

# *Stereotypes in Jokes and Anecdotes: the Search for Ethnic and National Features*

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**Abstract**—The article deals with linguistic manifestations of national features and ethnic stereotypes in popular Russian jokes and anecdotes. The authors make an attempt to define the specific character of anecdotes as precedent texts and to distinguish national and cultural stereotypes particular for “interethnic” and ethnic (Russian) popular jokes. They try to find out the best known character-traits of a “typical” Russian man drawn through the auto-stereotypical representation of his positive and negative qualities.

**Keywords**—stereotypes; anecdotes; jokes; national features; ethnic group

## I. INTRODUCTION

With today’s increasing interest in the problems of cross-cultural communication and the universal and national values origin, researchers pay great attention to such culture components as national stereotypes and their linguistic manifestations. This study sets out to explore specific ethnic stereotypes / national character verbalization as a set of traits (moral, mental, activity, physical and other) that is characteristic for different ethnic groups in general and such contemporary urban folklore genre as a popular joke in particular.

Most anecdotes reflect cultural stereotypes and attitudes within the ethnic group. The ability of each language to divide the world through its own way of conceptualization is beyond doubt. Representatives of different ethnic groups have in mind stereotypes of how the representatives of other cultures look, sound, and behave. In other words, within society there is a formation of certain stereotypes. Moreover, stereotypes reflect the attitude to their own ethnic group through national characteristics, behavioural attitudes and cultural traditions, and at the same time - to representatives of other linguistic cultures. The phenomenon and the concept of "stereotype" attracts the attention of many researchers. The analysis of this problem was studied by such scholars as W. Lippman, Y. A. Sorokin, A. V. Pavlov, N. In. Ufimtseva, V. Red, etc.

## II. STEREOTYPES: DEFINITIONS AND DIRECTIONS

Modern linguistics has concentrated on investigating definition and genesis of stereotypes. Researching stereotypes

is not an easy matter - in the first place, there is no common opinion on the emergence and functioning of national stereotypes in society. As a result, different interpretations and approaches to this phenomenon have emerged, which in various scientific works can be defined by such terms as ethnic prejudices, national stereotypes, ethnic representations, national images, etc.

W. Lippman was the first to introduce the concept of stereotype; while analyzing public opinion he tried to define the status of the stereotype and its role in the process of its formation. Moreover, he regards this phenomenon as mental concepts, pictures in our heads which govern the process of perception and the individual's feelings [6].

According to W. Lippman, while dealings with the world outside, the individual inevitably draws a picture or image in his mind not based on personal experience. Indeed, many of us have some idea of different factors and phenomena, even before we face them in reality. People, driven by linguocultural environment, form mental images of events they do not experience - the so-called idea-stereotypes. Simply put, we learn stereotypes from culture - in part, it can be argued that they are literally imposed on us by our culture, and as a result - we tend to perceive information in the form stereotyped for us by our culture.

The hypothesis that appeared in the 50s suggest that stereotypes may have a certain degree of reliability. However, in the following decades, the interpretation of the stereotype has changed dramatically. The main efforts of researchers are focused not on the phenomenon analysis, but on the study of its specific forms and types.

Social and ethnic stereotypes were actively discussed during this period, but nevertheless, the majority of the approaches existing at that time are based on the idea of the stereotype as a carrier of wrong information. A stereotype is defined as a schematic, standardized representation of a social phenomenon or object, usually emotionally coloured and resistant, which expresses a person's habitual attitude to any phenomenon, formed under the influence of social conditions and previous experience. English dictionaries give similar definitions of the term stereotype:

- fixed mental impression;

- a fixed pattern which is believed to represent a type of person or event.

When talking about stereotypes, sometimes we see that this phenomenon tends to receive the most negative assessment in both English and Russian because they often defined as something devoid of expressiveness and originality.

This idea is fundamentally wrong, especially if we explore the role of stereotypes in intercultural communication that provides an opportunity to understand alien cultural foundations, to grasp folk perceptions of people from other cultures, to weak the effects of the so-called cultural shock and to understand the way people perceive themselves and others.

S.G. Ter-Minasova notes that stereotypes allow a person to form an idea of the world as a whole, to go beyond his narrow social, geographical and political world [13].

