

**NATIONAL STEREOTYPES IN TEACHING ENGLISH
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING DEGREE
AT THE SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING
BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT

BY

RADMILA POPOVIC

MARCH 2004

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Project Advisor _____

Project Reader _____

Acknowledgments:

I owe a great debt of gratitude to several people who helped me in the course of my graduate study at the School for International Training. First, I want to acknowledge the Open Society Institute, New York, and the Fund for an Open Society, Belgrade, who awarded me grants to study in Brattleboro in the summers of 2001 and 2002. Special thanks go to Maja Danon, OSI New York, and Radmila Maslovaric, FOS Belgrade, for their continuous encouragement and great friendship. I am also greatly indebted to the SMAT faculty for their skillful and thoughtful guidance through the labyrinth of learning, and to my fellow SMAT 20s – the spirit of our friendship has been a great source of inspiration and energy throughout my work.

I am deeply grateful to Marti Anderson, my IYTP advisor, for challenging discussions about my teaching context. They greatly helped me conceptualize this paper. I also wish to thank my reader, Dragana Filipovic, Faculty of Political Sciences, Belgrade, for invaluable comments and suggestions, and Esther Polenezzer, Yugoslav-British Society School, Belgrade, for proof-reading. Last but not least, I should like to thank my thesis advisor, Paul LeVasseur, for the great deal of assistance, guidance, and advice he provided during the writing of this paper.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how to deal with lexically encoded national stereotypes in the second language classroom. I address this question starting with previous research on stereotypes, and discussing a principled approach to interrelating insights from a variety of paradigms and disciplines. Then I shift to the linguistic analysis of nationality words in English - phrases, idioms and proverbs, as well as connotations which these lexical items are capable of developing in certain contexts. Finally, I consider the implication of the findings for foreign language teaching, and suggest a pedagogical model for dealing with stereotypes in the language classroom.

ERIC descriptors

Stereotypes
Student Attitudes
Cultural Awareness
Cultural Images
Intercultural Communication
Foreign Culture
Language Usage

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PREFACE

Science is always autobiographical.

Blommaert, Verschueren, *Debating Diversity*

My interest in the main theme of this paper, national stereotypes, was initially aroused by two mutually unrelated slices of classroom life. I remember how at the very beginning of my teaching career I was once explaining the idiom ‘Let’s go Dutch’, when a student commented: “I didn’t know that the Dutch were mean”. When I asked him what he meant, he replied: “Well, if they don’t treat each other to a drink, they must be stingy, like Scots”. At that, I just laughed, repeated the definition of the expression, and continued the lesson. I didn’t give it too much thought at the time, but only made a mental note of the fact that it was strange how the student, who had probably never come across either a Scotsman or a Dutchman in his entire life, nevertheless had an opinion about them.

Another incident left a much stronger imprint on my memory. It was the end of 1993, the time when events in the successor states of the former Yugoslavia were front-page news in all world media. The civil war was raging in Croatia and Bosnia, and Serbia and Montenegro were under economic and cultural sanctions imposed by the UN. For

ordinary people in Serbia, where I come from, it was a period of extreme hardship: the society was undergoing a severe crisis, both economic and moral; the public scene was marked by the rule of an oppressive regime, while on a daily basis people had to cope with the thriving black market and inflation galloping at 2% per hour, living on salaries which did not exceed \$ 5 a month. Teaching English at that time had its challenges. Thus, I vividly recall how a student, participating in a class debate which had nothing to do with politics, said that the attitude of Anglo-Americans to “us” was arrogant, at best patronizing, and that they looked down on “our culture” as inferior. I feebly challenged his view; my main aim being to gloss over the incident.¹ However, the story did not end there. To prove his point, the ensuing week the same student brought an extract from the press that he found particularly offensive: “Patches of glaring ‘Westernism’ ... merely emphasize Belgrade’s fundamental ‘Balkanism’”. What upset him so much was the use of the term ‘Balkanism’ as the pejorative opposite of ‘Westernism’, and corresponding associations evoked by both words respectively: ‘backward’, ‘primitive’ and ‘poor’ by the former, and ‘advanced’, ‘civilized’ and ‘affluent’ by the latter, a typical instance of what I much later learned was ‘the balkanist discourse’². This was one of the most difficult moments in my teaching career – the decision how to react had to be made

¹ The nature of the topic of the debate has escaped my memory, but I can claim with great certainty that it had nothing to do with politics. At that time I thought that my duty was to teach English, English and nothing but English, and that sensitive issues should best be avoided. Not that I was afraid of voicing my opinion – I was working at a language school that was not part of the state education and was not obliged to follow the official policy. However, at that time there were a lot of people in the country who abused their positions to promote their own political views, which, needless to say, were in perfect accord with those propagated by Milosevic’s regime. I did not want to follow their example, partly because the teaching material I was obliged to use did not offer much ‘meat’ for that, and partly because the classroom was my sanctuary – when I closed the door, I shut out the ugly reality I was living in.

² According to Todorova, it is “a frozen image”, “a specific discourse around the Balkans” in which “a geographical appellation was transformed into one of the most powerful pejorative designations in history, international relations, political science, and, nowadays, general intellectual discourse” (Todorova 1997: 7; 19).

within seconds, and I was far from sure what course to take. On the one hand, I could understand his frustration with much of reporting on this country (moreover, I could have added an impressive array of similar examples from my own collection), but on the other hand I felt it was fundamentally wrong to make such gross generalizations. Instinctively sensing that I had to attend to the graver issue, I pointed out that the Serbs also used the term 'Balkan' to designate rough, uncouth behavior or appearance. To this, I was given the following reply: "It's O.K. for us to say that, but for them it's inappropriate."

For a long time afterwards this incident haunted me, and I kept turning it over in my mind trying to find a plausible explanation for what had happened. An obvious answer – that the student had succumbed to the disastrous influence of the Serbian media which gained notoriety for its biased reporting at that time - seemed much too obvious.

Ascribing the cause of such an attitude to either the prevailing public opinion, or to indigenous cultural values or beliefs, would only disguise the true proportions of what I felt was an extremely intricate and delicate problem, greatly surpassing the scope of English language teaching. Apart from that, I had to solve a personal dilemma – I could not get rid of the feeling that somehow I had failed in my role as a teacher. My teaching subconscious was telling me that I should have acted differently; in spite of striving hard, my teaching conscious could fathom neither why nor how. It was only much later that I recollected the former episode, made the connection between the two and launched on a fascinating voyage of discovery. The journey I have covered so far was long and circuitous; I made several false starts, reached many a dead end, and realized that it was necessary to simultaneously follow several paths: to examine one incident in the light of the other, link them with findings coming from a great variety of linguistic and

sociocultural sources, and bring them in connection with theories of language and culture learning. Since the project necessitated my involvement in fields in which I had little or no expertise, the quest was prolonged. Nonetheless, I managed to sustain a high level of motivation throughout the undertaking, probably because it was instigated by three powerful intrinsic sources: strong intellectual curiosity (I had to know why stereotypes are so widespread, and why so many people succumb to them), deep emotional involvement (I had to understand why the elite of the culture I had consciously adopted came to stigmatize the culture I happened to be born in), and a sense of moral and professional obligation (I felt I had to help my students avoid the trap of easily categorizing others).

Overall this study reflects an attempt to offer an answer to my initial query – identifying ways of dealing with national stereotypes in the foreign language classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Problems often look overwhelming at first. The secret is to break problems into small, manageable chunks. If you deal with *those*, you're done before you know it.

Calvin and Hobbes, *IHT*, February 1st, 2003

It has been widely recognized that stereotyping poses one of the most serious challenges to the contemporary world of intensified international and intercultural communication. This phenomenon has been an issue of debate among a range of academic disciplines, which have explored many of its aspects. As regards language pedagogy, it is only recently that it began to give stereotyping a serious thought, since for a long time foreign language learning was considered a medicine for this disease. However, investigations focusing on the problem suggest that the assumption that language learning leads to positive attitudes towards other people and cultures is not necessarily true, and that a mere exposure to language learning and information about other cultures does not inevitably lead to the acceptance of other cultures (Byram, Risager 1999: 1). What can prompt the intended outcome then? How can the language teacher contribute to the promotion of “plurilinguism and pluriculturalism among citizens” and to “combating intolerance and xenophobia”, which are the aims articulated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Common European

Framework of Reference for Languages 2001:4), and many other national curricula as well? However, we should not lose sight of the fact that such documents are designed to offer guidelines, and therefore contain very little on a way and ways of achieving the outlined attainments, leaving that issue to the ingenuity of teaching practitioners. If we agree that teaching is making informed choices (Stevick 1986: vii), the question arises as to how the teacher can find out what options are available as regards national stereotypes?

A first step in designing a research plan for exploring this topic seems to be a critical appraisal of the episodes recounted in the preface, followed by the identification of key concepts and content worthy of investigative attention.

Close scrutiny of the described incidents reveals that they have one element in common: the reaction of students and their specific lines of reasoning were triggered by expressions containing nationality words. Hence, it seems logical to tackle the problem within a framework encompassing the main protagonists in this affair: students, the teacher, and language. The scheme developed by David Hawkins and further expanded by Carol Rodgers (Figure 1) lends itself as the best instrument for achieving this goal.

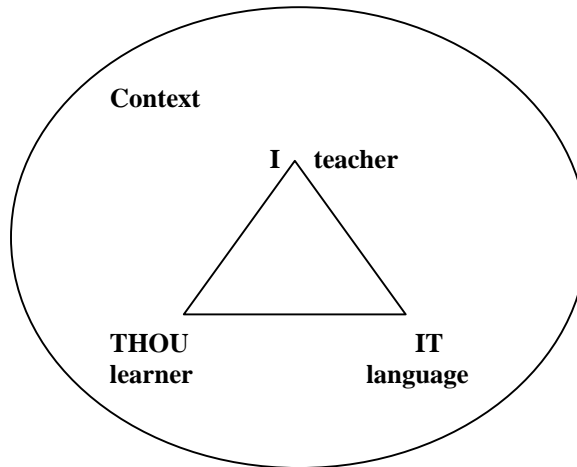


Figure 1³

The framework, incorporating four elements **I** – the teacher, **thou** – the learner, **it**-subject matter (language) and **context**, graphically shows that these are equally important, mutually dependent parts of a single whole and that they cannot be viewed in isolation.

IT. All languages contain phrases, proverbs and idioms expressing stereotypes and prejudices against other nations and ethnic groups, and English is no exception in that respect. Although denounced by many with good reason, these lexical items remain part of the everyday linguistic repertoire. In a number of studies dealing with linguistic aspects of stereotyping, it has been ascertained that language has considerable power in stabilizing and disseminating stereotypes (Bolinger 1968: 262; Arora 1995; Mieder 1995).

³ As represented in Graves 2000: 33. The triangle is drawn from the work of David Hawkins 1967, *The informed vision: Essays on learning and human nature*, while the element of *context* was added later by Carol Rodgers.

However, to my knowledge, few works have attempted to explain, in the broadest scope possible, what happens to these stereotypes in the process of language learning: do students, together with a new language, new beliefs and set of values, also learn stereotypes imbued in that language? Is an old bunch of prejudices completely or partially replaced or superimposed by a new one? Is there a transfer between L1 and L2? What kind of interplay is going on?

THOU. – The episodes outlined in the perface have also brought to the fore two ingredients of the affective factor, the most important variable in language learning: the learner’s attitude to the target language and /or culture, and his identity (Nunan 1995: 235).

When getting to grips with a language other than their mother tongue, learners are not passive recipients of cultural knowledge and values. They enter a struggle between their own meanings and those of native speakers (Kramsh 1993: 24), a complex dialogue between ‘self’ and ‘other’, or the new ‘self’ they are supposed to adopt. This is a formidable task in itself, and verbal ‘labeling’ encountered in the target language, which in ordinary interpersonal relations has a profound influence on the individual’s self-image (Stern 1983: 209), certainly does not contribute to its successful completion.

CONTEXT. The environment in which teaching takes place can also impact the learning process in general, and the learner’s attitude in particular. With regard to stereotypes, there are several dimensions to the learning situation that have to be taken into account, the main being the nature of the learner’s contact with L2 native speakers and culture: whether it takes place on a daily basis (second language context), or whether

it is mainly virtual (foreign language context). Apart from that, another crucial element to be considered is sociopolitical circumstances: it may happen that the country of the learner's origin finds itself on hostile terms with the country, or the countries, in which the target language is spoken. For some, such a situation may warrant siding with this or that side, and even bring about a change in attitude. The second episode from the preface clearly indicates that the role of the mass media in the process is far from insignificant. Although a number studies have been conducted on the media's influence on the formation of public opinion⁴, there has been little discussion on how the media may effect learners' attitude towards the target language and culture. This is an underresearched area and certainly deserves to be placed in the focus of investigative attention.

I. - What kind of stance should the teacher adopt with regard to national stereotypes? Should she resort to the most frequently recommended attitude and simply avoid them?⁵ Try as she may, her efforts are not likely to meet with success. The students are bound to come across stereotypes a) for the simple reason that they are part of the lexical inventory of the language they are learning, and b) teachers do not have control over the input their students get exposed to. Hence, even if stereotypes are successfully avoided in the classroom, learners are bound to come across them in the mass media, and, as we have seen, such an encounter can prove to be very powerful. Touching upon this issue, Byram and Morgan warn that "the influence of extra-curricular forces such as the media is

⁴ Cf. Said 1981; van Dijk 1987; Fowler 1991; Fairclough 1989; Bloomaert, Verschueren 1998; Resigl, Wodak 2001.

⁵ In a message sent to the ELTECs list, Clift and Wadham-Smith advise avoiding national stereotypes, because the mere repetition of them can cause offence and lead to re-inforcement (Naomi Clift & Nick Wadham-Smith British Studies, Literature Department, The British Council, London).

greater – and more insidious – than the intuitive and unsystematic efforts of the teacher” (Byram, Morgan 1994: 4). This is a very insightful observation, and its careful reading reveals a potential force capable of combating the powerful influence of the media: the informed and systematic efforts on the part of the teacher.

Supplying even preliminary answers to these questions and outlining possible paths for their further exploration requires considering findings from several disciplines. Since the focal point of this paper are national stereotypes as expressed in language, the investigation will start from theoretical and empirical insights offered by applied linguistics, then it will consult accounts from other related disciplines, and finally will connect the results with language pedagogy. In the first chapter, I will attempt to outline a principled rationale for the interdisciplinary approach adopted in the treatment of the topic, and develop a coherent framework within which the potentially valuable contributions of different theories can be drawn together for the benefit of the practicing language teacher. Chapter two will seek to describe research on stereotypes, primarily those coming under a linguistic umbrella (semantics, sociolinguistics, critical discourse analysis, text pragmatics), as well as those adjoining it (literature, cultural studies, anthropology and sociology). Chapter three will be dedicated to the linguistic analysis of lexical items containing nationality words - phrases, idioms, proverbs, as well as connotations which these items are capable of developing in certain contexts. Chapter four will give a critical look at the treatment of stereotypes in ELT methodology, while the last chapter, chapter five, will discuss the implication of the findings for language teaching in the light of the knowledge provided by language learning theories and my own perspective on language education. Finally, I will use the results of the investigation

to construct a model for dealing with stereotypes in the field of ELT and also offer some practical solutions by way of illustration. Although the model is designed primarily with the challenges of my teaching situation in mind, I hope that it will not be perceived as idiosyncratic and will be of use in other EFL, and perhaps some ESL, teaching contexts.

CHAPTER 1

DELINEATION OF THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

We separate theory from practice. Result: theories that have little to do with life and practice that is uninformed by understanding.

Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*

The central theme of this chapter is the delineation of the theoretical stance which will be adopted in investigating the topic in the focus of this paper. First the theory/practice polarity is touched upon, and then the scope and characteristics of a theoretical approach which could underpin research in language education is defined. A case is made for an interdisciplinary, problem initiated and practice driven theory. On the basis of the above, a theoretical framework for studying national stereotypes in language learning is presented.

A dichotomy between theory and practice has always been a matter of controversy in language teaching and researching circles. Very rarely does one come across a publication dealing with applied linguistics or language education issues which does not address this antinomy. A list of criticisms (both justified and unjustified) that the two

antagonists level at each other is lengthy. Nevertheless, the necessity of theory for language pedagogy has never been denied, and it seems that at least at this point opinions converge. However, two major contentious issues can be identified: one is related to the nature of such a theory, i.e. whether it should be primarily grounded in linguistics or not, and the other to its directionality: whether all wisdom, force, initiative and guidance should flow *from* theory *to* practice. In what follows I am going to address these questions in turn.

What Theory?

For a long time, linguistics was considered to be the natural parent discipline providing theory for language education. However, theoretical transfer was not conducted directly, but was carried out through a mediator: applied linguistics. Its very name indicates that this discipline was invested with the task of applying linguistic theory to all practical matters pertaining to language, the dominant concern being second /foreign language teaching and learning. Such a middle ground position is always the least favorable one, for it becomes an easy target for blows coming from both sides. Thus, accusations came from linguistic theory to the effect that applied linguistics does not deserve the label ‘theoretical’ since it fails to meet the requirements of academic rigor, while the practitioners charged it with being divorced from practice and not addressing the practical needs of teachers and learners. These allegations were not completely groundless, especially in cases when linguistics was too directly or indiscriminately applied, or when applied linguistics was used to as an additional proof to verify the linguistic theory of the day.

In the 1970s and 1980s the debate about the nature of relationship between linguistic theory and teaching practice took a new path. New voices emerged, claiming that knowledge coming from linguistics was far from enough to account for the rich variety of language and the phenomenon of learning, and that insights from other disciplines, such as education and psychology, were indispensable in elucidating diverse problems linked with language learning. It was also advocated that the task of applied linguistics was not to 'apply' linguistic theories, but rather to examine and recommend relevant implications for teaching practice.⁶ Gradually, room was made for a plurality of approaches, and applied linguistics grew into a truly interdisciplinary enterprise, mediating scientific explanations of the psychological, cognitive, educational and social aspects of language teaching and learning (Brumfit 2001: 186, McCarthy 2001: 6; 143). In addition, it has also changed its direction. Instead of the unidirectional, top-down imposition of theory along the theoretician - the mediator (i.e. applied linguist) - practitioner axis, a different, fruitful partnership between linguistics and its application is now argued for, in which practice is allocated the role of inspirer and initiator of research theories (Stern 1983: 39; de Beaugrande 1997: 279, McCarthy 2001:4). In other words, nowadays applied linguistics is primarily seen as a 'practice' and 'problem driven' field of inquiry (de Beaugrande 1997; Brumfit 2000, McCarthy 2001). Furthermore, it is stressed that applied linguistics should also be a critical discipline, for the theoretical base will flourish more independently when served by a critical consciousness than when the profession simply acts as a conduit for theories derived from linguistics (McCarthy 2001: 135).

