. Надэтнической тенденцией является преобладание положительных эмоциональных состояний над отрицательными. Однако психология не может в достаточной мере учитывать активную конституирующую

роль языка в формировании этнокультурного поведения. Язык способен влиять на систему ценностей, модель поведения. Психология не дает четкого описания того, как культура влияет на выражение и интенсивность чувств в общении. Представляется, что более достоверные данные можно получить на основе этнометодологической интерпретации речевого поведения, проводимой на материале естественной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: американский языковой коллектив; британский языковой коллектив; культура; коммуникативное поведение; национальный характер; индивидуализм.

Introduction. When communicating with Americans and Britons (as well as with any other linguistic culture), having as much information about each other as possible plays an important role. Each society is characterized by its own historically formed culture.

By culture we, following W. Goodenough, G. Hofstede, I. I. Tokareva, understand “all that knowledge which a person must have in order to be a functional member of society; culture consists not of things, people, behaviour or emotions, but of forms or organization of these things in the minds of people; collective programming of mind which distinguishes members of one group from another” [1, p. 12]. We can add that “culture is the traditionally established aesthetic, moral, ethical, religious and other views and attitudes that distinguish one ethnos from another. And ethnos is this or that ethnic community — nation, people, nationality, tribal union, tribe” [2, p. 776] or “an intuitively determined by a person belonging to some traditional culture” [3, p. 127].

Main part. We consider American and British language communities as representatives of an individualistic culture. The very notion of “language community” is derived from the concept of “ethnos” and is associated with the notion of a single culture. The concept was formulated by B. Worf, L. Blomfield, J. Gumpertz, D. Himes, A. D. Schweitzer, I. I. Tokareva. Following A. D. Schweitzer, we understand language community as “a set of socially interacting individuals, discovering a certain unity of language features” [4, p. 71]. Also it is possible to supplement the given formulation and to define language community as a single collective (though heterogeneous in structure)/set of people, members of which are united by those or other forms of social interaction, including communicative and capable of interpreting the cultural communicative models accepted in society.

The language community, which is composed of all English speakers, is divided politically into the United States and the British Empire [5]. Speaking about the language community, we should first pay attention to such a notion as national character, as the features of national character have a significant impact on the speech behaviour of communicators. The national character is understood as something acquired, received in the process of interaction of a certain society of people throughout their centuries-long life. These are the traditional forms of reaction of people to the world around them, established norms of behaviour and activities. Finally, it is a set of the most important ways of regulating communication, developed on the basis of the value system of society, and these ways are assimilated at both conscious and unconscious level [6, p. 12].

National features of communicative behaviour which we face in intercultural communication are the collective habits of the people fixed by tradition, manifested in the choice and preference of use in the process of interpersonal interaction of certain communication strategies and communication tools (both verbal and non-verbal). As a result, a national style of communication or communicative ethnostyle is developed.

According to J. Hofstede, individualism-collectivism is one of the primary characteristics of cultures according to the system classification, designed to explain the social behaviour of ethnicities. Individualism is understood as a belief in the original significance of the individual, an attitude of self-sufficiency and personal freedom, responsibility for oneself and the right to personal choice. The notion of individualism determines the nature of the state, the legislative system, as well as the communication between individuals in the professional sphere and at home. The concept of individualism is manifested in the choice of verbal means and in the peculiarities of non-verbal behaviour [7, p. 174].

In addition to this principle the classification includes: the attitude to distance and power, commitment to masculinity or femininity and the desire for certainty (uncertainty avoidance) [8]. These principles act as fundamental parameters of the variability of cultures at the socio-psychological level.

According to the principle of individualism-collectivism, American culture is defined as the most individualistic, giving preference to such values as self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement [9, p. 167], emphasizing the priority of the individual, its independence,

self-sufficiency and autonomy (distancing). A positive feature of American society is individual freedom, self-realization and self-determination.

For the British this cultural value is embodied in the value of personal space of a person, his right to independence, autonomous territory. For its designation in English there is a special word *privacy*, the exact equivalent of which is absent not only in Russian, but also in other European languages. The cultural value (the word *privacy*) is manifested in the psychology of the British who have a very well-developed sense of personal freedom and independence. As it is known the greeting *How are you?* regardless of the real state of affairs, is always answered in the same positive way — *I'm fine / I'm great / I'm very well*, etc. by both Americans and Brits. On the one hand this can be explained by a positive outlook on life, as well as an unwillingness to burden others with their problems. But on the other hand, it is a kind of communicative barrier that surrounds the Briton, just as a real fence surrounds his home. This barrier establishes distance and does not allow the interlocutor to penetrate his zone of autonomy. For people in individualistic cultures, and especially for minorities who have learned to ignore the prejudices of others, the evaluation of oneself and one's group by others does not matter so much. Western literature glorifies the individual who relies on his own strength. The psychology of Western cultures suggests that life will be richer if "you identify your possible selves and believe in your own power of personal control. Don't follow what others expect of you. Be your own self. Seek your own happiness. Do your own thing. To love others, first love yourself" [10, p. 71—72].