The concept of “stereotype” is discussed not only in linguistics, but also in sociology, ethnography, cognitive science, psychology, ethno-psycho-linguistics. And each of the above-mentioned sciences has their own idea of the stereotype, their classification of the concept. The stereotypes of thinking and behaviour features are considered within the framework of a subgroup of social stereotypes. Turning to ethno-cultural stereotypes means focusing on generalized ideas about the characteristics typical of any particular nation. An example of such ethno-cultural stereotyping would be the idea of the German accuracy, the hopes of Russian “Avos”, Italian temper, Scandinavian slowness, etc. Thus, national humor is shaped on the basis of stereotypes. Anecdotes, like any humorous speech genre, have some specific mechanisms to generate humor. Such specificity occurs due to the exceptional popularity of many jokes that leads to their becoming part of the background knowledge of native speakers. Therefore, in addition to general language and “life” stereotypes, anecdotes and popular jokes are able create their own stereotypes, which are, in turn, also “self-ridiculed” in them. They primarily relate to their main characters - their appearance and behaviour. Such “comical” stereotypes do not contradict with the common national ones, but simplify and downgrade them.

The desire to emphasize the range of the most significant and distinctive features of the national character inherent to the majority of an ethnic community is also one of the major principles of both Russian and English jokes. An inseparable feature of many “interethnic” anecdotes is a tendency to present their characters – representatives of other nations or ethnic groups - through the subjective assessment. In most cases – through the neutral or sometimes even negative one. Moreover, it is quite normal for “interethnic” anecdotes to emphasize the existence of certain generalized ideas of physical, moral and intellectual qualities of representatives of different ethnic groups.

An obvious confrontation of auto-stereotypes and hetero-stereotypes can often be found in ethnic anecdotes with the participation of two or three heroes of different nationalities. Protecting their national values and demonstrating the individuality of their ethnic group, anecdotes’ authors give “their” hero certain stable positive characteristics, while

representatives of other nationalities, appearing in the same joke, bear the stamp of stereotypes that reflect only negative qualities attributed to the whole ethnic group. Thus, judging by British anecdotes, Russian people are careless, lazy and cunning. From the Russians’ point of view, we, thanks to our good nature and ingenuity, are always the winners in any even most difficult situation. And as for the British, Russian people may often consider them to be prudish materialists and not very good patriots.

According to Sh. Begley, stereotypes present a trap into which many people can fall [2]. In 1995, C. Steele and J. Aronson reported on a study that showed how the existence of negative stereotypes affects those who are part of the stereotyped groups. They proposed that people feel threatened in situations in which they believe that their performance will identify them as examples of their group's negative stereotype. Steele and Aronson labeled this situation stereotype threat because the presence of these negative stereotypes threatens performance and self-concept. Even if the person does not believe the stereotype or accept that it applications, the threat of being identified with a negative stereotype can be an ever-present factor that puts a person in the spotlight and creates tension and anxiety about performance [11; 12]. Begley's article included examples of how widespread stereotype threat may be, how easily stereotype threat can be summoned, and how powerful stereotypes are in affecting performance [2].

Additional research suggests that nullifying stereotype threats may not be too difficult. Just the suggestion that men and women perform equally well on this test was enough to avert the effects of stereotype threat on a math test [10].

Stereotypes thus can be a positive influence, but much more evidence indicates that they can do damage and require additional steps to nullify. This powerful process affects both those who impose the stereotypes and those who are the targets of stereotyping.

### III. ANECDOTES AS PRECEDENT TEXTS

The study of culture and language correlation has become the mainstream of linguistics research because of the phenomenon of globalization, the blurring of borders between national markets and the washing of cultural differences between nations, regions and ethnic groups. Studying language through culture is meant particularly to emphasise the fact that the interests of all human sciences find common ground in the concept of ‘language and culture’. Regarding language as the main form of national culture expression and existence, E. Sepir noted that culture is what representatives of this society do and think, and language is how they think [9].

There is a direct link between language, mind and culture, with culture being the content and language the form of existence of the content. Language is a cognitive tool through which man perceives the surrounding world and culture.

Russian speech culture suggested that anecdote is a separate language concept. Anecdote, like any single text, belongs to a certain genre, has a special structure, content and form and anecdote can certainly be considered as a special kind of text.

Anecdotes are characterized as belonging to the category of precedent texts, i.e. texts that are well known to any member of a linguistic and cultural community, whose cognitive base includes an invariant of their perception, and the appeals to which are repeatedly renewed in the process of communication through related symbols.