⁶ For more detailed account of this matter see Stern 1983, chapters 7 and 8; Edge 1989, de Beaugrande 1997; Brumfit 1996, 2001; McCarthy 2001.

To sum up, an accountable, plausible theory for language education matters ought to be a problem-driven, practice-based, interdisciplinary theory, cognitively grounded, socially and culturally sensitive, psychologically justified, and critically oriented.

The interdisciplinary character of applied linguistics and its relation to language teaching is graphically represented by Brumfit (2001: 159):

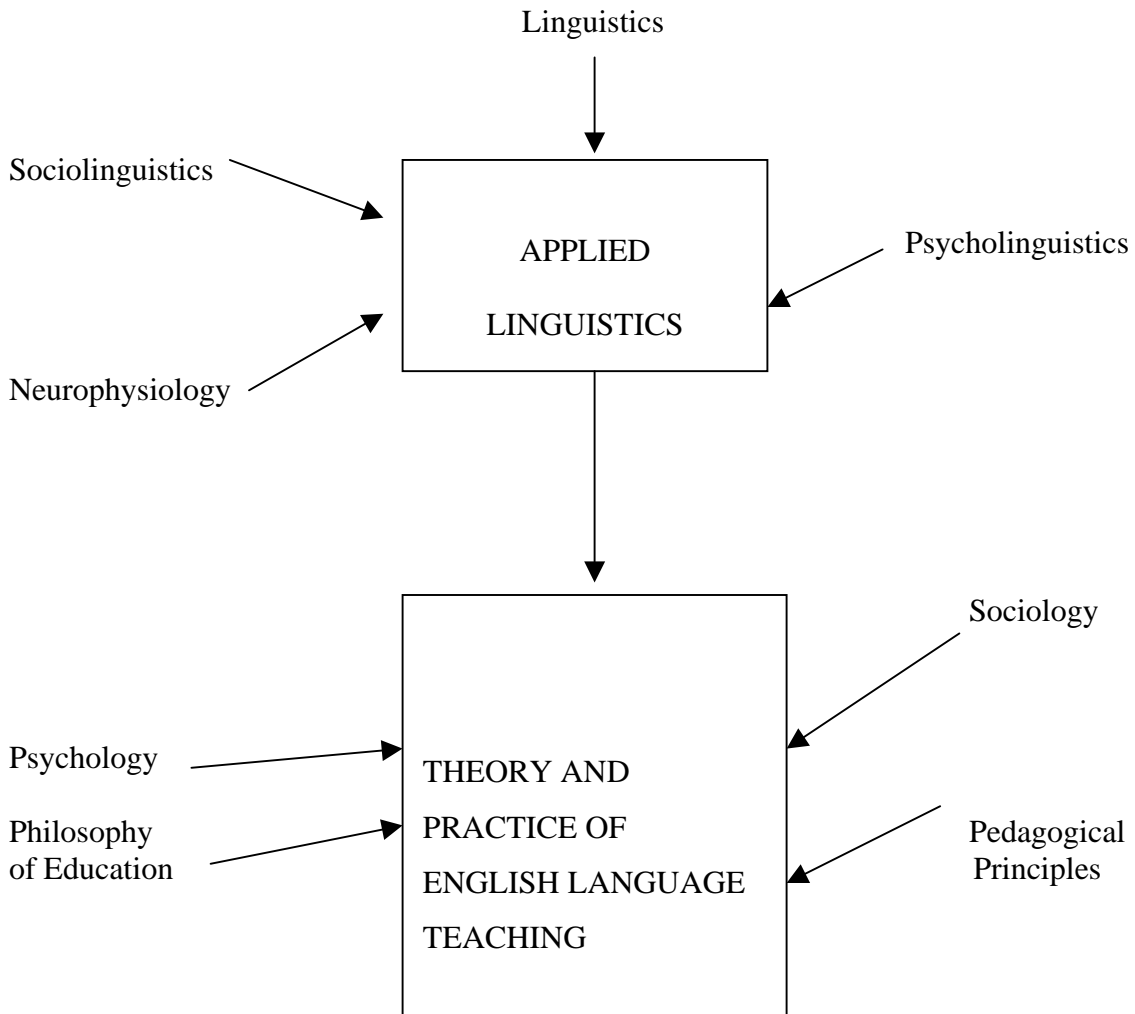


Figure 2

Brumfit also adds that “language teaching is forced to be an interdisciplinary activity in the ways indicated by the figure, and any teacher must necessarily adopt a perspective in relation to all these disciplines” (Brumfit 2001: 159).

It should be noted that such a scheme has been designed with the aim of providing a framework to cater for problems at a macro level. But for each concrete problem to be investigated a micromap has to be drawn, staking out minute details of one segment of the territory whose borderlines are only indicated by the large blueprint.

Initial guidance on how to approach the task of ascertaining what to put on the map and, more importantly, decide on the right proportions of the elements, is offered by McCarthy. He states that whenever the language teacher confronts a problem, she can ask if linguistics can contribute towards its elucidation, and then proceed to establish which branch(es) of linguistic study can assist her in that, and by what method(s) (McCarthy 2001: 9). The next question the teacher should pose is whether the problem is also addressed in other disciplines, and then she should repeat the whole procedure. Only in such a manner can one come to solutions meeting the needs of particular students in a specific learning context.

A Research Framework for National Stereotypes in Language Learning

What I have attempted to do so far is to discuss the scope of an appropriate theory for language education and to consider ways of specifying procedures to be followed to get to the origin of problems rooted in practical concerns. Let us now shift to building up a

concrete research framework which will be used as a basis for the investigation to be pursued in the rest of the paper.

It has been observed that there is no simple formula to guarantee good research, and there is no necessity for research to use only one method (McDonough, McDonough 1997:71). Certainly, the advocated plurality of approaches brings many advantages, the main being liberating the researcher from constraints and limitations imposed by a sole discipline. On the other hand, one must also be concerned with the potential pitfalls of excessive pluralism, i.e. a possible decline in the standards of intellectual rigor. In fact, a plurality of approaches does not entail randomness of approach; above all, a research approach must be principled. In addition, to be accepted by the relevant academic community, every research has to meet the criteria of validity, reliability and generalizability (McDonough, McDonough 1997: 69).

A first step towards coming closer to these requirements is to establish standards and criteria that are applicable to the area under investigation. The next move is to identify contextual variables and their interconnectedness, and then seek a deeper understanding of them in relevant fields, re-examine the variables in the light of new knowledge, and finally determine a possible solution(s). If the problem under investigation is of a practical nature, the proposed answer should also be tested in the real field.

Let us turn to structuring a research agenda for the object of our inquiry along these guidelines. In the introductory part we have identified variables relevant to the study of national stereotypes in language teaching and suggested that the **I – THOU – IT** matrix lends itself as the best candidate for a research model. It has proven its adequacy as a tool assisting teachers to articulate their beliefs concerning the three main participants in the

learning process and their interrelations,⁷ and also as a framework for explaining approaches and methods in teaching. On this occasion an attempt will be made to tap into its analytical potential in order to dissect the problem in the focus of this study into smaller components, and then select disciplines on which to ground further research.

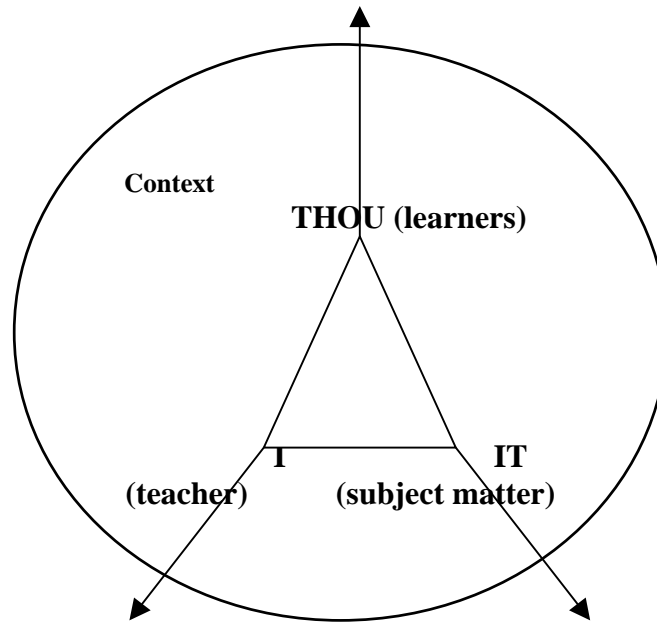


Figure 3

Let us picture Hawkins' triangle, and place it within Brumfit's lower rectangle - that of the theory and practice of language teaching. The arrows added to the triangle indicate that in order to find out more about the nature of any element of the **I-THOU-IT** trio we must reach outside it, either to the remaining part of the rectangular, or even further, to any of external 'feeder' disciplines. Once a relevant discipline, or disciplines, has been identified, we should shift the focus of observation – change the direction of the arrow,

⁷ On this see Graves 2000: 33.

and use the framework of that discipline as a zoom lens to examine the element from a different angle. This can be depicted in the following manner:

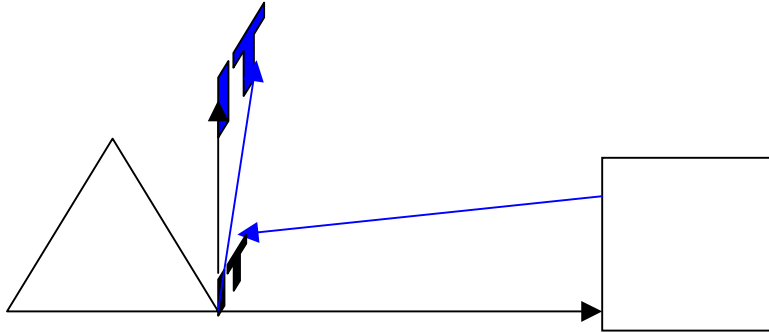


Figure 4

As with all zooms, the angle and distance have to be adjusted so that the element is seen with sufficient details, but within the totality of the picture. The same procedure should be applied to other points of the triangle, **I** and **THOU**, as well as **CONTEXT** encircling them. What is obtained as a result is a much sharper and coherent picture, disclosing the contained ingredients and their relations in a fuller dimension.

I will now proceed to specify researchable areas which could yield relevant information about national stereotypes and their treatment in language teaching.

IT. - If we recall the episodes recounted in the preface, we will remember that the reactions of the students were triggered off by idiomatic phrases containing nationality words, or ethnonyms. Hence, our task will be to center on these lexical items and attempt to pinpoint aspects of their meaning and use which may have brought the incidents about. In order to accomplish that, it will be necessary to resort to analytical procedures provided by relevant linguistic disciplines, namely lexical semantics and critical discourse analysis.

THOU. - Given the fact that in both incidents the interpretations of the target language samples urged the learners to make value judgements of others, and, furthermore, that the latter case was colored by emotionally charged behavior, it will be necessary to focus the investigative attention on factors subsumed under the affective domain: attitudes, values and beliefs of the learners, the role of the learner's subjective or culturally conditioned perceptions, and the issues of identity in second language learning.

CONTEX. - The previously outlined elements ought to be considered in the context in which they appear, since real-world problems are best not regarded as divorced from the world outside the classroom, the wider socio-cultural and political contexts in which language learning takes place (McCarthy 2001: 13). Hence, the topics of sociopolitical considerations should also be touched upon.

I. - The role of the teacher needs to be examined in the light the principles she holds with regard to the aforementioned issues, her own educational philosophy, and her view of the role of the teacher in education.

In the light of the findings, a possible treatment of national stereotypes in language teaching will be suggested and potential pitfalls identified.

The concern of this chapter was to raise to the fore the necessity of an interdisciplinary theoretical approach to problems related to second language learning and outline a corresponding framework for pursuing further analysis. In what follows, the framework will be concretely applied.

CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL STEREOTYPES – CHARACTERISTICS

It was the mask engaged your mind,
And after set your heart to beat,
Not what's behind.

William Butler Yeats, "The Mask"

In the introductory section I have suggested that stereotypes present an obstacle to intercultural communication, a barrier to the promotion of multiculturalism and, consequently, make up a considerable educational challenge. A prerequisite for coming to grips with a problematic area is to become thoroughly acquainted with its nature. Thus, a first step in the discussion on stereotypes should be to examine results of previous research on this phenomenon. In this chapter, I will give an overview of some findings and insights about stereotypes, then proceed to differentiate them from tangential concepts - schemata, prejudices and prototypes, and finally, on the basis of the above, propose a definition of 'national stereotypes'.

Origin of the Term and Findings from Previous Research

The term 'stereotype' originates from typography, where it was used to refer to ready-made matrices replacing individual characters in printing. The first to employ the word on regular basis outside typography were social psychologists, who borrowed it from

Walter Lippman, a reputed journalist and member of the Committee on Public Information in the Wilson administration during World War I, and the author of the book *Public Opinion* (1922). Interestingly enough, Lippman was also among the first to draw attention to the power of the mass media in controlling public opinion and “manufacturing consent by the means of propaganda”. In his book, he characterized stereotypes as “pictures in our head”, evaluative or irrational in nature, whose function was to assist people to make sense of the complexities of the external world (Kurcz 1989: 216; Quasthoff 1989: 182). Since then, stereotypes have been the object of analysis in several disciplines within social sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, social and cognitive psychology. It is only in recent times that they have come into the focus of some linguistic subfields.

Very informative overviews of previous research traditions dealing with stereotypes are offered by Kurcz (1989) and Quasthoff (1989). From these accounts we learn that scholars who directed the focus of analytical inquiry to identifying and specifying the content of stereotypes ascribe to *sociocultural* approaches; the *psychodynamic* approach investigated unconscious drives as the source of stereotypes and their functions; while those belonging to the *cognitivist* group put under scrutiny the process of stereotyping and its role in the information processing of the human mind (Kurcz 1989: 216). This list ought to be expanded to include studies dating from the 1990s, broadly subscribing to the discipline of linguistics, which concentrated on different *linguistic* realizations of stereotypes and prejudiced beliefs (Questhof 1989; Mieder 1995; Aurora 1995); then those dealing with the impact of stereotyping on communication (Scollon, Scollon 1995); as well as meticulous analyses of the occurrences and functions of linguistic means

employed in the rationalization and justification of discrimination against ‘Other’ (van Dijk 1987; Faircough 1989; Blommaert, Verschueren 1998; Reisigl, Wodak 2001).

Definition

Although probing the phenomenon from different theoretical stances and applying various analytical tools in its treatment, these studies nevertheless display apparent common threads. In them, the following characteristics have been identified as salient distinguishing features of stereotypes:

- Stereotypes are part of the ‘common’, ‘background’ or ‘world’ knowledge shared by a social group, most frequently defined as accumulated wisdom of a community about an object, being, or phenomenon (Labov 1972: 314; Quasthoff 1989: 192; Scollon, Scollon 1995: 58);
- They are often inherited from or socially transmitted by members of a cultural group (Grinstead 2000:35);
- They are products of excessive generalization – reduction to polar opposites, resulting from under-rating differences within a category, as well as over-rating differences between categories (Scollon, Scollon 1995: 59);
- They are rigid, treating everyone and everything in either /or terms, not allowing for any exceptions (Kurtcz 1989: 217; Quasthoff 1989: 183; Scollon, Scollon 1995: 156).
- They carry with them an ideological position (Scollon, Scollon 1995: 155).

It ought to be accentuated that stereotypes are not a monolith entity; it is worth distinguishing between their *descriptive* and *attitudinal* aspects. The descriptive facet

amounts to a list of features of the stereotyped object, or the content of a stereotype (e.g. the English are polite and reserved). The attitudinal aspect is related to evaluation of the stereotyped object in terms of +/- or good or bad (e.g. being polite is good, being reserved is bad), (Kurcz 1989: 220-221) and the distance that may result from it (e.g. the prevailing attitude that the English are not to be trusted since they never say what they think because they are reserved). This logically leads us to the *functions* of stereotypes. One of them is cognitive, i.e. they serve as an aid to humans to reduce excess information and in its subsequent organization into a meaningful whole. The other seems to be lying on the borderline between social and psychological realms: stereotypes are utilized to identify and clearly mark distance between two social or cultural groups. This aspect will be elaborated and exemplified later, with national stereotypes as a starting point.

Before embarking on further analysis of this phenomenon, a terminological distinction ought to be made between stereotypes and other concepts with which they are occasionally either confused or equated. These are *shemata*, *prejudices* and *prototypes*.

Those who examined stereotypes as a phenomenon in general define them as socially constructed mental categories for the sorting of events and individuals, categories which we project on to the world to make sense of it. In other words, they equate them with 'frames' or 'schemata' (e.g. Fowler, 1991: 17). Hence, a plausible question to ask is if they are the same as 'schemata'? If not, how do they differ? As some authors have observed, the delineation between the two is not easy to make (Quasthof 1989: 186-191), the more so since the term 'schema' is fuzzy itself and has been used to cover different phenomena (Scollon, Scollon 1995: 57-58). To a certain degree, schemata and stereotypes are related notions: both can be said to be mental structures involving the

cognitive processes of oversimplifying and overgeneralizing with the aim of making sense of, interpreting, classifying and storing incoming information. However, what seems to be a qualitative difference between the two is the presence of an evaluative ingredient in regard to stereotypes. This difference will be best illustrated by means of an example. It is common knowledge that Muslim women wear head-capes with veils; and this piece of information constitute a part of the schemata 'dress of Muslim women'. It would become an overgeneralization to simply assume that, because a woman is Muslim, she would inevitably be veiled. It becomes a stereotype to assume that this is a particularly good or bad quality. This example highlights the psychological and social function of stereotypes: to strengthen the inner-group coherence by defining themselves against an outer group.

