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Construction of Political "Others"
Through Multimodal Texts (Cartoons)
in British Press

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Cartoons as types of multimodal texts are actively exploited in a media determined political discourse for construction of "others" which is especially characteristic of the British press. In politics "others" can be viewed in two perspectives: intra-cultural and inter-cultural. Intra-cultural perspective presents the relationships between political parties within one culture, e.g. Conservative Party, Labour Party and Liberal Democrat Party within British culture. In the inter-cultural perspective, the attitudes of the particular culture's politicians towards their counterparts or political groups outside this culture are shown, e.g. Britain's relationships with Russia, the United States of America, France, etc. The general principles of multimodal analysis being the basic methods for the cartoons interpretation, the idea is that in each of the two perspectives the mechanism of representing the "others" is different. The specific features reveal themselves through the level of interdiscursiveness, emotionality, generalization, detail, use of metaphors, the strategy in frames of which this or that multimodal text contributes to the construction of the image of the "others".

Keywords: political discourse, construction, political "others", intra-cultural and inter-cultural perspectives, multimodal text, multimodal analysis, cartoon in the British press.

Introduction
and Theoretical Framework

T. van Leeuwen and G. Kress wrote that the contemporary interest in multimodality derives from the fact that communication itself has become increasingly multimodal over the past ninety years or so. Discourse can no longer be adequately studied without paying attention to non-verbal aspects of communication, whether in conversation, in therapeutic sessions, or in political discourse (Leeuwen, Kress 2011). Different aspects of multimodality and its analysis have been studied by T. van Leeuwen (2005, 2008), G. Kress (2009, 2010), R. Hodge (Hodge, Kress 1995), D. Machin (Machin, Leeuwen 2007), K.L. O'Halloran (2004) and others.

Communicative-pragmatic approach to understanding the text means that the perception of reality can only be done through the combination of verbal and non-verbal parameters. To define the texts which represent different semiotic components the term "multimodal text" is used and the analysis of cartoons and other non-verbal aspects of communication is

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known as "multimodal analysis". A multimodal text is a complex textual construction in which verbal and visual elements form the integral structural, semantic and functional unity aimed at complex pragmatic influence on the recipient (Anisimova 2003: 17). K.L. O'Halloran and B.A. Smith point out that multimodal analysis includes the analysis of communication in all its forms, but it is particularly concerned with texts which contain the interaction and integration of two or more semiotic resources – or "modes" of communication – in order to achieve the communicative functions of the text (O'Halloran, Smith 2010). Mode is understood as a socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meanings (Kress 2009: 54). To denote the non-verbal part of the text the researchers use different terms: "iconic component", "non-verbal element", "paralinguistic means", "visuals", "semiotic resource", "semiotic mode of expression"– the two last-named being the most productive (Airey, Berge 2014; O'Halloran, Smith 2010; Jewitt 2009; van Leeuwen 2005; Plotnikova 2013; etc.).

Semiotic resources include aspects of speech such as intonation and other vocal characteristics, the semiotic action of other bodily resources such as gestures (face, hand and body) and proxemics, as well as products of human technology such as carving, painting, writing, architecture, image and sound recording, and in more contemporary times, interactive computing resources (digital media hardwares and softwares) (O'Halloran, Smith 2010). Political cartoons are bright examples of multimodal texts in which semiotic resource is presented by illustrations designed to convey a social or political message. The cartoons are characterized by the use of visual metaphors and caricatures to portray political situations and politicians and by the use of humorous or emotional pictures for current events.

The article will first explain the concept of political otherness in intra- and inter-cultural

perspectives, then will tell about the ways of constructing the attitude towards the "others" in British political communication through multimodal texts and will show some strategies of constructing "others" in political cartoons illustrating the representation of "others" in the intra-cultural and inter-cultural perspectives.