Individualistic cultures highlight the needs of the individual, relations within the social hierarchy, associate social skills with superficial social relations. In individualistic societies people are driven mainly by personal interests and the interests of immediate family members. The core values of these societies are respect for human rights and the high value of human life. In the United States one's own separate self is completely independent from other people, from the social context [11, p. 148]. The American "I" which forms the basis of the US society is united with the "I" of other individuals, but it never dissolves in this unity. This individualism is a product of certain social conditions, and it has certain consequences. The fact that American culture assigns a higher priority to individualism affects self-concepts, social relationships, and parenting. From an early age, Americans are taught

the self-value of their own identity and the ability to manifest it in communication with others. The individualism of the British manifests itself in their dislike of communication, the ability to withdraw into their inner world, even when they are among people.

At the communicative level American and British individualism is manifested in the nature of speech acts, the choice of verbal means and communicative strategies. It should be noted that the peculiarities of the composition and character of ethnic thinking and belonging to a certain type of culture affect the communicative behavior of representatives of one or another ethnic group. The form of cultural communication, according to D. Carbaugh, opens the way for some actions and closes the way for others [12, p. 23]. Culture, as it seems to us, can influence the world model of each language collective, giving it, according to D. Pakanowsky, a certain meaning: "The process of transmission of ethno-cultural meaning in the process of communication, revealing social relations can be analyzed through its organization, forms and meanings dominating in this culture" [13]. When communicating representatives of this or that national culture consciously or unconsciously adhere to the values, features of their culture, customs and traditions. As a result it affects the use of language.

Among the leading principles defining communication in the American environment,

E. Stewart singled out the following, which reflect the specifics of communication in an individualistic society in the best way possible:

- 1) making a clear distinction between work and leisure;
- 2) objectivity (depersonalization) in relations with others;
- 3) perception of man as separate from nature and dominating it;
- 4) high value of possession of material objects;
- 5) awareness of one's own "I" capable of existing separately, in isolation as a result of individualism, self-sufficiency, independence;
- 6) ability to fragmented perception of others and reaction to them from the point of view of their separate qualities and social roles as opposed to whole perception of the personality [7, p. 175]. American categories of speech emphasize social neutrality and normative regulation of interaction [1, p. 101], something we find confirmation of in our study. American speech is "fast, mobile, reflecting the speed and vigor of the country's development", "it is emotional, appellative, and characterized by means of hyperbolizing the evaluative meaning of the statement as a whole" [14, p. 96]. American humor based on wit,

exaggeration and hyperbole — constant characteristics of the American language — originate in the history of the formation of the young American state. According to R. Lewis, “American language has never recovered from the influence of history” [14, p. 96].

The main features of American communicative behaviour include: sociability, demonstrative democratism and goodwill, cheerfulness, contactiveness, noisiness, businesslike conversation, truthfulness in communication, tolerance, striving to reach a compromise, little information, thematic limited communication, the great role of oral communication in reaching an agreement, love of showing one’s successes, the presence of humor in communication [6]. There is a certain pragmatism in the size and character of speech messages, which gravitate towards brevity and concreteness [1].

N. Reschke singles out such dominant features of the communicative behaviour of the English as: few words, high level of self-control in communication and emotional restraint, household politeness, non-categorical and anti-conflict orientation of communication, high level of thematic taboo in communication, development of secular communication. Individualism of the individual (as well as: personal space, private life, personal time, plans and obligations) is highly valued. One cannot ignore the fact that their opinion is much more important for them than the opinion of other people around them.

The British prefer small talk to frank heart-to-heart talk — a conversation without content, superficial, unveiled communication which plays an important communicative role — it is used to fill pauses, create a goodwill psychological atmosphere and establish contacts. At the same time it is important to emphasize that the most important values of English communicative culture include emotional restraint. The ability to regulate and control one’s emotions is an integral part of British culture, and it is what makes British people so different from active Americans [15]. Emotional restraint in Britain applies not only to negative but also to positive emotions and extends to all areas of communication, including such intimate areas as parent-child relationships, to which it would seem that rules restricting displays of emotion should not apply. Compared to Americans, Britons are prone to rigid self-control of their emotions, the open and relaxed display of feelings, typical of the American language community, is considered in Britain a sign of bad manners.

Conclusion. Psychology cannot sufficiently account for the active constitutive role of language in shaping ethno-cultural behaviour. Also,

the influence of culture on the expression and intensity of emotions in communication has not been studied in psychology. Therefore, more reliable data can be obtained on the basis of ethnomethodological interpretation of speech behaviour, relying on the material of natural communication.

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