As regards another term akin to stereotypes, prejudice, it has been designated as a mental state composed of – normally negative – attitudes towards social groups and of matching stereotypical beliefs (Quasthoff 1989: 184). On the other hand, we must not disregard the fact that stereotypes can also contain traits evaluated as positive (e.g. English politeness, or German punctuality) (Scollon, Scollon 195: 160).

Another concept sharing certain characteristics with stereotypes is that of prototypes. Prototypes are 'a typical example' of a class, 'the best case' of a category. Thus, *sparrow* is considered to be a 'typical' member of the category BIRD and a better case than, for instance, *penguin*, because it possesses more characteristic features of an average bird (small, with wings, with the ability to fly, etc.) (Saeed 1997: 37; Hatch, Brown 1995: 52-56). Prototypes can refer at *any* kind of category, while stereotypes refer only to *social* categories – ethnic, national, gender groups, professions, different social classes, etc.

(Kurcz 1989:219). More importantly, variations and differences are recognized in the structural organization of prototypes: less typical members of are not excluded, but allocated to the periphery of the category. As regards stereotypes, internal differences within a group are not acknowledged: the English are restrained and polite, Americans are simple and boisterous, and these characteristics are attributed to every single member of the group, no exceptions being allowed. Stereotypes take the form, either explicit or implicit, of a logical syllogism, e.g. 'He is an Englishman. He is, therefore, brave.'⁸

Let us now turn our attention to the substance proper of this paper, national stereotypes. It follows from the above that they are part of inherited, socially transmitted 'background' or 'common' knowledge about an ethnic or a national group which is shared by a speech community. Stereotypes may have a general verbal label and a characteristic phrase which serves equally well to identify them (Grinstead 2000: 24; Quasthoff 1983: 184). However, one should not lose sight of the fact that they can also be expressed visually, in the form of cartoons, for instance, or by non-verbal means – gestures deemed typical of a particular nation or an ethnic group.⁹

National stereotypes can be said to result from encounters between various national and ethnic groups, which are either a) **direct**: achieved due to geographic proximity, by means of cultural influence and trade, or are consequences of political alliances and hostilities, colonial domination, etc.; or b) **indirect** - undertaken or imported from other cultures, civilizations and literature. They may be based on factual information about a

⁸ This is a famous example used by the philosopher of language Paul Grice to discuss possible meanings of the connective 'therefore', and subsequently by many other philosophers who got engaged into a polemic debate with him.

⁹ The latter is amply exploited in the movie and advertising industries: the Japanese bowing and smiling deferentially, the American walking with a slouch and sitting with his feet on the table, the Italian waving his hands around.

country, i.e. circumstances under which a particular nation lives; however, they are chiefly concerned with properties generally thought to be typical of a nation (character, dress and appearance, daily routine, habits, etc.). Besides this, they encompass traces of the influence of collective historical experience, political outlook, and shared prejudices. The closer and the more long-lasting the contact between two nations was, the more detailed the 'knowledge'.

Naturally, national stereotypes are not only 'other' oriented; as a rule, ethnic groups are also busily engaged in building and disseminating their own self-image. Comparative analyses of representations that two groups have of each other have revealed that self-image of a group is richer and more positive than images that others have of them (Kurtz 1989: 230); self-criticism is also present, but the attitude to one's own faults is very tolerant ("well, we are, after all, human"). I would like to add additional weight to this conclusion by drawing attention to some of its consequences I witnessed in the recent past. The realization that 'others' hold 'us' in low esteem can be used to justify our own stereotypes of others ("If they say this about us, we can say similar things about others"); furthermore, stereotypical views coming from what the common view holds to be advanced cultures (either countries with great economic power, or belonging to ancient civilizations), can be employed as a backing for our own attitudes ("If *they* say such things about X, then it must be true"). Thus, the Chinese are quoted against Americans, and Americans against Muslims, as the need arises. The phenomenon, which can be labeled 'the snowball effect of stereotyping', alerts us to the fact that "not all discourses have equal weight, and the reason for this does not usually lie *inside* the discourse, but

outside, in the identity of the producer, in the socio-political and spatio-temporal context of its production” (Blommaert, Verschueren 1998:26).

The issue that has caused much controversy concerns the extent to which stereotypes are based on truth. Some researchers deny any objectivity to stereotypical constructs, and it is possible to identify numerous instances of stereotyping resulting from false assumptions¹⁰. Nevertheless, it cannot be disputed that the real world provides a starting point for stereotypical knowledge. However, the choice of a salient feature, and the significance attached to that feature varies to such an extent as to appear arbitrary. This is most obviously manifest in putative properties attributed to a nation (Scollon, Scollon 1995: 159).

The next point to be touched upon in this chapter concerns the manner in which stereotypical images are manifested and disseminated. As previously noted, language is one of the chief means of their stabilization and propagation. Thus, a study of the lexical inventory of a language, its linguistic structures and potentials offered by linguistic usage, can offer insights into the mechanisms by means of which stereotypical beliefs can be invoked and even encoded in the lexicon. The results yielded by such an analysis will provide a valuable source of information for language teachers to consult when examining options in their teaching.

It has been previously mentioned that stereotypes, although products of simplifications, are invested with the role of helping people to make sense of the world. Naturally, taking into consideration the aforementioned, one may wonder what it is in

¹⁰ Scollon and Scollon provide a good example of fallacious stereotyping, when after their lecture on international communication between Chinese and Americans one of the participants came to the conclusion that the differences between Chinese and Americans are identical with the differences between

their character that qualifies them to be appropriate for this important task. A plausible answer to this comes from anthropology: half-understood or mysterious reflective beliefs are much more frequent and culturally important than scientific ones (Sperber 1996: 91). In other words, people are more likely to be influenced by the word of mouth they encounter on a daily basis. In that, national stereotypes seem to be invested with a special mission. With their help, it is possible to identify traits in contrast with codes and practices in a particular society. They comprise a catalogue of ‘fors’ and ‘againsts’ to which we pay unthinking and often ritualistic respect. We resort to them to condemn what departs from established norms, from what a society upholds as an ideal; and condemnation of others not infrequently equals to the indirect praise of one’s own virtues.

Last, but not least, a point worth exploring is why stereotypes become perpetuated and how come that some of them (e.g. about Indians, Jews, Muslims, Americans) enjoy such a general international consensus. This is a very sensitive and complex issue and can be investigated as a topic on its own. On this occasion it will suffice to say that numerous studies have accumulated a body of evidence that mass media¹¹ - films, songs, the press – and literature¹² have a very prominent role in enhancing, spreading and perpetuating stereotype motifs. A better acquaintance of this matter can assist language teachers in

men and women outlined by Deborah Tannen in her book *You Just Don’t Understand: women and men in conversation* (Scollon, Scollon 1995: 156).

¹¹ Mieder (1995) discusses the role of film industry in spreading the stereotypes of Indians; on the role of the press and academia in spreading the stereotypes about the Muslims see Said 1981; on racism in the press see van Dijk 1987; Blommaert, Verschueren 1998; Reisigl, Wodak 2001.

¹²See *Inventing Ruritania*, by Goldsworthy. The gist of her heavily documented study is that “Balkan” became synonymous with “violence, incivility, even barbarism” soon after being coined in 1809 by a confused German geographer as a term for Southeastern Europe. Goldsworthy concludes that the literary “colonization” of the Balkans by mainly British writers from the 19th century onward created stereotypes and biases that pervade the political thinking and establishment journalism of the English-speaking world.

perceiving the attitudinal and affective dimension of the problem, which is of crucial importance for attending to this aspect in teaching.

In this chapter, I have reviewed and attempted to systematize previous research on stereotypes conducted in several disciplines. In brief, it has been ascertained that stereotyping occurs when two groups are treated as polar opposites, when characteristics, taken to have some exaggerated either negative or positive value, are overgeneralized in order to apply to each member of the group. Although they can offer a positive picture of a group of people, stereotypes cannot be said to contribute anything to the promotion of intercultural communication and understanding. Their character is inherently *limiting*, for they constrain our view of human activity to just one or two salient dimensions, do not allow exceptions to the general rules, and consider those to be the whole picture (Scollon, Scollon 1995 : 155-156).

CHAPTER 3

LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL STEREOTYPES

‘What’s in a name?’
‘...that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call’d
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doft thy name
And without that name which is not part of thee
Take all myself.

William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, II,ii, 42-48

It is not only the exquisite beauty of language that renders immortality to this oft-quoted passage, but also the perennial topicality of the question posed by Shakespeare’s tragic heroine. From Plato and Aristotle to the present day, philosophers and linguists have paid a lot of attention to uncovering the meaning of names. They have been intent on solving several enigmas pertaining to them: to what extent a name is part of an entity, what the connection is between perfections owned by a person and a name he or she bears, whether that very name can be used to refer to the same perfections exhibited by other individuals or groups, and how this is made possible. On this occasion no attempt will be made to discuss their findings and still unsolved controversies; it will suffice to say that it has been shown that names of some individuals and places, whose bearers have historical, social or cultural significance can be employed in contexts in which they do

not identify their referents, but rather stand for certain properties or characteristics associated with them¹³. Thus, it is possible to say “He is the Napoleon of the 20th century”, “She’s our Marilyn Monroe”, “Hong Kong is the New York of South-East Asia”, etc. Do nationality names, or ethnonyms, differ in this respect?

In grammar books, they are defined as terms with generic reference, i.e. saying something about a class. What does that something include for nationality names, apart from the obvious component ‘from a particular country’? In other words, what perfections do they hide in them?

In order to answer these questions, I will resort to an anecdote from Serbian history.

Legend has it that Nikola Pasic, the Prime Minister of Serbia at the end of the 19th century, was once advised in parliament that, regarding his behavior, he should take his cue from his British counterpart, Mr Gladstone. To that, the Serbian Prime Minister reputedly replied: “I’m Gladstone to the same degree that you are English”. The members of the parliament met this remark in silence, which indicates that they did not take the meaning of the utterance literally (at that level, it amounts to an obvious truth that the Serbs are not the English), but rather came to it by logical inference: the English are well-mannered. Gladstone is English. Therefore, he is well-mannered. The Serbs are not the English. Therefore, they are not well-mannered. I am a Serb. Therefore, I am not well-mannered. Mr. Pasic’s remark quickly gained enormous popularity and its high citation score confirms that the hinted assumption on which it rested was shared by many.

The fact that the anecdote is easily translated into English and loses nothing in the process confirms that constructs such as ‘the English’ ‘the Japanese’ or ‘Serbs’ have some common meaning, accepted by most members of those groups. This common

¹³ See Lyons, 1977:220; Marmaridou, 1989: 370; Hatch, Brown 1995: 176-178.

meaning places emphasis on traits considered to be shared by these people (Scollon, Scollon 1995: 125). Thus, everybody more or less agrees that the English are polite, and this consensus enables the speakers of English and many other languages to refer to polite manners (in particular contexts, of course) by ‘English behavior’ and be correctly understood.

Let us take a look at another example. Since the times of Mr. Pasic, the circumstances in Serbia have considerably changed, and many would laconically describe them as spartan. These two words, ‘laconic’ and ‘spartan’, found in almost all European languages, were originally used to designate citizens of Laconia and its capital Sparta, but subsequently came to be employed to refer to the manner in which the Laconians spoke, and the way in which the Spartans lived in a distant past¹⁴. Owing to the tremendous influence of the Greek language and civilization, the word ‘spartan’, utilized to designate ‘simple and severe with no comfort’, and the adjective ‘laconic’, with the meaning ‘using very few words, terse’, spread to other languages and are now employed by people of whom many are not even aware that Laconia ever existed.

What enables a speaker to use words in such a manner is chiefly shared knowledge that people in a given culture have concerning a certain domain – i.e. weather, animals, and, in our case, nations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is variously called common background, socio-cultural, or encyclopedic knowledge: the knowledge a speaker might calculate others would have before, or independently of, a particular conversation, by virtue of membership in a community (Kövecses, Szabó, 1996: 338;

¹⁴ In all probability, not absolutely all of them lived and spoke in such a way, but certainly a sufficient number of them did so for a long enough time, or their behaviour differed very much from that practiced by the surrounding population. Why has nothing like ‘Corinthian’ or ‘Athenian’ been encapsulated in

Saeed 1997: 183). In regard to nationality names, this view encompasses traces of the influence of collective historical experience, political outlook, and shared prejudices. However, what makes them worthy of attention is what they indirectly reflect: how speakers of a particular language look at other nations. Analyzing language is a good way of approaching this question, for tacit knowledge of a language community relating to a particular domain is revealed more clearly in linguistic structures and in linguistic usage (Wierzbicka, 1996: 355). Thus, a close scrutiny of relevant lexical items bearing on a particular domain (in our case other nations) in a language will yield a series of components, which, when connected, comprise what several authors call a stereotype. The more varied and richer it is, the stronger the case (Wierzbicka, 1986: 351).

A first step in a linguistic analysis is to determine the unit of the linguistic description – whether it will be conducted at a word, sentence, or discourse level. In that, two elements have to be taken as decisive criteria: the nature of the phenomenon, and the main objective of the study. As regards the former criterion, our concern is at least twofold: the analysis should include words and expressions with stereotypical meanings, or lexicalized stereotypes on the one hand, and contexts in which nationality words can evoke stereotypes on the other. Our other chief interest is the examination of ways in which stereotypes can be encoded in language so that we can use the findings to make informed decisions in our teaching. Hence, the unit will have to be both broad enough to incorporate all major occurrences of stereotyping relevant to language teaching.

The analysis starts from lexicalised stereotypes, for they can be encountered in all kinds of discourse, and, consequently, learners are more likely to come across them. It

language? In all probability, because there was no distinct pattern consistently pursued in their way of living, nothing to decline from the norm to merit lexicalization.

will be restricted to lexical items (single words, bound collocations, simile, metaphors, sayings, proverbs and idiomatic phrases) containing a nationality word as an immediate constituent. The corpus under scrutiny comprises data from various dictionaries¹⁵. When deemed relevant for the topic, names of countries have also been included. Derogative terms have not entered the corpus as such, for the simple reason that they would require a wider coverage¹⁶; however, they have been included if parts of phrases. In the following section, I shall focus on specific syntactic constructions in which stereotypes occur. Finally, sentence boundaries will be transcended, and I shall offer a brief outline of the most characteristic discursive strategies employed for stereotyping.

National Stereotypes As Expressed in Language

On the basis of the formal properties of these lexical items, and linguistic mechanisms deployed in their formation, the following groups have been distinguished:

1. Bound collocations.

They indicate where ‘from’ particular objects, gadgets, or animals originated (or are thought to have originated), and also denoting specific properties clearly differentiating them from other members of the same group: ‘French bread’, ‘loaf’ or ‘stick’ is not just

¹⁵ See the list of sources in Appendix 1. It is important to know what learners can come across in dictionaries in a period when independent dictionary use is advocated as a powerful strategy for vocabulary learning (Nation, Meara 2002: 44-46).

¹⁶ There are no ‘terms of endearment’ designating other nations, that is also worth investigating.

bread made in France, it also has certain distinctive characteristics - shape, flavor, taste - making it unique.

One may wonder why these expressions are mentioned, since they have nothing to do with stereotyping. They are touched upon here for the simple reason that they most obviously manifest the potential power of nationality words as linguistic means. This is further illustrated by the fact that in some instances political authorities deemed it necessary to interfere directly in matters of language and alter a nationality word in an expression of the kind we previously discussed. Objects had to 'doft their names', because their explicitly labeled descent after many years of use became politically incorrect for the simple reason that "favorable reference to the enemy is taboo", and that is to be avoided at all costs (Bolinger, 1968: 263). Thus, after World War II in Britain 'German shepherd dog' was changed into 'Alsatian dog', the expression now employed in British English, while the former remained in usage in the United States. Another example is 'Turkish coffee', which became 'Greek coffee' in Greece, and is on the point of losing its name in Serbia as well.¹⁷ Unfortunately, the process seems to be still productive: in some circles in America 'French fries' have been renamed into 'liberty potatoes'¹⁸.

To this class we may also add some colloquial or informal expressions used to designate a particular type of behavior. The collocation is still transparent, i.e. the head

¹⁷ This phenomenon is worth investigating: the usage of 'Turkish coffee' has not been banned by an official decree, but it is strange how some people tend to avoid it now – in restaurants, for instance, one is served 'domestic', 'home-made' or even 'boiled' coffee.

¹⁸ Timothy Garton Ash, "Anti-Europeanism in America", *The New York Review of Books*, February 13, 2003, Volume L, Number 2. See also Gersh Kuntzman, "Frying the French", *Newsweek* April 14 2003, p.9.

word has kept its literal meaning, but the nationality word functioning as a determiner renders the meaning of the entire collocation different - *XY is a specific instance of Y, done in the manner typical of X*, e.g.:

- 1) Spanish customs or practices (inf.) irregular practices among a group of workers to gain increased financial allowances, reduced working hours, etc.
- 2) Mexican standoff – a general stalemate, deadlock

Thus, Mexican standoff is a standoff, but of a specific kind. The extrapolation added in the entry definition: “Mexican seems to be used to give a sense of peril and crudeness to the situation, as if two persons faced each other directly with machetes or loaded guns” clearly points to its stereotypical origin.

2. Figurative language – tropes, phrases and idioms.

This is a large group comprising many examples which can be classified on the basis of several criteria: with regard to the linguistic level they belong to, or on the basis of tropes deployed in their creation. Since ways of invoking stereotypical meanings are the chief concern of this study, the latter classification will be adopted.

The most frequent tropes include:

Euphemisms - Bound collocations and phrases containing a nationality word are sometimes employed as a milder substitute for something that is not decent to be called its right name, or simply in order to achieve a humorous effect.

- 3) French postcards, French prints – obscene drawings
- 4) French Consular Guard – prostitutes
- 5) to take French lessons – to use the services of a prostitute

- 6) the French disease – syphilis
- 7) French letter – condom
- 8) Dutch cap – a cap (birthcontrol)
- 9) German goiter – beer belly

Not infrequently, humor may slide into irony and even sarcasm:

- 10) Irish confetti – a stone, brick, or fragment of stone used as a missile
- 11) Mexican breakfast – a cigarette and a glass of water
- 12) Mexican promotion (or raise) – advancement in rank or status with no raise of salary
- 13) Dutch treat – sharing the cost of something, esp. meal
- 14) Dutch courage (Br) the confidence that some people get from drinking alcohol before they do something they are frightened of doing

The meanings fashioned out in these expressions occasionally provided foundation for the creation of idiomatic expressions:

- 15) Let's go Dutch – let's share the cost of the meal
- 16) To assist in the French sense (iron.) - not to take part

Metonymy. Let us consider again the example first mentioned in the opening of this chapter:

- 17) She laconically answered that the living conditions in Serbia were Spartan.