Intra-cultural and inter-cultural perspectives of political "others"

According to P. Chilton and C. Schäffner's definition, political discourse is the result of politics, which, on the one hand, is viewed as a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it; on the other hand, politics is viewed as cooperation, as the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty, and the like (Chilton, Schäffner 2002: 4-5). It should be mentioned that the representation of the Self and the Other has often become the main subject matter of political discourse, because, by its nature, this opposition encompasses positive and negative meanings and is able to be filled with any contents, reflecting the interests of different social groups [Grigor'eva 2010: 328]. Various factors and strategies can contribute to constructions of Self and Other for different political aims (KhorsaviNik 2010).

Political otherness, that is the representation/construction of "others" can be viewed in two perspectives: intra-cultural and inter-cultural. These terms are correlated with such oppositions as "self" and "others", "in-group" and "out-group" with the corresponding attributes for identification of special attitude towards "us" which differs from the attitude towards the outsiders. "The understanding of the "other" comes when something familiar ceases and something strange and unusual starts" (Kulikova 2004a: 185). The relationships within "we-
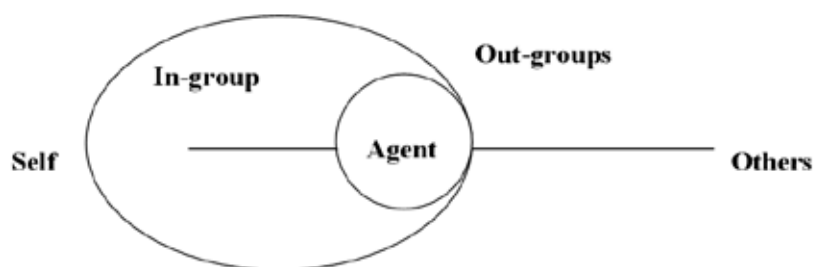
Fig. 1. Opposition "self" (intra-cultural/in-group) and "others" (inter-cultural/out-group)

group" are characterized by solidarity, unity whereas the relationships with "others-groups" are characterized by hostility. This attitude is explained by the fact that everything alien is perceived and evaluated basing on the "in-group" stereotypes.

If we follow the traditional understanding of the opposition "self" – "others" it can be presented in the following way (Fig. 1):

Looking at the two perspectives: intra-cultural and inter-cultural; we should take into consideration that

1) the relationships with the "others" are traditionally connected with intercultural communication;

2) according to the modern understanding intercultural communication can be viewed in both narrow and wide sense.

Intercultural communication in the wide sense is the communication between the representatives of different lingvo-cultures; in the narrow sense intercultural communication additionally looks at the peculiarities of communication within one country, even within different institutions and organizations. This "intercultural" moment can appear due to difference in age, professions, background of the communicants, different behavior and choice of words, for example, use of slang, language literacy and so on (Kulikova 2004b: 29-30). In other words, within one culture there can be some relationships of otherness, because the

"self" culture is not homogeneous and there is also an element of the "other" in it.

So, it is believed that the fact of belonging to the same or different cultures determines the kind of attitude towards the "others". Thus we can differentiate the relationships with the so called "close other" (when the "other" is within the same culture as the agent) and "distant other" (when the "other" is outside the culture which the agent belongs to). It can be demonstrated in the following way (Fig. 2):

Correspondently, *when we analyse the construction of political otherness in the intra-cultural perspective we study the interaction between political parties and political agents, journalists belonging to the same national-lingvo-cognitive community, which can be viewed as one country. In frames of inter-cultural perspective we study the attitude towards the political agents – representatives of other national-lingvo-cognitive communities (so to say, other countries).*

The term "national-linvo-cognitive" community is defined as social, economic, cultural, political and mental community of the people sharing the same language and cognitive base.

In the intra-cultural communication "others" are the representatives of different political parties (Conservative, Labour, Liberal-Democrats) presented in the British Parliament. The majority of the empirical data were taken from the British
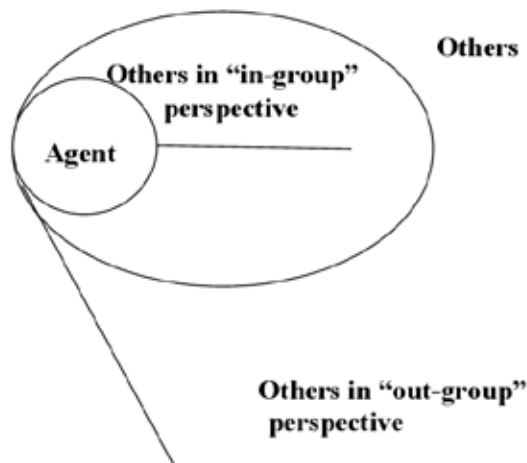
Fig. 2. Representation of "others" in intra-cultural (in-group) and inter-cultural (out-group) perspectives

newspapers and magazines. The criterion of the selection was the address of the discourse directed on the intra-cultural representatives.