This statement reflects a tendency of people to introduce variety in their speech by taking one well understood or easily perceived aspect of something to represent or stand for the thing as a whole. In this case, the ethnonyms, denoting here the local origin of people living in ancient times, stand for a characteristic deemed typical of these very people, e.g. ‘spartan’ has become a term of reference for simple and severe living, and ‘laconic’ for a terse manner of expression. This is an instance of the trope known as metonymy. An essential feature of metonymy is the token substituting the type (Gibbs 194: 323; Hatch, Brown 1995: 89), or the part standing for the whole¹⁹. Apart from its referential function, i.e. allowing us to use one entity to stand for another, metonymy also serves as a vehicle for providing understanding. For instance, in the case of the metonymy ‘the part for the whole’, there are many parts than can be selected to stand for the whole. However, “*which part we pick out determines which aspect of the whole we are focusing on*” (Lakoff, Johnson 1980:36, emphasis mine).

Let us examine which aspects - traits or characteristics – of particular ethnic groups are highlighted and lexicalized in the following expressions:

18) Asiatic (navy & marine corps, before W.W.II) – crazy; wild, violent

19) Scotch - mean (person), ungenerous (act)

20) byzantine – characterized by complexity, deviousness, intrigue, etc;
(of attitudes) inflexible and complicated

21) Irish – n. anger

¹⁹ In traditional rhetoric, ‘part per tutto’ is defined as synecdoche; however, some theoreticians consider synecdoche as a special case of metonymy (cf. Lakoff, Johnson 1980:36). This distinction, however, is not significant for our topic.

- 22) Tartar (informal) – a) person of irritable or violent temper; b) a person who is unexpectedly formidable; c) a rigorously exacting person
- 23) Turk – (archaic) – one who is cruel or tyrannical
- 24) arab - a homeless vagabond; esp. an outcast boy or a girl
- 25) turk – football, an employee of a professional football team, generally not a highly placed one, who tells players they are to be dismissed (the image of a Turk with a scimitar sword, who “cuts” the player)
- 26) gypsy²⁰ – wanderer
- 27) jew – a) one given to hard financial bargaining b) a miser

These examples illustrate a special case of metonymy: the typical token (a nation) standing for the type (a specific characteristic or class). They also demonstrate how in one historical period a connotation of a term, based on the stereotypical belief, may become a basis for the formation of new words or expressions and phrases. The orthographic alteration of a capital into a small letter in some of these examples confirms that a specific conversion has taken place – a shift into a different type of noun (a proper into common, the cases of ‘turk’, ‘jew’, ‘gypsy’).

As with the previous subcategory, the new meanings of nationality words provided ground for the formation of idiomatic phrases:

- 28) jew down – late 1800s (slang) to bargain and haggle in an attempt to get a lower price

²⁰ In many languages, the word ‘Gypsy’ is discriminatory at the level of referential identification and predication (for more about it see Reisigl, Wodak 2001: 68). This example illustrates well how the connotative associations – being tattered, ragged, vagrant, unsteady, became lexicalized in the ethonym.

- 29) get one's Irish up – get enraged
- 30) Do the Dutch, Dutch act – commit suicide
- 31) In Dutch – early 1900 – in disfavor, in trouble
- 32) Dutch uncle – one who criticizes or admonishes sternly and bluntly
- 33) To take a French leave – to leave without saying goodbye
- 34) Pardon my French – excuse my bad language
- 35) To turn Turk – go bad
 “if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me” (Hamlet, III.ii.276)

An idiom is not just an expression that has meaning that is somehow special in relation to the meanings of its constituent parts (Hatch, Brown 1995: 202); it arises from the general knowledge of the world, historical and cultural experience shared by all speakers of a language (Hatch, Brown 1995: 203; Kövecses, Szabó, 1996: 338-339), or, in some instances, from shared stereotypes and prejudices. We can rely on this knowledge to make sense of the meanings of idioms; hence the meanings of idioms can be seen as motivated and not arbitrary. Sometimes knowledge of historical circumstances, literature or folk tales is needed to account for their motivation.²¹

In sum, some of the expressions classified into this category are obsolete, some belong to slang²²; all of them put together provide important socio-cultural information about the attitude to some nations in a particular epoch.

²¹ A good example of the latter is ‘Greek gifts’, or, in its full version ‘Fear the Greeks bearing gifts’ - implying ‘gifts from enemies are dangerous, false friends are worse than open enemies’. It entered the vocabulary of many languages thanks to Virgil (Aeneid II, 48 – Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes).

²² It should be borne in mind that slang of one generation becomes the standard language of another.

3. Sayings and proverbs

Stereotypes, ethnic slurs and racial prejudice as expressed in proverbs and proverbial expressions have a considerable scholarly tradition. Linguists pursuing paremiological studies have drawn attention to the power of proverbs and sayings as stereotype disseminators. Some very strong views have been outlined, to the effect that a proverb told by members of one national groups about another may be more responsible for attitudes held by the first group about the second than any other single factor. The claim is further substantiated by the assertion that proverbial sayings and other kinds of folk stereotypes are not merely a passive reflection of attitudes towards ethnic or national groups, but that they play an active role in the creation or propagation of those attitudes (Arora 1995: 15). Given that proverbs are frozen phrases which display shared cultural wisdom, their potential power should certainly not be underestimated. However, this claim should be taken with some caution. Works in the field of critical discourse analysis have shown that prejudices working at not easily noticeable levels of assumptions and presuppositions can be held more responsible for the dissemination of stereotypical views.

Proverbs do not only disseminate stereotypical beliefs, then can also serve as a matrix for concocting similar invectives against other nations and ethnic groups. Thus, writing about the history of the saying 'Only a dead Indian is a good Indian', Mieder has shown how the maxim purportedly uttered by General Phillip Sheridan served not only as a starting point for spreading the stereotypes about the Indians, but also as a productive model for defamatory slogans against other nations (Mieder 1995).²³

²³ Mieder (1995) described how this proverbial formula was used in different wartime situations to discredit the enemy (Germans, Japanese, Vietnamese). The title of a recent article attests to its longevity and

Before I move on to further consideration of linguistic realizations of national stereotypes, let me comment briefly on the previously outlined points. The first thing noticeable is that the analyzed examples make up a rather heterogeneous set:

- they differ diachronically;
- synchronically, they belong to different registers;
- it is possible to pose the synchronic question of the frequency of occurrence – for some of the examples it can be rightfully claimed that they were not in widespread use, or were employed only by certain social groups. Consequently, the findings based on their analysis are of a limited value.

It cannot be denied that much more frequency research is needed on the popularity and acceptance of certain expressions before they can be interpreted as being indicators of commonly held attitudes. However, it is important to stress that this paper is focused on possible ways of expressing stereotypes, not on describing the content of stereotypes encoded in the English language by means of linguistic analysis. Such an enterprise would demand a different research approach: conducting surveys through interviews and questionnaires, for instance, analyzing fiction of a particular epoch, and /or the reporting in the mass media.

4. Sentence level and beyond

It has been previously stated that the largest number of studies dealing with linguistically encoded stereotypes come from the field of discourse and text pragmatic analyses, and that the classifications and categorizations outlined in them are made on the basis of investigating prejudiced discourses, discourses of racism and discrimination.

generative potential: David Binder, Walter R. Roberts “The Only Good Serb Is ...”, *The Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No.3.

However, it is important to note that stereotypes are just one of the strategies in the negative construction of Other and the positive construction of Self. Since the focus of this investigation is directed at verbal expressions of stereotypes, it has not been possible to completely undertake the analytical apparatus of any of the approaches. For the purposes of this study, the tools developed and deployed in discourse analysis have been borrowed and adapted. In that, I have been primarily guided by the needs of language learners.

Firstly, I am going to look at the ways of expressing or invoking stereotypical propositions: 'All x are y' and 'y is an intrinsic characteristics of all x'.

A view of another nation or an attitude to it can be expressed **directly**, in the form of a statement - an analytical proposition or the type S+P, or subject + predicate. The subject comprises the name of an ethnic or national group as the realization of the noun phrase, while the verb phrase of the predicate contains lexical items referring to a quality or behavior pattern, e.g. "Germans are hard-working", "Americans are loud". The illocutionary force of such propositions amounts to general truth – it pertains to all, say, Germans, under all circumstances. These statements can be further modified. The speaker can distance himself by resorting to "It is said that Germans are ...", or "Germans are considered to be...", or add additional force by directly expressing his view: "I don't think that Germans are ...". He can also resort to the wisdom of authorities: "In the book of 'The Clash of Civilization' it has been ascertained that ...", or call his own expertise (i.e. experience) to the rescue: "I know Germans, I have lived in Germany for 5 years". The resulting effect is different: the strength of the claim is either mitigated or intensified, and the degree of the speaker's commitment varies.

Implicitness. There are various ways of implicitly invoking stereotypical meanings, with nationality words being part of the predicate:

36) He is a typical /real German /American.

37) That's typically German /American.

The utterance 'He is a typical X' or 'He is very X' may refer to physical appearance, or to certain traits. The best developed stereotypes include both components. The evoked typical quality has to be inferred from the broader context, and the inferential process is occasionally aided by the clues found in the same sentence:

38) He's very Germanic in his efficiency.

39) He won't be late because he's German.

The latter example rests on the stereotypical assumption that Germans are never late.

Nationality names that have not developed connotative meanings in English cannot be employed in these constructions; with them, the construction is meaningless or difficult to interpret.

An especially interesting case is the situation when an ethnonym takes the place of both the subject and the predicate of the sentence, i.e. an instance of a tautology:

40) Indians will be Indians.²⁴

²⁴ The example is quoted by Mieder 1995.

For the interpretation of this sentence, one has to make use of the connotative potential of the nationality word in the predicate position, i.e. to national stereotypes. According to Mieder, in the case of Indians it equals ‘savages’ (Mieder 1995). It is not difficult to think of tautologies containing other ethnonyms, i.e. ‘English will be English’, ‘Serbs will be Serbs’, and an array of meanings that can be inferred in various contexts.

In the end, mention should also be made of different tropes that can be employed to implicitly refer to stereotypes. They include synecdoche, metonymy, and metaphor. As previously mentioned, synecdoche, resting on the possibility to use a whole to refer to part and vice versa, or ‘part for whole’, is used to allude to traits assigned to particular nations. Metonymy is a substitution involving two closely connected fields of reference: for instance, the persons are replaced by the place they live – the state, country, town, region, i.e. ‘Europe is not Asia’. Metaphor is another category of figurative language, when something is described by stating another thing with which it can be compared. At this point, it is interesting to note instances when names of states or regions have been transformed into specific metaphors. Thus, ‘America’ is deployed to stand for richness, ‘the Balkans’ – feuds, wars, disorder, backwardness; ‘Africa’ – poverty; ‘Europe’ – prosperity, advancement, ‘West’ – advancement, ‘East’ – backwardness²⁵.

Let us summarize what has been outlined so far regarding the form, meaning and use of stereotypes, and then attempt to ascertain a general pattern on the basis of the findings yielded by the analysis.

²⁵ No so long ago, a summit of the ‘West Balkan’ countries was held in Belgrade. A closer look at the list of the participant revealed that, as a matter of fact, all Balkan countries took part in the conference. A chance passer-by, with a good knowledge of geography would wonder - if everyone is present, what countries take up other, less fanciful parts of the ‘doomed’ peninsula? A more plausible explanation would be that the determiner ‘West’ was needed to render the element of ‘decency’ or ‘prestige’ and ‘glamour’. Yes, we are Balkan, that cannot be denied, but we are the WEST Balkan countries.

The analysis has registered lexicalized instances of stereotypes (words, phrases, idioms, proverbs and sayings) which are part of the lexical inventory of the language. At the sentence level, they can be expressed both by explicit and implicit means. In that, great connotative potential of nationality words is capitalized on.

As regards meaning, it is interesting to register what characteristics have been singled out and what such a choice reveals, and who they are attributed to. Even a perfunctory glance at the examples on the pages 36-40 reveals that stereotypes that merited lexicalization in English are mostly negative. But English is not unique in that; other languages do not describe others in flattering terms either. A brief list of similar stereotypical expressions in other languages indicates that most frequently criticized faults recognized in other nations are roughly the same:

- a) Others are accused of speaking in an incomprehensible way (dating from the Tower of Babel); the only difference being which language is overtly blamed for complete unintelligibility: 'it's all Greek to me' (English and Dutch) 'Spanish villages' (Serbian) 'it's Chinese to me' (Greek, Hungarian and Russian), Turkish (French) 'Bohemian, i.e. Czech villages in German (das sind mir böhmische Dörfer).
- b) Another nation epitomizes a vice – sexual immorality (the French)²⁶, and drunkenness. It is interesting to note who are the most notorious drunkards in popular

²⁶ Citing Theodore Adorno and his famous work *The Authoritarian Personality*, Quasthoff argues that such a position results from a personality syndrome: forbidden desires are projected on outgroups, be they national or any other (Quasthoff 1989: 187). The sexual imagery continues to be a rich source for developing stereotypes: in his article "Anti-Europeanism in America" Timothy Garton Ash writes how it is exploited in the latest American-European confrontation: "If anti-American Europeans see "the Americans" as bullying cowboys, anti-European Americans see "the Europeans" as limp-wristed pansies. The American is a virile, heterosexual male; the European is female, impotent, or castrated. ... The word "eunuch is, I discovered, used in the form "EUnuchs." (NYRB, February 13, 2003, Volume L, Number 2, 32).

view: Russians in Serbian; Poles in French and Russian, Germans in Italian and Spanish.

- c) Other nations are blamed for ill-manners – the English reproach the French for leaving without saying good-bye, (to take a French leave), but they do the very same thing in France (*filer à l'anglaise*) and Italy (*andarsene all' inglese*); the Serbs look down on the Turks for not shaking hands ('*ruka ruci nismo Turci*' 'let's shake hands, we are not Turks').
- d) Another common fault found with other nations is treachery: for the Serbs, Turks are the epitome of this loathsome trait, while the English perceived it in the Byzantines.

The number of idiomatic phrases containing specific nationality names indicates that the closest neighbors lent themselves as convenient targets of stereotypical jibes – the French in case of British English, and Mexicans and Indians in case of American.

Stereotypical portraits of other nations are not of equal quality: some (i.e. those of “good” acquaintances) are pretty detailed, some resemble a crude sketch with a feature or two put in the foreground. Although no comparative analysis of stereotypical images in various languages has been done here, the outlined examples nevertheless allow us to make some conclusions in that regard. Some stereotypes, or stereotypical traits and their carriers – e.g. of Jews, the French, Indians, Americans, Germans, the English – are encountered in many languages and cultures, and can boast of international acceptance: the image of the cold and polite Englishman has undoubtedly become globalized. On the other hand, some stereotypes are culture specific, especially those capitalizing on locally manufactured differences: in Serbia, Montenegrins are the epitome of laziness.

Two points should be made with regard to use. One relates the frequency of lexicalized stereotypes, and the other the types of discourses they are usually encountered. It is interesting to note that in older dictionaries the number of such expressions is larger. This is probably the result of greater public awareness of the potential harm of such expressions which gradually brought about what some would label as more politically correct, or, I would suggest, more responsible usage of language. Another possibility is that the common desire to stick to political correctness has influenced dictionary compilers to exclude such expressions from new editions. I will also hypothesize that in all probability the present state of affairs is the result of the joint impact of both. Such expressions have been expelled from many forms of communication; the fact that they are still encountered in considerable quantities in slang is very telling in itself.

The next issue to be touched upon is the range of discourses in which stereotypes may appear. They are a necessary ingredient of discourses of 'otherisation', representing others in a negative light, but certainly not the only linguistic mechanism employed to that purpose²⁷. Apart from this natural host genre, stereotypes can be encountered in everyday conversation, in innocent remarks unthinkingly made; in jokes targeting ethnic groups, travel brochures, literature, entertainment industries, and last, but not least, the press. However, one point needs to be clarified here. Expressing one's identity, including national, searching for a better understanding through its constant defining and redefining, is a basic human need and inalienable human right. It is certainly not the intention of this paper to suggest that every single reference to values, beliefs and ideals

²⁷ Detailed analyses of other linguistic means can be found in Fowler 1991: 66-90; Reisigl, Wodak 2001:31-90.

of national and ethnic groups, such as ‘the Germans do this’, ‘the Italians do that’, ‘for Americans, family means...’ equals to stereotyping. People have an understandable desire to explore and express their national identity in various ways, and to voice their experience and views of other peoples and cultures. The number and range of most recent titles dealing with this topic yielded by a Google search confirms that the interest in this matter has not abated, and that the scholars in the era of globalization approach it with the same zest as the great minds of the epoch of Romanticism, when studies dealing with national characters enjoyed a considerable vogue among scholars and men of letters alike. What can be problematic in my view are:

- a) Instances of discrimination coming from the elites, either politicians or experts. As has been mentioned in Chapter 2, not all discourses have equal weight, and statements such as “Muslims, both Arab and Turks, readily acknowledge that, judged by a range of intellectual criteria, their civilization does not measure up to that of the West because intellectual rigor, the West’s real gift to the modern world, has barely touched Arab civilization”²⁸, often come to be quoted as facts, for the simple reason that they are produced by a high-standing authority in the field.
- b) When ordinary people utter fallacies probably originating from ‘expert opinion’ e.g. “Muslims consider their civilization inferior to the West” and are unaware of that.

²⁸ Milton Viorst, a writer of numerous articles for the *New Yorker*, quoted by Said 1997: xxv.

In this chapter, I have examined occurrences of nationality words in English and resorted to descriptive linguistic tools to classify instances of their evoking stereotypical meanings. I have also attempted to categorize foreground stereotypical traits and ascertained a high degree of correspondence across languages with that regard. At the end, I have briefly summarized discourses in which stereotypes may appear. In the ensuing discussion, I will change the point of view and look at stereotypes from the position of language teaching.

CHAPTER 4

NATIONAL STEREOTYPES AND ELT

There are no such things as facts, only interpretations.

Friedrich Nietche

This chapter is focused on systematizing perspectives taken on national stereotypes in field of ELT. Its first part will give an overview of aspects of stereotyping addressed in the relevant literature on language learning and teaching. Next, the principal ideas will be summarized and critically appraised. The final section will identify main points and variables that ought to be taken into consideration in opting for an appropriate treatment of stereotypes in the language classroom. In addition, findings will be brought in the connection with the **I-THOU-IT** framework followed in this paper.

This survey of the approaches to stereotypes in ELT will center on key issues linked with the problem. Dilemmas preoccupying ELT professionals can be chiefly subsumed under the following: to deal with them or ignore them; to address them directly, or to attend to other elements which will indirectly bring about their disappearance. Let us examine rationales behind each option.

Option 1 - avoid them. In the introductory part it has been pointed out that the most frequently recommended attitude to stereotyping in ELT is avoidance of the issue. Implicit in this approach is the assumption that controversial topics should be excluded, and that the best way of assimilating conflicts is by avoiding them. Thus, the only guidance that teachers can find in methodology books regarding stereotypes is to make sure that “stereotypes of certain nationalities do not appear in the coursebooks” they use (Harmer 1998: 119). This quote, originating from a relatively recent book, attests to the vitality of such a view. Yet, the statement is ambiguous: it is not quite clear whether stereotypes that are to be shunned in the classroom amount to widespread representations of people from the target language community and their way of living, i.e. the reserved and polite English having tea at 5 o’clock, Americans who are in constant rush and never have time, images and situations shown and spoken of in such a way that those who study the language cannot but come to stereotypical assumptions. If the aforementioned stereotypes refer to these gross overgeneralizations, then we must admit that the warning is justified. Nevertheless, the statement is at best clumsy: first, one can gain the impression that for some reason only stereotypes of “certain” nationalities are invested with danger, while others are less damaging, or even harmless; second, if this is the case, then teachers deserve to be given some guidelines on how to differentiate between the two classes of stereotypes, let alone an explanation why this is the case.

However, a more tricky issue, bringing the learners’ existing hetero-stereotypes into the open, was rarely considered (Byram, Morgan 1994: 41). Many teachers tacitly avoided this because they were advised to do so; those who wanted to do something did not venture, because they did not know how to approach this issue. Yet, one must also be

fair and outline the reasons lying behind the avoidance attitude: a discussion on what is damaging and what is harmless is bound to open Pandora's box – it is very difficult to agree what is harmless and what offensive. This point is corroborated by the following illustration. Not so long ago, Mike Solly, Manager ELT Network Services, the British Council, examined a number of recently published coursebooks in an attempt to ascertain whether the numerous complaints of his American colleagues that British EFL textbooks contained too many instances of “blatant anti-Americanism” were justified. These are the results of his investigation:

“In summary then, I actually received very few examples of anything that seemed to be real evidence of ‘anti-Americanism’ in course books. I did certainly have examples of a strong bias in British produced books of standard English vocabulary and grammar. I also saw examples of what many (including myself) may see as insensitive material when seen in isolation. Obviously this only skims the surface of attitudes, but some very strong feelings have been present on this one, and I believe this area merits real research.”

Solly's contribution leads to several important insights: first, it is very difficult to reach a consensus on what ‘insensitive’ material is; second, the fact that instances of ‘insensitiveness’, but only *when seen in isolation*, caused offence confirms that people approach meaning construction from their own positions²⁹; third, many tend to be oversensitive with regard to how others see and represent them and, consequently, are likely to overreact when their collective identity is given a negative face.

Option two – teach culture. This approach further elaborates the assumption that learning the target language and culture will ultimately bring about a positive attitude towards other people and cultures. For this reason, the solution to the problem of stereotyping is sought in supplementing language classes with culture related topics, and,

²⁹ As did both of my students in the episodes I recounted in the preface.

occasionally, topic-related courses (i.e. British Studies). The criticism leveled at this approach was that the learner was put into the 'outside position' of being a silent witness to a sociocultural 'film' or 'drama' of the foreign world. Another frequently encountered objection was that this type of culture learning superimposes the values and cultural assumptions of the native speaker's society (Kramsh 1993:12). However, research results have questioned its efficacy. It has been shown that "a relationship does not exist between attitudes, insight and knowledge" (Byram, Morgan 1994: 31), and that "an unsystematic approach providing information leaves pupils precisely with unstructured information rather than knowledge and is without effect on pupils' understanding of others" (ibid. :48).

Option three - tackle them. The 1990s witnessed a turn in the treatment of stereotyping in ELT in the works of Byram, Morgan (1992); Byram, Zarate and Neuner (1997); Kramsh (1993; 1998), Pennycook (1994) and Guilherme (2002). First of all, it is important to stress that stereotypes are not in the main focus of these studies, which are primarily devoted to various aspects and interrelatedness of culture and language learning, the acquisition of socio-cultural and socio-pragmatic competence, and critical pedagogy. In them, stereotypes are treated as part of a much broader issue. Although it cannot be claimed that the views of these authors are identical, it is possible to identify certain threads that they have in common. Fundamentally, they argue for a different approach to culture learning: it ought not to be limited to the acquisition of the foreign cultural content, but ought to include facts about other culture. In addition, they emphasize that a large part of culture is a social construct, the product of self and other perceptions. Hence, culture teaching should also include a process that applies itself to

understanding foreignness or ‘otherness’ (Kramsh 1993: 205-206). Part of that process includes confronting differences and potential barriers to communication, including stereotypes (Kramsh 1993, Byram, Risager 1999). In other words, what is advocated is searching for an understanding of cultural boundaries, not just registering that they exist, and attempting to come to terms with them (Kramsh 1993: 12). The ultimate goal for the learner is also changed: s/he is not to become a surrogate native speaker, adopting a new culture, but s/he develops a third perspective, taking both an insider’s and an outsider’s view of the source and target cultures (Kramsh 1993: 210), or a critical perspective towards the Self, the Other and the world (Guilherme 2002: 167).

Another point on which the views of the aforementioned authors converge concerns the role of the teacher. It is stressed that the goal of confronting controversial issues in the classroom could not be attained if the teacher did not actively assume a different role – that of the critical educator. This logically turns our focus to one of the components of the learning triangle – the engagement of **I**, the teacher. Contrary to previous views which advocated the ‘neutrality’ of teachers regarding political issues with an argument that ‘education is not a place for politics’, these authors assert that this is not possible, for education is inherently political. In that, they do not equate politics with ‘indoctrination’, but rather remind us that teachers cannot avoid deciding what sort of vision of society they are teaching towards: either for preserving the status quo, or educating critical citizens. If this is the case, then teachers need to see themselves as transformative intellectuals (Pennycook 1993: 299).

In summing up, the following interconnected aspects ought be singled out as crucial.

In these works, it is suggested that a) stereotyping should be addressed within a differently conceived approach to culture/language learning ; b) it should be confronted and its boundaries explored in a critical classroom; and c) that this could be achieved if the teacher adopted the role of a critical transformer, relying on the tenets of critical pedagogy.

A critical examination of these studies reveals that these authors were chiefly focused on reciprocity, i.e. on examining possible relations between C1 (source culture) and C2 (target culture), and the resulting interplay between two self- and two other-perceptions (Kramsh 1993: 208). In other words, it is considered important to examine and compare a) stereotypes that foreign language learners, coming from Serbia, for instance, have about themselves and the target language community, i.e. the English or Americans, and b) the stereotypes that the target language speakers – the English and Americans – have about themselves, and about the learners' community, the Serbs in our example. There is no doubt that these issues must be touched upon in language teaching.

However, the outlined approach also has some drawbacks:

- 1) A possible asymmetry of the relationship – it is to be expected that the stereotypes that representatives of two 'big' cultures (Germans and Americans, for instance), have of each other are equally developed; however, this is not the situation if the learner comes from a so-called 'small' culture. If this is the case, it is very likely that the target culture does not contain a developed stereotype of the learner's ethnic group.
- 2) The suggested model implies that only these reciprocal stereotypes should be put under scrutiny. This leaves an important aspect uncovered – the impact that L2

images of other cultures – representations of the Dutch in English, for instance, may have on the learners of L2 (e.g. the case of Dutch treat)

So far, little attention has been directed to the following question: to what extent can the claim that new stereotypes are appropriated together with a new language be considered valid? The present day position of English in the world certainly accords additional importance to this question. In my view, it has the face of Janus: it is a window to the world and an invaluable link between ‘small’ cultures - my first encounters with the great civilizations of the East - Chinese, Japanese, Indian - came through English; today, English is my primary link with world; nevertheless, it is also a disseminator of stereotypes. In his study, Pennycook warns of this side of English:

“Thus there is, for example, a discourse on China that is both reflected and constructed through various forms of writing on China. This operates principally through a process of dichotomizing (‘we’ and ‘they’) and essentializing the resultant Other (‘The Chinese’), creating a series of stereotypes within a discourse that constitutes China as dirty, backward, dull ... Such discourses ... become embedded in institutions and are constantly played and replayed through texts and conversations about these countries.” (Pennycook 1993: 166).

He contends that the key issue amounts to avoiding “reducing culture (or language) to a deterministic reflection of other realities” and “cultural representation amounting to essentializing the ‘Other’” (Pennycook 1993: 60-64). In that, not a little responsibility rests with English teachers, who, unfortunately, frequently take up positions within similar discourses themselves. In Pennycook’s view, this problem can be tackled within the framework of critical pedagogy, the aim of which is to turn classrooms into places where the accepted canons of knowledge could be challenged and questioned, and which would enable students to write, read, speak and listen back (Pennycook 1993: 296-298).

For this reason, this aspect deserves to be looked a little more closely, and the teachers ought to be aware of it, so that they could maximize the potential influence of the former and minimize the latter.

The aforementioned studies laid considerable attention on the area of learners' attitudes. This naturally leads us to the discussion of the last element in the triangle: the **THOU** factor.

One of the most powerful insights offered to us by Byram and Zarate is that all learners address the discovery of a foreign culture with attitudes and knowledge empirically constructed through their own culture. It follows from this that foreign language instruction does not start 'from zero', but is rather bound to deal with these pre-established concepts of the foreign world (bits and pieces of information; personal experience; generalization and stereotypes; prejudices; aversions or preferences, etc.) in the individual learner's mind (Byram, Zarate 1997: 13).

Is it possible to change attitudes, which represent "an exceedingly important aspect of a theory of SLA" (Brown 1993:135)? Attitudes develop early in childhood and are the result of parents' and peers' attitudes, contact with people who are "different" in any number of ways, and interacting affective factors in human experience (Brown 1993: 168). Foreign language instruction is only one of the factors that contribute to forming the 'image of the foreign world' in the learner's mind, and very likely not the most influential one. Moreover, as Byram has shown, the assumption that language learning leads to positive attitudes towards other people and cultures is not necessarily true. On the other hand, it is not false either. It follows from this that our task is to ascertain what

kind of instruction is effective and under what conditions; and what increases its effectiveness.

Are there any other factors that can bring about a change in attitudes? Brown enhances our hopes that something can be done to that effect, claiming that “the negative attitudes *can* be changed, often by exposure to reality – for example, by encounters with actual persons from other cultures” (Brown 1993: 169). Such a view is also shared by Byram, from whom a key teaching principle is encouraging the language learner to become geographically mobile (Byram, Zarate 1997: 11). Hence, he designed a program for developing and enhancing socio-cultural competence, an obligatory component of which is student exchange and a year spent in the target language country. The program initiated by him and his associates in several European countries has met with success (Byram, Morgan 1994: 67; Byram, Risager 1999: 130). However, there is also evidence to the contrary provided by Coleman. In his paper, Coleman presents the results of the European Language Proficiency Survey, both the pilot study and full survey, investigating the stereotypes of UK students of foreign languages before and after a year spent in the target language country. Both surveys suggested that

“UK students of foreign languages hold clear, differentiated stereotypes of other European nationalities, and that residence in L2lands has served, if anything, to reinforce the stereotype, while diminishing students’ rating of L2landers on non-stereotypical qualities” (Coleman 1998: 51).

The findings of the survey are both counter-intuitive and disturbing. Speculating on various reasons that may have brought about this situation, Coleman concludes that this

underlines the necessity of preparing students for the residence abroad both psychologically and interculturally (Coleman 1998: 57).

On the basis of the above, it can be concluded that on the one hand, instruction about other culture is certainly not enough, and that experiential learning in direct contact with that culture is much more effective. However, there is documented evidence to the effect that direct contact with C2 without previous instruction is far from being a recommended solution. In addition, for many learners of foreign languages travelling to target language countries is very difficult, if not almost impossible, both for economic reasons and because of strict visa regimes. If direct experience with the target culture really were the decisive factor, then the majority of people on this planet would not stand a chance. This highlights the importance of instruction even more, and puts a demand and responsibility on the researcher to re-examine the existing knowledge and attempt to delineate the area in which instruction could be beneficial. This brings us to the area of appropriate methodology for tackling cultural differences. Although it is certainly true that the profession is in need of one underpinned by theory, it does not prevent us from making the best possible use of existing knowledge and skills. In that, mistakes are bound to be made, but if we fear doing things wrongly, constantly evaluating ourselves, we will never come to the curricula which address every dimension of cultural diversity (hooks 1994: 33).

On the basis of the aforementioned, it can be concluded that the areas meriting further exploration are attitudes and critical pedagogy.

First of all, it should be noted that attitudes are not a monolithic category. In an insightful passage that, for some reason, has escaped broader notice, Stern warns that it is necessary to

“conceptually distinguish affective elements *which determine and precede* the approach to learning from those that *accompany or result* from learning experience, nor does it clearly distinguish the *more enduring personality characteristics* from the more immediate responses to language learning.” (emphasis mine, Stern 1983: 384)

What is the area that the teacher can influence? More enduring personality characteristics, such as authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, and Machiavellianism (Stern, *ibid.*) somehow do not render themselves as a likely candidate. However, it is difficult to see how the teacher can shun her responsibility for attitudes resulting from language learning. As for those accompanying the learning process, her responsibility is partial, for one must also take into account external influences - those coming from **CONTEXT**. Contextual influences can be broadly classified into two groups: those emanating from the predominant and favored mode of education, and those resulting from the global historical and political situation. In wartime or in other periods of political upheaval or social unrest, these historical and political influences become more noticeable. Thus, shifts in the emphasis on French, English, German, or Russian as second language throughout the world have mirrored the ups and downs of political and economic power and prestige (Stern 1983: 278). With regard to the attitudes which precede language learning, there are some grounds for hoping that they are not decisively influential, for people do not necessarily stick to their beliefs throughout their lives – occasionally, they rebel against those forced on them by school and parents. Thus, even if learners come

with deeply set stereotypical views of the foreign world, the teacher has to be aware that there is a possibility that they might be changed, if addressed properly in teaching.

Naturally, such an approach assumes a specific commitment on the part of the teacher, her adherence to corresponding educational philosophy – that of critical pedagogy.

Furthermore, there are grounds for the claim that **I** is the decisive factor. This is not to claim that the teacher is a *sufficient* determinant, but all other elements being equal, without her active engagement and expertise very little, or practically nothing, can be changed.

Working within this paradigm is far from easy, it requires knowing how to identify a possible *affective challenge* for the learner, and knowing how to deal with it. Even the fervent proponent of critical pedagogy Alastair Pennycook warns that once we make “student subjectivity a focus of our critical pedagogy and make claims to understanding and investigating students’ cultural positions ... we need to tread carefully” (Pennycook 1994: 318). Furthermore, the reluctance of teachers to address controversial issues, including stereotyping, probably stems from the fear that that classrooms will become uncontrollable and unsafe (hooks 1994:39). The issue in teaching critically is one of assisting students to realize how a nationality is represented, and how they can represent themselves in the world. Hence, a critical practice in ELT must start with ways of critically exploring students’ cultures, knowledge (including stereotypes) and histories in ways that are both *challenging* and at the same time *affirming* and *supportive*. The latter component can be secured by giving the students voice. Thus, the task of the teacher is both to help students find their voice and express their identity, and also to challenge their (or generally accepted) modes of thinking. In other words, the teacher has to find

ways of joining two seemingly irreconcilable opposites, metaphorically represented by East and West, the twain that shall never meet. The teacher is required to balance between allowing, accepting and appreciating on the one hand, and challenging, shaking and criticizing on the other.

The theoretical and methodological framework for this seemingly mission impossible can be found in what Elbow calls the epistemology of contradiction. Chiefly drawing on the writings of Dewey and Bakhtin, Elbow contends that what is needed is to replace the *either/or* rhetorical model with *both/and* rhetoric (Elbow 2000: 65-67). This could be achieved through interaction with others, through dialogue, which, to borrow Bakhtin's wording, is a means of testing our own and others' ideas and ourselves, and testing especially our individual and our cultural differences (Elbow 2000: 69). Translated into the language of praxis, this means that taking into consideration the affective challenge and using the dialogic model, the teacher has to show to the learner that East and West are particular constructs and need not represent a subtractive vacuum but rather a range of possibilities.

The task is undoubtedly formidable, but attainable. To be able to meet it adequately, the teacher has to be aware of the nature of the influence of traditional binary thinking on the perception of learners and their attitude formation. And, in a way, they are not to be blamed for that. If one takes a closer look at society, culture, the world of knowledge, one inevitably comes across ample proof to the effect that either/or binary thinking is a normal, natural way of things, the way the world is ordered.

The outlined approach is not easy, the transformation process does not run smoothly or quickly, and demands of lot of patience and perseverance, especially under adverse

external conditions (political situations) and the heavy burden of historical heritage. It has a chance to succeed if critical educators are aware of its nature, and, even more, of what they can potentially do in their sphere of influence.

In this chapter I gave a brief overview of the treatment of stereotypes in recent literature on teaching and learning culture and cultural awareness. The main conclusion is that national stereotypes should be addressed and challenged within the cultural/language curriculum in the critical classroom by the teacher who sees herself as a transformative educator. A prerequisite for the successful tackling of the issue is ascertaining what learners come with, and considering the context in which both the teacher and learner live and work. The theoretical and methodological rationale backing this approach is found in Elbow's model of the epistemology of contradiction. A possible way of translating this model into practice will be outlined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

NATIONAL STEREOTYPES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

A Suggested Model

Oh, East is East, and West is West, but can the twain ever meet?