From the position of inter-cultural perspective "others" in relation to the British culture are all the non-British political parties and communities, for example, we studied Britain's relationships with China, France, Iran, Iraq, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and so on. The main source of empirical material were the publications in the British press devoted to the issues of foreign policy.

The ways of constructing political "others" through the cartoons

As it was mentioned above it is important to realize that while interpreting the multimodal texts all the information perceived through different semiotic modes is integrated and processed by the recipient as a unified whole (Leeuwen, Kress, 2011). Looking at correlation between verbal and visual components of the multimodal text it can be said that images provide interpretations, ideologically coloured angles, and they do so not explicitly, but by suggestion, by connotation, by appealing to barely conscious, half-forgotten knowledge (Berger 1972).

In T. van Leeuwen's book "Discourse and practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis" (2008) the author writes about the mechanisms of representation and interpretation of "others", which was the result of the author's joined work with G. Kress. In the basis of the approach there are two questions: "How are the depicted people related to the viewer?" and "How are people depicted?" Answering the first question the researchers suggest considering the image in three dimensions:

- the social distance between depicted people and the viewer;
- the social relation between depicted people and the viewer;
- the social interaction between depicted people and the viewer.

In pictures, as in real life, distance communicates interpersonal relationships. We "keep our distance" from strangers; we are "close to" our nearest and dearest and so on. In pictures distance becomes symbolic. People shown in a "long shot" from the far away, are shown as if they are strangers; people shown in a "close-up" are shown as if they are "one of us".

The second parameter is the angle from which we see the person, and this includes the

vertical angle, that is, whether we see a person from above, at eye level, or from below; and the horizontal angle, that is whether we see a person frontally or from the side, or perhaps from somewhere in between. These angles express two aspects of the represented social relation between the viewer and the people in the picture: power and involvement. Vertical angle is related to power differences. To look down on someone is to exert imaginary symbolic power over that person, to occupy, with regard to that person, the kind of "high" position. To look up at someone signifies that someone has symbolic power over the viewer, whether as an authority, a role model, or something else. To look at someone from eye level signals equality. The horizontal angle realizes symbolic involvement or detachment. Its real-life equivalent is the difference between coming "face to face" with people, literally and figuratively "confronting" them, and occupying a "sideline" position.

In the social interaction we check whether or not depicted people look at the viewer. If they do not look at us, they are offered to our gaze as a spectacle to our dispassionate scrutiny. The picture makes us look at them as we would look at people who are not aware we are looking at them. If they do look at us, if they do address us directly with their look, the picture articulates a kind of symbolic demand. The people in the picture want something from us – and what that something is, is then signified by other elements of the picture: by facial expressions, by gestures, and also by angles.

So, there three dimensions – distance, angle, and the gaze – which must always be there. The gradations and multiple combinations these dimensions allow can realize many different ways of depicting people as "others" (Leeuwen 2008: 137-147).

Answering the second question "How are people depicted?" Theo van Leeuwen offers five ways of visual representation of people. Special interest for us is how the people meant as "others" are depicted:

1) deliberate exclusion of people from all the contexts where in reality they are present;

2) depicting people as the "agents" (the doers of the actions) or the "patients" (the people to whom the action is done) in the situations which are considered negative, oppressive, criminal, humiliating and so on;

3) depicting people as homogenous groups thereby denying their individual characteristics and differences;

4) negative cultural connotations connected with the image of the depicted person (hairstyle, clothes, etc.);

5) negative racial stereotypes associated with the depicted people (ibid.).

The example of the analysis

It should be mentioned that the cartoons are usually the reaction on the social and political events happened recently. They express criticism towards some actions which is represented through the images.

As an example we will take the cartoon by S. Bell published in the British newspaper *The Guardian* on the 11th of October 2012. (Fig. 3)

This cartoon is the reaction on the part of the speech by the British Prime-Minister David Cameron made in the Conservative Party Conference on the 10th of October 2012. In his speech D. Cameron talks about the system of education in Great Britain:

And to all those people who say: he wants children to have the kind of education he had at his posh school...
...I say: yes – you're absolutely right.
I went to a great school and I want every child to have a great education.
I'm not here to defend privilege, I'm here to spread it.

Fig. 3. Steve Bell on David Cameron's privilege pledge – cartoon. The Guardian. 11.10.12.

Having said that the Prime-Minister himself went to a great school, Mr. Cameron underlines that he would like the same education to every child finishing his idea with the words "*I'm not here to defend privilege, I'm here to spread it*". This phrase evoked wide response because of the combination of the word "*spread*" having the meaning "*to become or cause sb/sth to be distributed over a large area*" (OALD); and the word "*privilege*" meaning "*a special right or advantage available only to a particular person or group of people*" (ibid.). It is hardly possible to "*spread the privilege*" (in other words, right for something) and besides, in this context D. Cameron is seen as a benefactor spreading (or giving) the privilege.

In Steve Bell's picture we can see a smiling Prime-Minister standing on the doorstep of the house and giving blue ribbons, the symbol of "privilege" to a grey indefinite crowd of people who humbly stand in the rain and wait for some "benefaction". Only the figure of the Prime-Minister and "the privilege" (ribbon) are coloured, whereas the people and the street itself are grey and gloomy. The people's faces are almost indistinguishable which is a marker of representation of "others". However, in this

cartoon, considering the opposition and proportion of bright and grey it can be concluded that the Prime-Minister is represented as the "other" towards the people. Moreover, the character depicting Mr. Cameron is standing much higher in comparison to the people waiting in the street some of whom are standing with their necks adroop and with the stoop. That is the way how otherness is manifested through people's (social) position: the Prime-Minister looks down on the crowd.

Also, the given example shows the interdiscursive links with the original work on the basis of which the cartoon was made. On the verbal level it is proved with the phrase in the left bottom corner "*Apologies to Gustave Doré*", which sends us to the work of the French artist of the 19th century G. Dore *Refuge – Applying for Admittance*. (Fig. 4)

The picture is connected with the acts of 1834 and 1849 aimed at deterring vagrancy in Great Britain. The Master had to decide which vagrants to admit being instructed to only admit tramps who were unable to proceed with their journey in cases of illness or extreme destitution and that all able-bodied vagrants were to be handed over to the police if asking for alms. So,
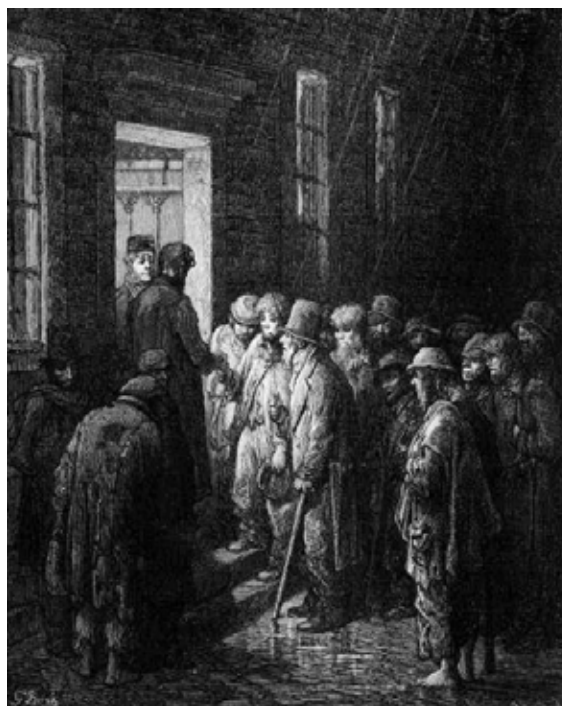
Fig. 4. Doré, G. *Refuge – Applying for Admittance.* Available at: http://dl.tufts.ed/catalog/tufts:MS004.002.045. DO01.00176 (accessed 21 July 2014)

in Dore's picture people really got a privilege. Interdiscursive links between Bell's cartoon and Dore's picture help us to more exactly understand the context of the situation in which the modern version was created and thereby concentrate the recipients' attention on the paradox of the phrase said by the Prime-Minister and the sense this phrase has when perceived and interpreted by the recipients.