In the past chapters I have tried to provide a broad and yet detailed picture of national stereotypes by bringing together research insights coming from a variety of linguistic, sociocultural and pedagogic sources. My aim was to connect and critically examine a body of relevant knowledge in order to gain a deeper insight into the phenomenon. What I will concern myself with in this chapter is the delineation of a model for dealing with stereotypes in language teaching. Drawing on the findings outlined in the previous sections, I will first explicate the model and then shift to discussing how it can be translated into teaching practice. In the end, I will critically assess the suggested framework, and attempt to ascertain its potential effectiveness.

The closing part of the preceding chapter proffered convincing arguments, at least in the opinion of the author of this text, in favor of the claim that national stereotypes,

together with other potential barriers in intercultural communication, should not be avoided, but rather faced and challenged in the language classroom. It seems that the importance of this is dawning on many, and that the profession in general is becoming increasingly aware of the need to address this issue directly. Thus, two important documents of a very recent date, written with the aim of providing guidance to and bringing about improvement in foreign language teaching, explicitly state that learners should develop “the ability to overcome stereotyped relations” (*Common European Framework* 2001:105), and that they “should explore the process of stereotyping and the role stereotypes play in forming and sustaining prejudice” (*US Standards for Foreign Language Learning* cited in Guilherme 2002: 151). In spite of the fact that such open specifications were welcomed by many, some criticisms nevertheless appeared to the effect that the outlined recommendations were “too vague and ambiguous, without explanations of strategies or concepts underlying these items” (Guilherme 2002: 146-148)³⁰. Although it cannot be maintained that the objection is groundless, it could be contended that its brunt should be aimed at a different target: documents of this kind are to specify objectives, whereas the users are invested with the task of exploring how they can be attained in practice. A proposal of how the projected goals can be achieved is to follow; however, it must be stressed that it is only a possible, and certainly not the only answer.

Let us now turn to the topic proper of this chapter, i.e. discussing ways of translating the general principles outlined in the aforementioned documents into more specific teaching objectives.

³⁰ It ought to be added that this censure is directed at the *Common European Framework for Reference for Languages*.

The first issue to be clarified is to ascertain where to anchor dealing with national stereotypes in the foreign language curriculum. Given the aspects of stereotypes highlighted in Chapter 2, i.e. their *descriptive* (relating to properties generally thought to be typical of a nation) and *attitudinal* sides (positive and negative evaluation of these characteristics)³¹, as well as their *linguistic manifestations* and *discoursal use*³², it is evident that their treatment ought to rest on an integration of linguistic learning and critical cultural analysis. In view of their inherent characteristics (i.e. “they are tenacious and do not disappear simply as a consequence of exposure to attractive images and the process of language learning” - Byram, Morgan 1994: 41), it is not plausible to expect the fulfillment of the desired outcome if stereotyping were reduced to a thematic unit in the cultural syllabus³³. The usefulness of such a module is not denied; however, given the different dimensions of the phenomenon, a better and more lasting effect is more likely to be expected if stereotypes are addressed recurrently.

What is the anticipated effect of the recommended regular attention to stereotypes? Or, in other words, if the learner acquires linguistic competence as the result of teaching language proper, what can s/he expect to gain from the suggested stereotype ‘exposure’ in the language classroom? The answer is a sum of knowledge, both linguistic and cultural, as well as skills for interpreting and critically appraising cultural artifacts and

³¹ See Chapter 2.

³² Discussed in Chapter 3.

³³ For instance, an outlined minimum content for British learners of German contains a theme “Stereotypes and national identity”, with the following subtopics: explanation of stereotypes and the stereotyping process, information on German auto-stereotypes, raising awareness of English/British auto-stereotypes, symbols of national stereotypes and their meanings, and indication of phenomena in a common heritage (Byram, Morgan 1994: 55).

cultural differences. Ultimately, this would bring about increased *critical awareness* and the development of *critical attitude* to both source and target cultures.

In the preceding chapters, it has been stressed on several occasions that research has shown that the impact of language teaching on the learners' attitudes towards other people and cultures was negligible. Before proposing a model aiming at the cultivation of critical attitudes, it is essential to identify why previous efforts failed. In an astute analysis, Byram and Risager point to the core of the problem:

We attributed this lack of success in what teachers themselves often claim as a principal purpose, to the powerful countervailing influence of the media and other factors outside school, and, significantly, to *the lack of a systematic, planned approach to the cultural dimension in teaching*. (emphasis mine) (Byram, Risager 1999:110)

This illuminating passage brings to the fore the stark reality of classroom life: although the claim that language and culture are inextricably bound up and should be taught as two sides of the same coin has become a commonplace in language education discourse, the general assumption seems to be that culture should be secondary to language. Dwelling on the whats and hows of teaching culture would lead us to a debate which is beyond the concern of this paper; however, it is important to highlight that the systematic, focused and reflective approach to teaching language and culture, in the line of the work of Kramsh (1993), Byram (1994, 1998) and Guilherme (2002), constitutes a general framework for our model of dealing with stereotypes. This approach implies “the integration of linguistic learning and critical cultural analysis” (Guilherme 2002: 214) leading to the reflection and critical apprehension of one's own cultural schemata, as well as those of the foreign world (Byram, Morgan 1994: 44-45; Kramsh 1993: 243).

The following issue on our agenda concerns the discussion of manners in which stereotypes ought to be dealt with in the classroom. It has been previously contended that the recommended line is that of a *critical, reflective* approach that *does not threaten the learner's self-image*, and especially his/her perception of *the group self-image*³⁴. In preparing for this, account should be taken of *the attitudes learners come with*, and of **CONTEXT** in which learning is taking place (i.e. constraints imposed by the educational system, as well as prevailing sociopolitical circumstances).

Given the above, the agenda for dealing with national stereotypes should embrace three interconnected aspects: awareness raising, helping the learner to find his /her voice, and critical thinking. These three components are possible global focuses of different teaching units: activities and tasks done as parts of sessions, then entire sessions, and finally thematic units taught over several sessions. They are pursued *concurrently*, in the sense that they do not exclude each other and can be applied within the same session, and *parallelly*, not in any fixed order, i.e. a starting point can be any of the three. Although not much is known about the nature of stereotype debunking and attitude change, we have sufficient grounds to assume it cannot be a linear process. So, the student is not to be expected to progress gradually and steadily from being less to more critically and culturally aware. This process s/he is supposed to undergo is cyclic, initiated and influenced by a series of operations: experiencing, exploring, wondering, speculating; then appreciating, commenting, comparing, reflecting, and finally analyzing,

³⁴ For it should be borne in mind that the preservation of the self-image is the first law of psychological survival (Stevick 1998: 22).

questioning, evaluating, hypothesizing, negotiating, and deciding³⁵. The model is visually represented in Figure 5:

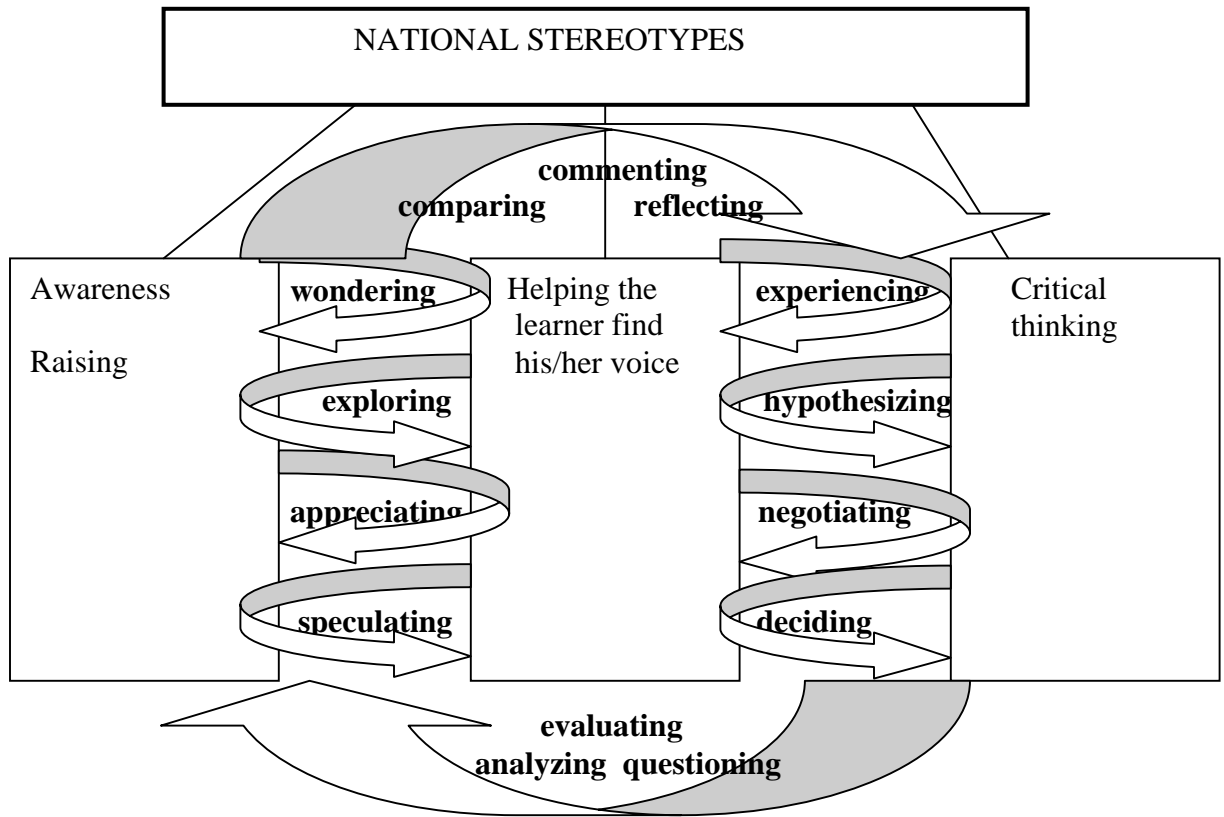


Figure 5

³⁵ A list of operations is undertaken from Guilherme 2002:221.

The figure aims to show that these operations need not be applied in any strict sequence; neither should all of them to be put to use in all situations, or practiced to the same degree (to have the equal amount of questioning and evaluating, for instance). They rather serve as a specific reminder and a checklist for the teacher. In addition, their implementation in practice depends very much on the dynamics established among teachers and students. This leads us to the consideration of the factors associated with the most important protagonist of the learning enterprise – **THOU**, or the student.

A prerequisite for selecting a suitable mode for tackling stereotypes is ascertaining what learners come with: a) personal factors, such as general knowledge, attitudes, experiences, and basic predisposition in the individual, such as tolerance of ambiguity (capability of accepting with tolerance and patience the frustrations of ambiguity involved in encounters with different beliefs and values) (Stern 1983: 385); then b) level of English, and c) age. In that, teachers are advised not to assume that all students arrive with deeply set stereotypes, for this may bring about a completely opposite effect - “the way we diagnose out students’ condition will determine the kind of remedy we offer” (Palmer 1998: 41). The teacher should rather attempt to establish what the situation is, and then plan a sequence of actions accordingly, taking into consideration all relevant factors. This can be achieved by resorting to some kind of attitude tests, either open-ended expressions of view, e.g. “What made you decide study English”, or the technique called the ‘semantic differential’. In the latter, students are asked to indicate their impressions about ‘the English’ or ‘Americans’ on scales including several variables:

interesting – boring; honest – dishonest; pleasant – unpleasant, etc. (Stern 1983: 376-377).

Another important issue to be borne in mind is the fact that learners process any new information they receive in the light of the knowledge they possess, and that not infrequently this knowledge has the function resembling that of blinders – focusing only on one segment of information, naturally, the one supporting the learner’s existing views. Moreover, some experiments have shown that “exposure to more information can lead to a strengthening of existing attitude where people are on opposite sides of an issue” (Byram, Morgan 1994: 39). For instance, if learners hold the widely spread stereotypes about Germans being people who like law and order, they will register every single instance in favor of their view, and not infrequently interpret unrelated incidents in the light of it. The result may be that the existing stereotype is reinforced, not altered. A conclusion to be drawn from this is that the mere quantity of information is far from being effective; instead, more thought should be invested in considering how to convey the message so that it does not give ground for unwarranted assumptions, and, most importantly, not to forget to check how the message has been received afterwards. In addition, investigations have shown that the teacher’s message is more likely to be received as intended if the learners place trust in her credibility (Byram, Morgan 1994: 33)³⁶.

As regards the learner’s level of English, it can limit the teacher’s options, for learners with lower language competence cannot be expected to get engaged in reflective

³⁶ This piece of evidence corroborates the formerly outlined contention that re-examination of existent knowledge about teaching with stereotypes in mind can reveal good guidelines for building up an efficient strategy for dealing with stereotypes – a pre-requisite for good learning atmosphere is establishing mutual trust.

discussions in the target language. For that reason, it is more convenient to resort to linguistically less demanding tasks.

With respect to the age factor, a crucial piece of information for successful action planning on the part of the teacher is that younger children do not have clearly developed views of foreign countries, and that it is during adolescence that a ‘downward curve’ in attitudes to people from other cultures occurs, partially resulting from “the adoption of prevailing adult stereotypes” (Byram, Morgan 1994: 31). Obviously, this is the age group which ought to be treated with special attention.

Last but not least, mention must also be made of external circumstances, including the political environment. In times of crisis, politicians and the media are likely to place stereotypes to the fore, and exploit them to their own purposes. In such situations, the teacher has to tread carefully, use a lot of effort and wisdom to counterbalance the likely negative effect – sharpen the focus of the approach and try out an array of operations, both individually and in unison.

Let us turn to discussing ways of putting this model into practice. First I will offer a brief account of each the three main components, in which I will lay emphasis on the issues that have to be addressed in practice. Then I will look more closely at how it is possible to translate the findings into the practical level, and will illustrate that by concrete teaching activities.

Awareness Raising

The main educational purpose that this segment is supposed to achieve is to bring the issue and nature of the process of stereotyping to the attention of the learner. At the outset, however, we need to take account of the warning voiced by Byram that awareness does not amount to understanding (Byram, Morgan 1994; Byram, Risager 1999). Although one cannot but agree with him, one must nevertheless add that awareness is a prerequisite for understanding, and that the main challenge seems to be how to initiate and aid the transition *from* awareness *to* understanding. A following dilemma to be solved is determining what awareness actually amounts to. Research in the field of linguistic awareness informs us that it is possible to differentiate between subsidiary and focal awareness³⁷. Subsidiary awareness, also called peripheral attention, denotes the ability to understand the general meaning of messages automatically, without making a conscious effort to do so, whereas focal awareness designates the ability to consciously apply linguistic knowledge in order to identify and solve a problem in communication. The next stage seems to be moving towards critical awareness. Critical linguistic awareness is an important mental condition, necessary for solving problems, or for thinking more critically and independently about important issues (Van Lier, Ch. 1:4). It also implies specific knowledge; thus, “a critical awareness of language requires a basic knowledge of how language is put together” (Van Lier, 2: 19). Resorting to an analogy, we can maintain that first step seems to be bringing stereotypes into the focus of

³⁷ The distinction outlined by Polanyi, *Personal knowledge* (1958) cited in Van Lier, Chapter 1:2.

learners – they have to receive the information that stereotyping exists as a problem, and, furthermore, to acknowledge that it is a problem, because it reduces the representation of a nation to a couple of salient traits. Then the learners gradually move towards the understanding of stereotypes – they acquire knowledge of how they are put together and learn to recognize their harmful influence. These issues need to be the content of awareness raising activities.

The previously outlined points will be illustrated by sample activities.

Activity 1.1

Focus: *Sensitizing learners to of the origin of stereotypes*

The teacher puts the word ‘stereotype’ on the board and asks students to explain what the word means. She elicits their ideas and writes them on the board. Then she provides them with the origin of the word: typography, where it was used to refer to ready-made matrices replacing individual characters in printing.

She underlines ‘type’ in ‘steretype’ and asks them

- a) to provide a dictionary definition of the word ‘type’
(Possible answer: ‘A particular group of people or things which shares similar characteristics and forms a smaller division of a larger set.’ Source: Cambridge International Dictionary of English)
- b) to decide on characteristics of ‘type’ characteristics of their class, e.g. restless, hard-working, amusing, etc. (in groups of four).
- c) Groups prepare a matrix /visual for their ‘class type’ and present it to the class.

Discussion: to what extent do they conform to it?

The teacher gives the students Lippman’s definition of stereotypes: “pictures in our head”.

Are these pictures accurate?

Activity 1.2

(Can be done as a continuation of 1.1, or on its own)

Pair work.

A: Write four characteristics you consider typical of your own nation.

B: Write a list of four famous national figures.

A and B read their lists to each other and have to decide to what extent the persons on the B's list possess the outlined characteristics. They report back to the class.

Discussion: How did you choose these characteristics?

Why do you consider them typical? Do other students agree with that list?

Do you possess these characteristics?

Other matters that ought to be accounted for within this category include the arbitrariness of stereotypes, means of dissemination, their power and impact.³⁸

Before we move on to the exploration of the next category, two points ought to be mentioned. First, activities classified into this group are not exclusively 'awareness raising' oriented, but predominantly so; they contain some features of other categories, namely, those of giving voice or critical thinking. Second, the activities are primarily discovery oriented – in the Activity 1.1, the learners are not told what stereotypes are, they are rather discreetly geared to detect that on their own. The teacher must constantly keep in mind that her task is just to create proper conditions and provide guidance, and it is the learners who ought to have the ownership of the discovery of certain facts and truths. Insights reached in such a way tend to have a more lasting effect. The following

³⁸ More activities coming under this heading can be found in Appendix 2. Each of them is designed with the aim of bringing various aspects of stereotypes to the focal awareness of learners. They are provided as further practical illustrations of the points made in the chapter.

example will suffice to illustrate this claim. In a running trial of Activity 1.2 the students were asked to externalize four traits they deem representative of the nation they belong to, and then decide to what extent these characteristics were salient in prominent figures from Serbian history selected by someone else. In one case, the pair could not establish any connection between the highlighted traits (chiefly linked with military valor and bravery) and the list of meritorious people (exclusively including artists and writers). In the heated debate that followed, which soon engaged the whole group, the students challenged the validity of each other's lists; the only thing they could agree on was that both lists were *arbitrary*. The discussion lasted for quite a while, and in the end I had to interrupt it by saying that they had discovered the main feature of stereotypes - characteristics attributed to nations are mainly arbitrary. This left such a deep impression on them that they kept referring to it until the end of the semester.

Helping the Learner Articulate His/Her Voice in a Foreign Language

If there is any division of labor between the three components, then it could be stated that this one is in charge of affirming and supporting the learner's identity through challenging it. However, these two functions are not mutually contradictory, and here we encounter most directly the application of Elbow's epistemology of contradiction.

As mentioned earlier, dealing with stereotypes represents an 'affective challenge' both for the learner and the teacher. The bottom line of raising the issue of stereotyping in the language classroom is bringing about a change in attitudes, which means that prior to this learners have to realize and admit to themselves that some of their views were wrong. This is self-threatening in itself, and if the same learners are not given space to

express some of their views and values and get a confirmation of their validity, the whole endeavor has a very little chance of success. Therefore, it is of vital importance that stereotypical beliefs are challenged in the atmosphere of security, for it is seen as conducive to a change in attitudes (Byram, Morgan 1994: 34). Creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom is vital for all kinds of learning situations, and it is certainly not a peculiarity of this approach. However, practices conducive to safe learning surroundings are varied; and it is crucial to select those which are likely to counterbalance the expected negative reactions of the learners. In case of national stereotypes, the desired learning climate and mutual trust can be most efficiently developed if learners are given voice. The notion of *voice*, a key term in developing critical pedagogies (Pennycook 1994: 310) has been widely debated in many studies; here it will be touched on only in the measure it relates to the theme proper of this paper. First of all, the concept ought to be determined. *Voice* is understood here as defined by bell hooks: “Coming to voice is not just the act of telling one’s experience. It is using that telling strategically – to come to voice so that you can also speak freely about other subjects” (hooks 1994: 148). In the perspective of this model, this is crucial: an effort to articulate their values and beliefs (for instance, what family means to them) in a foreign language will force the learners to reflect more deeply on them and devote more thought to their true essence. The mere fact that they are asked to express their values, and helped in that, will likely lead to the assertion of their identity – they are given an opportunity to spell out their views, and that is met with respect and appreciation. Hence, they will be more prepared to accept the challenge later, when they face different values and different beliefs. This can be a deeply troubling experience, and the teacher has to provide the

learner with all possible support. As previously stated, this should not only be part of dealing with stereotypes; rather the whole course should nurture such an approach. For this reason, the component represents a natural connection point with the rest of the syllabus.

A careful reading of the studies of the adherents of critical pedagogy uncovers helpful guidance on how to translate this component into practical activities. For instance, Pennycook's claim that students should be enabled to write, speak and listen back (Pennycook 1994: 311) clearly indicates that a connection can be established through teaching the four skills in the framework of critical pedagogy. A practical illustration of how this can be achieved is outlined in Activity 2.1.

Activity 2.1

The teacher tells the students they are going to read an article '**Stop the presses! There's no Balkan curse**' in which the writer makes mention of one word which in her opinion defines the Serbs. The students are asked to think what that word may be and to write it down. Then they are given the article to read.

The teacher asks them to compare the word discussed in the article with the one they wrote down. Did they guess correctly? What guided them in guessing?

Double entry notes. The students are asked to choose one sentence they either agree or disagree strongly and write back. Group sharing.

The students are asked to expand on the word they chose and explain why it is better /worse than the one the writer chose. Group sharing.

The students are asked to write back to the writer and explain why they think she was /was not right.

THE GLOBE AND MAIL, Saturday, May 8, 1999 FOCUS AND BOOKS

Stop the presses! There's no Balkan curse

Here's the truth: The region is not worse, or more complicated, or even very different from all the other places where empires have been rolling in and out for thousands of years.

GWYNNE DYER

'Inat' is the quintessential Serbian word, the one most Serbs would choose to define themselves. It means stubborn pride and defiance against all odds plus, in the current circumstances, a kind of blitz spirit that is expressed in Belgrade jokes such as the one in which someone offers to show you a piece of the downed U.S. Stealth fighter. He reaches into his pocket and shows you (of course) an empty hand.

'Inat' is the bull's-eye targets that so many Serbs proudly wear, and the billboard saying "Fuck you, NATO," and the Belgrade tabloid paper whose Page 3 beauty is wearing a "Stealth bra."

"'Inat' means you never give up," says Belgrade's best-loved cartoonist, Predrag Koraksic. "You keep on going, whatever. Even if you don't know whether you're really in the right."

Probably not one Serb in a thousand realizes that 'inat' is actually a Turkish word. This is the Balkans, after all, where some bits of history are cherished and the rest is buried very deep. But the word means exactly the same in Turkish, and even has the same weirdly positive connotation for Turks.

'Inat' presumably drifted into Serbian at some point in the five centuries when most of the local Christian elite also spoke Turkish, the imperial language -- but that's one of the bits of history that's buried very deep. It would have been an easy transition, nonetheless, for Serbs and Turks both have cultures that are actually proud of being misunderstood by the rest of the world.

A link with the general language syllabus can also be instituted and maintained through vocabulary learning, namely through focusing on meanings and cultural connotations of certain words, especially key moral concepts in the native and target

culture. The rationale behind this is multiple: the link of language and culture is made evident; it has beneficial to vocabulary acquisition, since connotations, although presenting a considerable learning challenge, are rarely explicitly treated in the classroom; the acquisition and understanding of the connotations of apparently equivalent items in both languages leads learners into the discovery of the schemata and perspectives of the foreign culture (Byram, Morgan 1994 : 44). This discovery can be used as a starting point to help the learner take a different perspective of his own values and beliefs, and re-examine his identity. A concrete illustration of this point is supplied in Appendix 3: Activity 2.2 explores the notion of pride, one of the central values in Serbian, and many other cultures, and suggests a way of introducing it in the language classroom.

Critical Thinking – Taking up a Third Place

This is the most overtly critical component of the three, focused on the critical appraisal of both native and target cultures. Its ultimate objective is to guide the learner towards developing an insider's and outsider's look at both realities, or, in Kramsh's terms, towards taking up a third place, permitting the learner to see them from a higher ground. In this case, the task of the teacher amounts to assisting the learner to articulate a critical voice and bringing him to challenge common sense assumptions which help legitimize existing social relations and differences in power. A methodology for addressing ideological assumptions can be found within the tradition of critical discourse analysis and text pragmatics. These disciplines also provide analytical tools which, when adopted to the purposes of learning and teaching, can enable the learners and the teacher to come to grips with "the discursive construction of reality" (Pennycook 1994: 311), or

“ideologically determined ways of talking or writing about persons, places, events, or phenomena” (Wallace 1992: 68).

This segment has the task of connecting the word and the world, in the true Freirian sense of the term, with the aim of turning a critical eye on them. It is also very kindred in spirit to the ideas of the famous Brazilian educator, who claimed that “to speak a true word is to transform the world” (Freire 1970: 67). In terms of content, it envisages that students will concern themselves with the analysis of provocative texts dealing also with ‘darker sides’ of both the source and target cultures. This assertion, however, warrants some further clarification. Such an approach does not imply ‘presenting the target or source community in the negative light’; it only advocates focusing attention on all aspects of reality, including less glamorous and downright ugly ones, which are, nevertheless, part of reality.

Apart from this, this component is also invested with the role of a ‘voice tuner’, in the sense that the learners should be enabled to “reflect on the *kind* of English they use and how far it allows them to express their own personal voice as language users” (Carter 1997: 226).

Activity 3.1³⁹

1. The teacher writes on the board 'woman' and asks the students to define the word.
2. The teacher writes on the board 'A woman is a woman' and asks the students to explain the meaning of the sentence. Does the 'woman' in the subject position differ from the 'woman' in the predicate position. How ? Why?
(Optional – introduces the term 'tautology' and asks ss to supply more examples, even in their mother tongue, and to say when tautologies are used.)
3. The teacher gives students the famous line of Kipling's 'Ballad of East and West' 'Oh, East is East, West is West, and never the twain shall meet.'
4. Teacher asks students to explain the meaning of the line. What were Kipling's motives to write it?
5. Ink shed. Students write their response to Kipling. Group sharing.
6. Can you think of any other famous lines, proverbs, or titles (books, films, songs ...) containing 'East' and 'West'?
7. Students share their answers.
8. How did these constructs come into being? Do they reflect the truth?
9. What characteristics do you associate with East /West? Volunteers share their views.

In this chapter I have outlined a model for dealing with stereotypes in the language classroom grounded in research on national stereotypes and their linguistic realizations. I have argued that stereotypes can be successfully challenged only within the general language course in which the cultural component is dealt with systematically. I have also stressed that a prerequisite for the elimination of stereotypes is the prevailing atmosphere of security in the language classroom.

The model comprises three interconnected components: awareness raising, helping learners find their voice, and critical thinking, which are applied simultaneously and parallelly. Their actual order is decided by the teacher after the careful examination of characteristics of her students and the context in which learning is taking place.

³⁹ A possible sequel of this activity, prepared for Serbian learners of English, is presented in Activity 3.2, Appendix 4. The same Appendix contains more activities illustrating possible practical realizations of this component.

The model has several advantages: it rests on the premises underpinned by theory; it is flexible and adaptable to different learning contexts; it is learner centered and process oriented; it contributes to culture learning and encourages critical awareness. However, it has certain limitations. It has been designed with the aim to focus on individuals – “cultures do not talk to each other, individuals do” (Scollon, Scollon 1995: 125). This is the result of the conscious decision to approach the whole issue with a dose of realism, to assess what can be achieved in a given time and with the given knowledge we have. In the end, it ought to be added that it is only to be hoped that it will contribute to the raising of general awareness of the problem of stereotypes and bring about the diminishing of their influence.

CONCLUSION

Today we all speak, if not the same tongue, the same universal language. There is no one center, and time has lost its former coherence: East and West, yesterday and tomorrow exist as a confused jumble in each one of us. Different times and different spaces are combined in a here and now that is everywhere at once.

Octavio Paz, "Invention, Underdevelopment, Modernity"

I began this paper with two episodes from my teaching practice which brought the issue of national stereotypes into my focal awareness and triggered off so many questions that I could do nothing but set off on an exciting research track in pursuit of deeper understanding and possible resolution. In the course of study, the field of inquiry expanded vigorously as the full complexity of the subject matter I was investigating became apparent, as well as its significance for education for international citizenship. I realized that giving at least a preliminary answer concerning the classroom treatment of this awkward impediment to intercultural communication requires the consulting of a several disciplines. As a result, a number of research directions have been pursued, each of which provided a wealth of insights relevant to the phenomenon under scrutiny. Chapter 1 made a case for a principled interdisciplinary research in language education,

and attempted to establish a coherent theoretical framework within which the potentially valuable contributions of different disciplines can be drawn together and reinterpreted from the perspective of their usefulness for teaching practice. More specifically, it argued that a range of relevant fields exceeded the traditional ‘feeder’ disciplines, and that a search for them ought to commence from Hawkins’ scheme, that including **I-THOU-IT** components and the learning **CONTEXT**. The proposed model was implemented in Chapter 2, in gathering and systematizing knowledge germane to stereotypes in general, and national stereotypes in particular. Chapter 3 was devoted to the analysis of **IT**, i.e. possible linguistic realization of stereotypes. Chapter 4 examined literature on stereotypes coming from language pedagogy, and identified the main points associated with **THOU** and **CONTEXT** that ought to be taken into consideration in opting for an appropriate treatment of stereotypes in the language classroom. It also laid emphasis on the crucial role of **I** - the teacher: without her active involvement and determination to tackle the problem as a critical educator, chances of making any progress in the ‘stereotype termination’ mission will be very slim. Taking critical pedagogy and Elbow’s epistemology of contradiction as principal points of departure, in Chapter 5 I took aim at explicating a possible model for dealing with national stereotypes in language teaching, firmly grounding it in findings outlined in previous chapters. I argued that stereotypes have to be challenged in the content-oriented and task-based comprehensive curriculum, in which cultural component is integrated with language instruction. I also contested that the challenge is likely to lead to desired results if the problem of stereotyping is brought into the focal awareness of learners, and then critically assessed it in an atmosphere of security, in which students are given voice. The dynamics of the interaction between the

three identified domains depends on contextual variables and has to be decided by the teacher.

A main discerning feature of the proposed model may be said to be its flexibility – it does not aspire to provide an all-inclusive, exportable solution (which would certainly amount to a recipe for disaster), but only to identify main elements that have to be attended to in the language classroom, and to outline ways in which that can be achieved. As regards its potential effectiveness, it has been designed with the ambition to take all learners over the lowest threshold – that of awareness. True, awareness does not amount to understanding, but on the other hand we must not forget Gattegno's sagacious remark that it is the only thing educable in people.

Yet, if this practice-inspired and theory-driven model is to be accorded any credibility, then at least a few sentences addressing its effectiveness in the classroom ought to be promulgated. In other words, I have to reflect on the taste and the healing effect of my own concoction. First of all, I would like to emphasize that the model endured the test of practice in the sense that all the activities described in the paper were tried out in the genuine classroom at least once. So far, it has proven to function, and for the time being the only evidence I can provide to confirm its validity are glimpses of experiences and changes perceived both by the students and the teacher involved.

I started experimenting with the model the moment I had completed a rough sketch of it, and my first reaction was that great satisfaction: my students displayed a very positive attitude towards the target culture, so at the beginning, to my surprise, I did not encounter any opposition or hard feelings (and this experience gave rise to the insight that we should not take anything for granted). Later on I realized that this could be partly

attributed to the considerably changed political context – Serbia does not live in isolation any more, and my different teaching setting – I now teach students majoring in English at Belgrade University, and their views and attitudes certainly differ from those of an average language learner in Serbia. As the time passed by, I managed to pinpoint two areas that needed further attention. The first relates to bringing the students’ auto-stereotypes in the open, and Activity 1.2 proved to be beneficial in that. However, the strongest feelings were triggered off by Activity 3.2 (outlined in Appendix 4): after the class, a couple of students told me that they were ashamed of their ignorance of national history and culture. Had they known more, they would not have fallen prey to the manipulations of the mass media and ‘experts’. The second finding relates to the students’ attitude to the target cultures and native speakers of English: most of them hold Britain and British culture in higher esteem than that of the United States. I have not devoted this matter a serious thought, and therefore my interpretation of this occurrence belongs to the domain of speculation: a possible identification of Britain with the ‘original’ target culture, and allocating America to the lower status of a ‘derivative’, the stronger influence of Britain in Europe, the impact of obligatory courses in British literature on their curriculum and the high esteem allotted to them by the academia, the detrimental effect of Hollywood movies which confirm and fortify numerous stereotypes of Americans, etc., etc. However, my attempts to counterbalance this stance through telling stories about my experiences in both countries had a somewhat surprising result: the students listened to me spellbound. For most of them, travelling abroad, let alone visiting Britain or the United States, verges on the impossible. The questions that they asked me afterwards, full of curiosity and great deference, brought about many insights,

as well as mixed feelings. My power was almost palpable, and the fact that at such a moment I could have sold them almost anything was both encouraging, frightening and deeply disturbing. Encouraging, because it confirmed that the teacher had the power to influence the course of events; frightening, because this could be a lethal weapon in inapt hands; disturbing, because of the present order of things in the world my students are prevented from gaining their own experience of foreign cultures, and forced to resort to a surrogate, supplied by their teacher.

These insights hopefully confirm that the model has a potential for shaking and altering stereotypical views; however, to be accorded full validation, it has to endure further testing, with different age groups and various teaching contexts. In the meanwhile, we also need to give due attention to a host of new queries opened by it so far. It is only proper that they should be considered in the concluding chapter, together with issues that remain to be addressed in subsequent research.

1. Should national stereotypes be treated only within the field of ELT?

One of the main criticisms that can be leveled at this approach is that dealing with national stereotypes should not only be the preoccupation of foreign language learning and teaching, but of entire education. This is certainly true, and ought to be stated in unambiguous terms in order to avoid unwarranted inferences. If dealing with national stereotypes were left to language teaching only, then one might be lead to assume that those who do not study foreign languages are deprived of an important aspect of education, or even that for some reason they do not need it (because their mother tongue is stereotype free, for instance). However, foreign language teaching, especially if the foreign language in question is English, seems to be the natural locus for unmasking

stereotypes for a couple of reasons. First, in various cross-linguistic and cross-cultural contrasts and comparisons, which are an inevitable part of language learning, stereotypes, a very contentious issue, are likely to emerge and therefore must not be left unattended. Second, the approach recommended in this paper will hopefully lead learners to the recognition that no language is stereotype-free, and that it is indeed a loaded weapon. This perception is invested with even greater importance with regard to English as a second /foreign language, given its position in today's world. The debate on English as an international language, as well as world Englishes, is opening up, and the view of the spread of English as natural, neutral and beneficial has met with severe criticism (Pennycook 1994: 7-11). However, it is my contention that we can reap true benefit of the spread of English if we become fully aware of its partiality. Hence, the engagement of learners and teachers of English alike with the discourses of 'otherisation' by means of critical linguistic awareness could serve a twofold purpose: contribute to the raising of general public awareness of negative impacts of such discourses, and empower the 'otherised' to attempt to amend the state of affairs not by falling into a begrudging mood of wronged victims, but by listening, speaking and writing back. It is through English that such discourses were constructed and disseminated, and only through English can they be dismantled.

2) Is it ethical to proclaim the change of attitudes as a teaching goal?

It is the role of the teacher to provide proper conditions for cultivating an open, critical mind. Research has shown that teachers can have "influence over cognitive, affective and moral development, and thereby play a significant role in young people's education in an international world" (Byram, Morgan 1994: 39). In my view, this increases the

responsibility of the teachers to recognize their power, not to shun away from it, but rather adopt the role of a critical educator.

3) Wouldn't a specialized course focused on stereotypes be more effective?

A specialized course, designed in a similar vein such those dealing with human rights issues and citizenship, would certainly be beneficial, but only if designed for sublimation and greater focus. Standing on its own, such a course would send an indirect message that counterbalancing stereotypes were a matter that could be learnt in isolation. However, their tenacious nature requires a constant and systematic treatment. Besides this, in order for the course to be maximally effective, ground should be prepared beforehand. Nevertheless, the idea of a specialized course devoted to stereotypes is worth considering.

4) Doesn't the model depend too much on the specific commitment of the teacher?