The strategies
of multimodal representation
of "others" in British political cartoons

The construction of political "others" through multimodal texts, namely cartoons in the British press, is presented in three steps:

1) analysis of contents, that is interpretation of the interconnection between the text and social practice in which this text was created;

2) identification of strategies of representing "others";

3) description of semiotic resources which are are aimed at manifesting "others".

By the strategy we understand the complex of intentionally determined semiotic means aimed at constructing the "others" in political communication and determined by national, linguistic and cognitive peculiarities of the communicants.

One of the most productive strategies is *the identification, or positioning of "others".* In the intra-cultural perspective it is usually connected with some negative positioning of a politician, whereas in the inter-cultural communication it can have more neutral evaluative character. For example (Fig. 5).

In this picture the Prime-Minister is metaphorically presented in the image of a crying seagull. It should be mentioned that metaphorical

Fig. 5. Andreou, A. Why David Cameron is the ultimate "seagull" manager. New Statesman. 25.07.12.

images in the intra-cultural perspective are more culturally determined, that is reflect national political situation. In most cases negative professional qualities are manifested.

Negative image of a seagull is based on the metaphor "*seagull manager*". It described someone, usually a consultant, who flew in, made a lot of noise, dumped on everyone from a great height, then flew out again, leaving others to deal with the consequences.

Visualization of politicians in the inter-cultural perspective is usually focused on the political line of the "others", not some personal professional qualities. The situations are taken in general not in the context of some specific actions or words. Metaphors are usually widely known and are more generalized, politicians are recognizable, there can be some stereotypes. (Fig. 6)

The cartoon presents the reaction on the result of the elections in the United States of America. The characters are recognizable, the situation is clear.

In terms of interdiscursivity, we believe that it is more a specific feature of intra-cultural communication, here are more hints, references. For example, in *the presupposition of difference between "now" and "then"* which is an intra-

cultural strategy, the idea is to strengthen the positive past and the negative present. (Fig. 7)

The cartoon consists of two parts presenting two political leaders in the process of preparation of the speech what is obvious from the words above the picture – "Great British Speechwriters"). The left part of the picture is black-and-white, the right one is coloured. In the black-and-white part is Winston Churchill who in this context implicates the "positive past". The character is concentrated on self-writing the speech, the attributes only include a pen, some paper and a lamp. We think that the author's intention is to show a serious political approach of the past. In the coloured part is a modern Prime-Minister (the additional means of identification is the sign of the cup "P.M. – Prime-Minister"). The second part presents "negative present" which is realized through the context: the Prime-Minister is dictating the speech to the secretary, they smile, the politician's pose and the presence of the additional attributes like tea and buns say about the ease of the situation, perhaps, not very serious attitude towards the preparation of the speech. If we look at the second part of the cartoon and the sign "Great British Speechwriters", we will feel the author's intention to highlight the difference between a serious concentrated approach of the