What can a language teacher realistically achieve?

The implementation of the model implies a specific role of the teacher – her commitment to being a critical educator. This is crucial. Needless to say, if the teacher does not subscribe to such a view, the suggested model is not likely to succeed. Again, it is to be expected that a number of teachers who recognize the danger of stereotypes will simply doubt that they have enough power to influence their students. What has to be brought to their attention is the thoughtful insight offered by Elsa Auerbach, a proponent of critical pedagogy and participatory approach, that our choices as educators play a role in shaping students' choices (Auerbach 1995: 9). However, in the same article Auerbach raises the issue of the marginalization of ESL teachers. This opens up another question, considering what marginalized people can realistically achieve. The answer that I would propound is that marginalized people have to realize that they do have some power

which, of course, is not omnipotent, but which nevertheless obliges them to discover its range, and to employ it in a proper way to maximize the impact. By making the best use of the power they have, they can contribute to bringing about some positive changes –the spread of English, if dealt with critically, may offer chances for cultural renewal and exchange around the world (Pennycook 1994: 325).

Needless to say, the effect of the instruction on stereotypes will certainly be limited until it becomes shared throughout the curriculum. Until that is achieved, language teachers have to start tackling this issue by resorting to the knowledge and skills they possess (and be aware that this is only the beginning). Their efforts deserve to be supported and guided by adequate methodology and proper education, and these are areas which will certainly preoccupy researchers in the years to come.

In this paper I have delineated an approach to dealing with national stereotypes in language teaching which ought to be further examined and evaluated in practice, expanded, amended and fine-tuned. The entire effort represents an attempt to pave way to educative learning – that which gives a broader value and meaning to the learner's life (Williams, Burden 1997: 6). It is only hoped that the model, outlined from the position of a critical educator, will contribute to the attainment of the overall educational goal, as described in the following passage:

Let me return to one of Dewey's central themes, that the ultimate aim of production is not the production of goods but the production of free human beings associated with one another on terms of equality. That includes, of course, education, which was a prime concern of his. The goal of education, to shift over to Bertrand Russell, is "to give a sense of the value of things other than domination, to help create wise citizens of a free community, to encourage a combination of citizenship with liberty individual creativeness." (Chomsky 1993)

APPENDIX 1

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APPENDIX 2

Activity 1.3

Focus: *Arbitrariness of stereotypes*

- a) 'That's a very English thing to do'.
- b) 'That's a very German thing to do'.
- c) 'That's a very Serbian thing to do'.

Divide students in three groups – a, b, c; give them corresponding sentences and ask them to write a context in which they could appear.

Ask students to read their sentences /passages and to comment on the examples. Was it difficult to write these sentences? Why? How did you know what a 'very English thing to do' was?

Give them another set of sentences”

- a) 'That's a very Portuguese thing to do.'
- b) 'That's a very Estonian thing to do.'
- c)'That's a very Lichtenstainian thing to do.'

Ask them to perform the same task. Invite comments –when did they have more ideas? Why was this the case?

Activity 1.4

Focus: *Dissemination of stereotypes*

Put the expression 'Greek gifts' on board. Ask the students what it means. If they don't know, supply the explanation and then give an example. Ask them if there is a similar expression in their mother tongue. Ask them to explain the similarity.

Ask for the origin. If they don't know, remind them of the Trojan war and ask them to tell you what happened. Explain the origin of the saying (Virgil).

Why did it enter so many languages? What kind of message did it bring?

Do you know any other similar case? What are the consequences?

Activity 1.5

Focus: *What do stereotypes censor?*

1. It's all Greek to me.
2. To su za mene spanska sela. ('These are Spanish villages to me' -Serbian).
3. Eto dlja menja kitajski. ('It's Chinese to me' - Russian)
4. Das sind mir böhmische Dörfer. ('These are Bohemian villages to me' - German)
5. Pijan kao Rus. ('As drunk as a Russian' – Serbian)
6. Pjot kak Poljak. ('As drunk as a Pole' – Russian)
7. to take a French leave
8. filer à l'anglaise ('to take an English leave' – French)
9. andarsene all' inglese ('to take an English leave' – Italian)

Distribute a list with idiomatic phrases containing nationality words. Include expressions from other languages too. Ask students to look at them and guess to the meaning. Groups discuss their findings. Teacher supplies a list with correct answers. Asks students to have another look at the phrases and try to classify them. Which vice is censored, which nation is accused of being xxx? Sum up their answers. Who's the typical drunkard? What's the answer?

Invite discussion. (Aim – to come to the conclusion that censored characteristics are more or less the same).

Why do we tend to see vices in representatives in other nations?

(Comment: The list outlined here was prepared for Serbian students of English. It includes expressions from Polish and Russian, Slavic languages close to Serbian. The students did not have problems with identifying their meaning. As for examples in Italian, German and French, they inferred from the other phrases on the list what they could be about, and offered more or less accurate guesses.

Activity 1.6

Focus: *Power and impact of stereotypes*

The students are given the saying:
Boys (1) will be boys (2).

Teacher introduces 'stating the obvious'.

Pair work. A – defines the meaning of boy1, B defines the meaning of boy2. They exchange information, agree on the interpretation and then exchange views with another pair. Sharing answers - whole class.

Teacher asks them to supply contexts in which this saying can be used.

Why were we able to infer the meaning of boy2?

Can you do it with all nouns? What does 'carrots will be carrots' mean? (leave this question to hover – tell them it will be discussed later).

Teacher invites students to supply examples of their own. (If the class is short of ideas, teacher adds examples of her own: war is a war, a teenager is a teenager, promises are promises).

Teacher puts the examples on the board and invites students to define where and when and why are these constructions used.

[Answer: the speaker names a general category (e.g. boys) to refer to specific salient part or attributes of that category (e.g. unruly behavior).

Speakers and listeners share information about the social situation at hand, but they also mutually assume specific stereotypical understandings of people, activities, and objects.

People in a linguistic community share certain beliefs, knowledge and attitudes – their common ground – and use this information in deciding what to say as well as in understanding what is meant from what is said.]

Teacher gives another saying: "Indians(1) will be Indians(2)".

Asks students to define Indians(1) and Indians(2).

Group discussion. How do we know it? Why has the word 'Indian' become synonymous with 'treacherous behaviour'?

What do you know about Indians? Where does your knowledge come from?

Is it accurate? To what degree?

What other stereotypical images of other nations are propagated by the mass media /movie industry?

(Comment: The activity draws heavily on the section on colloquial tautologies outlined in Gibbs 1994: 345-351. The idea underlying it is that it is necessary to bring national stereotypes in connection with other stereotypes (especially gender).

Activity 1.7

Focus: *Are you aware of what you sometimes say?*

Teacher puts on the board:

Apples are not pears.

Teacher asks students to give their immediate reaction to this sentence. Amusing? Funny? Nonsensical? Wise? Would ever say such a thing? Under what circumstances? Define the context. What kind of attitude do you display in such a way?

Teacher distributes cards with the same sentence 'This is not Africa'. Each card contains a different context in which the sentence could be used. Students are asked to read the sentence in a way which best conveys the meaning of the sentence. Each group reads the sentence, and the rest of the class guesses the context.

(Possible answers: the climate is different, you'll need warmer clothes; this is not a backward country)

The students are asked to do the same with another sentence, e.g. 'This is Europe /America' (or the continent /region they come from). The procedure is repeated.

The students are given the sentence directly concerning the issues bothering them.

This is Europe, this is not Iraq.

Belgrade is not Baghdad.

What does it mean? When was it used? Why?

(*Comment:* The aim is to draw their attention to the clash between the intended message 'You can't bomb Belgrade' and the underlying presupposition 'You can bomb Baghdad').

This activity has been tried out several times; and the students I did it with said that it was not their intention to say that Baghdad could be bombed.)

APPENDIX 3

Activity 2.2

Focus: *Comparing key terms in two cultures*

Pride and Prejudice

Put the word 'Pride' on the board. Ask students to put synonyms on one side, and antonyms on the other.

Class sharing – agree on synonyms, antonyms.

What is the difference between *pride, dignity, self-esteem, conceit, vanity*?

What is the difference between *humility* and *humiliation*?

Pair work: discuss with your partner who has a right to be proud and why. Is pride a failing? Under what circumstances?

Students read the extract from *Pride and Prejudice*.

Would you agree that pride is a common failing?

Has the idea of pride changed over times? What were your parents /grandparents proud of? What are you proud of?

Look at the list below and mark the situations in which, according to your opinion, pride is justified.

1. When you don't let anyone underestimate your abilities.
2. If you act differently, you will be humiliated.
3. When you earn a lot of money and enjoy a high standard of living.
4. When your personal identity in a relationship is about to be lost.
5. When you are successful and think that you are more important than others.
6. When someone looks down on you.
7. When you feel oppressed by the attitude of others.
8. When you have self-respect and do not allow to be influenced by other people's opinions and attitudes.
9. When you neglect a person (friend, boyfriend, girlfriend) because you don't allow yourself to show your personal feelings.
10. When you refuse to accept someone's help not because you think you can do without it, but because you don't want to humiliate yourself.

(*Comment:* Of 300 Belgrade students who did the activity, an overwhelming majority marked 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10 as justified pride).

(An earlier version of this appeared in Popovic 1999:22)

‘Another time, Lizzy’, said her mother, ‘I would never dance with him, if I were you.’

‘I believe Ma’am, I may safely promise you never to dance with him.’

‘His pride’, said Miss Lucas, ‘does not offend me so much as pride often does, because there is an excuse for it. One cannot wonder that so very fine a young man, with family fortune, everything in his favour, should think highly of himself. If I may express it, he has a right to be proud.’

‘That is very true’, replied Elisabeth, ‘and I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine.’

‘Pride’, observed Mary, who piqued herself upon the solidity of her reflections, ‘is a very common failing I believe. By all that I have ever read, I am convinced that it is very common indeed, that human nature is particularly prone to it, and that there are very few of us who do not cherish a feeling of self-complacency on the score of some quality of other, real or imaginary. Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others to think of us.’

(Jane Austin, *Pride and Prejudice*)

Activity 2.3

Focus: *Raising awareness of difficulties involved in coping with a third culture*

The teacher asks the students to work on their own and provide a definition of 'a third culture'. The students work on their own. Class brainstorming.

The teachers gives them a reader's letter to *Newsweek*, March 3 2003, p.8

I want to congratulate you for your Jan. 27 article "Always Home". I am a 22-year-old "TCK" [third culture kid] myself, half American, half Spaniard. The article covered very well what it means to be brought up like I was: spending most of the year in Europe and the summers in the United States, and the virtues and faults of this sort of upbringing. My only criticism is that you didn't take into account the incredible stress that we TCKs are under as Americans in a hostile anti-American world. We feel connected to, and part of the culture of, the country where we live; to have to defend one of our identities against the other is heartbreaking and frustrating.

Lucia Fraile-McCord
Tenerife, Spain

Why is Lucia under stress?

What is your attitude a) to your own culture and b) to the culture of the language you are studying? How many identities do you have?

APPENDIX 4

Activity 3.2

Teacher gives the students the following passage to read:

‘Some misunderstood our place in this clash of currents, so they cried that we belong to neither side, and others that we belong exclusively to one side of the other. But I tell you, we are doomed by fate to be the East in the West, and the West in the East’.

How can you be the East in the West, and the West in the East?

11. Who is the author of this passage? After hearing speculations, the teacher informs students that this passage appeared in the article ‘Oriental Variations on the theme ‘Balkans’, *Slavic Review: American Quarterly of Russian, Eurasian and East-European Studies* 5/1, 1992. The authors of the article, Milica Bakic-Hayden and Robert M. Hayden, quoted it as a part of the letter written by the founder of the independent Serbian Church, St. Sava. Teacher invites their comments. Was St Sava right?
12. After the discussion, the teacher provides students with counter evidence: an article written by historian Sima Cirkovic, in which he has shown that the aforementioned passage (very frequently quoted in the press, by a number of politicians and people in the public eye) is a false – St. Sava DID NOT write it, it appeared in a historical novel and almost everybody started quoting it. Teacher invites students’ comments.
13. Why was it necessary to invent such a thing? Why was it necessary to connect it to St. Sava’s name to give the piece credibility?
14. Is it necessary do define one’s national identity against other’s?

Activity 3.3

1. T. tells ss that they are going to read a text about the Irish. In the text, there is a sentence 'That would have been the Irish thing to do'. What do you think that means?
2. Ss share their answers. T asks – how do you know this?
3. T adds that 'the Irish thing to do' refers to St. Patrick Day. Who's St. Patrick? How is his day celebrated? What is the Irish thing to do on St. Patrick Day?
4. Ss share their answers. T asks – how do you know this?
5. T reads paragraph 1. After reading, ss go back to their answers and decide what is the Irish thing to do on St. Patrick's Day. T asks – do you think it is true that the Irish are the world's best in drinking and fighting? How do you know that? What proof do you have? What else do you know about the Irish?
6. T. gives ss to read part A. When ss finish reading, she asks them to tell her what the writer's attitude is to the stereotypes about the Irish. Is his anger justified? Why?
7. What does 'think Paddy' mean? (T explains if they don't know the answer). Why is it that people invent offensive names for other nations?
8. Does the writer provide an unjustified claim himself?
9. What are offensive names for other nations in you mother tongue? Where do they come from? Why were they invented?
10. Can the problem be overcome? How? What do you think the writer suggests?
11. Ss read Part B.
12. Double entry notes. Ss choose one of the author's arguments from the text and write back. They share they answers.
13. The teacher asks ss what they think about the last sentence: "The Internet is no miracle that transforms the human race. It is more like a mirror that reflects us."

PART A

March 22, 1999

National stereotypes

By Gerry McGovern

Well, I hope you've had a happy St. Patrick's Day! I hope you went out and got drunk and then started a bloody big fight. That would have been the Irish thing to do! We Irish love to get drunk and fight. We're the world's best at it and proud of it too!

Strange then that Ireland has one of the lowest alcohol consumption rates in Europe. Strange, that a 1999 report entitled 'The Drinks Industry in Ireland,' found that about 75 percent of the adult population consumes alcohol in the Republic of Ireland, compared to 80 percent in the Netherlands, 83 per cent in Spain and 90 per cent in the UK.

I'm not saying that the Irish don't like to drink and that some of us do get very drunk, but to even consider labeling us a nation of drunks is way, way off the mark. Now, I've traveled a lot and I'll tell you, there are many countries where a macho drink culture is far, far stronger than it is in Ireland.

Of course, the Irish are a bit simple. That's why there are so many jokes about us. We were cute but not very bright. Strange then that the Irish are second only to the Jews for success in the United States. Strange then that Ireland used to be known as the Land Of Saints And Scholars, a country that educated the elite of Europe, and that at one stage was producing half of Europe's books.

PART B

National stereotypes can be hard to overcome, and I'm sure that many readers will have at some stage found themselves judged in a negative way because of where they came from. Will the Internet help to break down national stereotypes? This newsletter could not be possible without the Internet. It reaches over 70 countries. I'd like to believe that you, my prized readers, don't see me as some 'thick Paddy.'

However, to think that something such as national stereotypes, that have endured for so long, will somehow be washed away by the Internet, is wishful thinking. They draw from a deep well of tribalism, nationalism and community.

Oh, I know that many will feel anger that I should associate anything negative with community, but it is a fundamental law of nature and society that anything that has a positive has an equal negative. I heard an interesting definition of community recently: 'When two people get together to exclude a third.'

Communities, cultures and nations have a habit of thinking wonderfully about themselves, and thinking strange things about other communities and cultures. The Internet may bring before us the ability to find information on and communicate with other cultures more easily. Hopefully, it will lessen the fear and racist driven stereotypical thinking that comes from ignorance.

Unfortunately, the Internet itself is an environment where stereotypes can blossom. In the computer industry, we have our nerds and dweebs. There are communities online, whether they be professional grouping or just fan clubs, where not knowing your stuff begs for exclusion and contempt.

The Internet is no miracle that transforms the human race. It is more like a mirror that reflects us.

Activity 3.4

Linguistic circles - helping learners read critically

(This activity is an amalgam of ideas coming from two different sources: *Literature Circles: Voice and choice in the student-centered classroom* by Harvey Daniels, Sternhouse Publishers, York, ME, and critical text analysis as developed by Fairclough 1989 and Fowler 1991. It was prepared for the presentation “Exploring procedures for promoting critical reading and critical thinking” delivered at the Sandanona Conference, SIT, August 13-14 2002.)

Procedure: The students are divided in groups of five. Each is given a different role card containing the description of the task s/he is about to perform After getting familiar with the requirements, each student reads a text and analyzes it with the help of the tools provided on the cards. When they finish reading and analyzing the text, the students gather together in their original groups and inform the others on their findings.

A – Your job is to focus on how the writer describes what is going on. You have to identify who /what is talked about, and how it is done.

Person or place Referred to in the text	Adjectives /nouns collocating with person /place	Verbs (states, actions, mental processes) co- occurring with person/place

What is the effect of the writer’s choices? How do the used adjectives /nouns /verbs make you feel about the persons /places talked about?

B – *Your job is to focus on how the writer indicates attitudes to self, subject and reader.*

Underline affirmative, imperative and interrogative sentences. Which type is predominant?
Why are the questions asked in the text?

What kinds of modal verbs are selected?

What personal pronouns are selected? How does the writer refer to self, subjects, and reader?

What is the effect of the writer's choices?

C – *Your job is to focus on how the content of the text is organized.*

<i>Theme:</i> what information is selected for the first position			
<i>Voice:</i> When is active or passive voice selected			
<i>Cohesive relations:</i> What kinds of connectors are used			

What is the effect of the writer's choices?

D - Your job is to focus on how facts and opinions are presented.

Find instances of

Putting forward arguments (and counterarguments) which may include facts and figures without using the first person		
Statements of personal opinion which are clearly marked		
Direct appeals to the reader		

What is the effect of the writer's choices?

E – Vocabulary Analyst

Your job is to find especially important words and expressions. Check the puzzling or unfamiliar ones in a dictionary and write down their definitions. You may also run across familiar words that somehow stand out in the reading – words that are repeated a lot, used in an unusual way, or key to the meaning of the text. Pay special attention to the use of emotive words, irony and sarcasm. When your circle meets, help members find and discuss these words.

Word	Definition	Usage: unusual way, repeated	Achieved effect

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