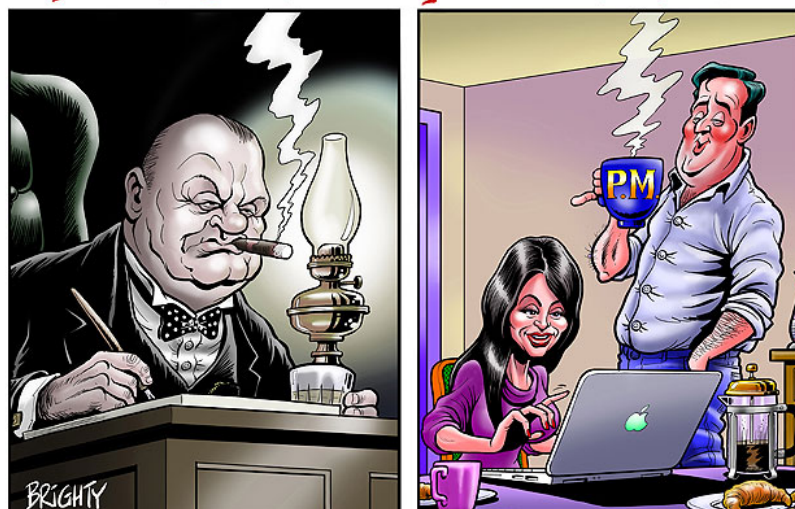Fig. 6. Davey, A. The Sun. 06.11.12.

Fig. 7. Bright S. Great British speechwriters. The Sun. 28.01.13.

past (then) and not serious, surface approach of the present (now).

In the inter-cultural perspective the images are more generalized, express the idea more evidently, for example, *the strategy of paternalistic attitude towards the "others"* which is specific of only inter-cultural perspective. The term "paternalism" is directly connected with the otherness because it represents the relations of "others" and a more influential person who considers it to be his duty to demonstrate care and protection towards the "other".

In visual realization of the strategy of paternalistic attitude towards the "others" it is important that the sender and the receiver of the help and protection were explicitly or implicitly present in the picture. The intention of patronage is manifested through understandable non-verbal

Fig. 8. Kuhn, L. The hand over. Morning Star. 30.09.12.

signs of help: the position of the hand over the object with the intention to constructively influence this object and so on (Fig. 8):

We think that the cartoon actualizes the negative aspect of the strategy of paternalistic attitude towards the "others". It is obvious that the hand in the cuff with the image of the British flag represents Great Britain. This person "helps" the Libyan (the fact that the second person is the representative of Libya is proved by the title in the paper "*Libyan oil contracts*" and the Libyan flag. Trying to interpret the author's intention we, judging from the context and verbal component *(The hand over)*, drew the conclusion that the image has a negative, or criticizing, meaning.

Conclusions

Having analysed the representation of "others" in British political cartoons it was concluded that in the inter-cultural perspective the authors of multimodal texts use generalized visual images characterizing the situation in general. In the cartoons there is an extensive use of well-known metaphors (for example, Russia is a bear), symbols (flags), well known politicians. In the intra-cultural perspective the accent is put on the detail, the image is "bound" to some phrase of concrete action of a politician. The cartoon is more emotional which is actualized through facial expressions and posture of the characters. There are more interdiscursive means in comparison to inter-cultural perspective. In general it was noticed that in the inter-cultural perspective the author's intention is more evident than in the cartoons representing "others" in the intra-cultural perspective.

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Конструирование политических «чужих» через мультимодальные тексты (иллюстрации) в британской прессе

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Иллюстрация как тип мультимодального текста активно задействована в масс-медиально опосредованном политическом дискурсе для конструирования «чужих», что особенно характерно для британской прессы. В политике «чужие» могут рассматриваться в двух перспективах: интра-культурной и интер-культурной. Интра-культурная перспектива отражает отношения политиков в рамках одной культуры, в частности, взаимодействие представителей консервативной, лейбористской и либерально-демократической партий Великобритании. В интер-культурной перспективе анализируется отношение политиков одной культуры (Великобритании) к политическим деятелям и партиям других культур, например, рассматриваются отношения Великобритании с Россией, Соединенными Штатами Америки, Францией и т.д. Принимая за основу общие принципы мультимодального анализа в качестве базового метода интерпретации иллюстраций, мы полагаем, что в каждой из двух перспектив механизм репрезентации «чужих» различается. Специфические черты манифестируются через разные уровни интердискурсивности, эмоциональности, обобщенности, детализации, метафоризации изображений; а также через ряд стратегий, в рамках которых тот или иной мультимодальный текст участвует в конструировании образа «чужого».

Ключевые слова: политический дискурс, конструирование, политические «чужие», интра-культурная и интер-культурная перспективы, мультимодальный текст, мультимодальный анализ, иллюстрация в британской прессе.