Anecdote heroes are also precedent and defined as ethnic types that are stereotypically associated with comical standards of conduct which are perceived adequately only within a speech culture that created the joke.

Anecdotes are most often based on the “precedent situation” presented in the differential features form and associated with a set of certain connotations. For example, in ethnic anecdotes different nationalities representatives are put in the same conditions (train, uninhabited island, hunting in the forest, etc.).

Precedent texts are part of a particular ethnic group language culture and based on standard communicative situations that reflect national and ethnic stereotypes that are commonly used in everyday discourse.

Davis says that the anecdote traditions of different countries follow certain rules governing ridicule and ethnicity. There are implicit cultural models, sets of social situations that cause the production of similar anecdotes (i.e. based on similar scenarios) in different countries. These patterns should manifest themselves in the anecdote-tradition of each individual culture and be based on the assumption that the joke focuses on the deviation from the norm of the average [3].

The anecdotes use is directly connected with the world knowledge system or, in other words, the linguo-cognitive level of perception. Such texts analysis can determine the individual features and actions justified, encouraged or condemned in a certain society at a certain stage of development. Analysing the Russian culture of folk humour, we can say that the communicative setting of the joke lies in a kind of “switching” tone and the change from serious to funny. The Russian jokes sphere of functioning is quite wide - Russian jokes are told in the companies both to a certain case (and this is their primary function), and just for fun.

Researchers of the genre of anecdote traditionally distinguish two types of ethnic anecdotes:

- a) anecdotes, which tell about the representatives of one ethnic groups;
- b) anecdotes, containing a comparison of representatives of different cultures. For the second group of anecdotes it is typical to attribute stereotypical characteristics that do not have a clear evaluative character to representatives of other ethnic groups.

Ethnic anecdotes also often narrate of some typical representatives of any nation – a ‘lover’, a ‘boss’, a ‘representative of the law’, different female types - a ‘wife’, a ‘mother’, a stupid ‘blonde’, etc. As typical images of different cultures, these characters equally manifest themselves in similar situations. The following two examples are based on stereotypical ideas of ‘blondes’ as typical

representatives of beautiful, but frivolous young ladies in Russian and French anecdotes.

A Russian anecdote:

“What does a blonde say when she will gives birth to a child? - Are you sure it’s mine?”

A French anecdote:

“A blonde gave birth to two beautiful twin babies, but she keeps weeping. The nurse asks her, ‘Come on, Madam. Why you crying? You are now the mother of two beautiful healthy babies!’ – ‘I know’, replies the blonde, but I don’t know who is the father of the second one!”

#### IV. ANTHROPONYMS AS LINGUISTIC MEANS OF EXPLICATION OF ETHNIC STEREOTYPES IN ANECDOTES

It is quite obvious that language stereotypes can be reconstructed on the basis of the analysis of three types of sources: the first one - connotations manifested in polysemy, word formation, collocations and phraseological units; the second one - steady associations as a result of a questionnaire experimental survey; and the third source presents specific texts containing these stereotypes. As for the material for the linguistic analysis of ethnic stereotypes, it can be easily found in various anecdotes that often exploit common ideas about a particular ethnic group or several different minor groups within a major one.

There are different reasons for the emergence and consolidation of ethnic stereotypes of different ethnic groups in the minds of representatives of a certain ethnic group. The researchers note the importance of the frequency of occurrence of some individual objects, which leads to longer contacts with these objects and, consequently, to their stereotyping. Thus, the most common names of a country can add to the national and interethnic stereotypes. Certain associations, connected with anthroponyms carry important background knowledge, determine the semantics and pragmatics of the described units.

The associations may be so steady and socially significant that they become a kind of cultural symbols. There is a famous Russian joke of the Soviet Union period about a Jew who came to a personnel manager to apply for a job in some Russian office: “Good morning, I am a designer. - Yeah, I can clearly see that you are definitely not Ivanov”.

Personal names as markers of national identity deserve special consideration. Anthroponyms “live” their own life in any culture, obeying the rules of the national language and reacting to the society development. A name represents an inseparable part of any ethnic world-view and makes it impossible to accept it as a complete one without considering the system of its anthroponyms. In the vast majority of cultures personal names are chosen from a limited national onomastics, as well as from an “anthroponymic pool” of actively interacting cultures.

Symbolization is definitely typical for anthroponyms, which proceed the long way from the “just a name” status to

the “cultural symbol”. As “Hans” and “Fritz” have become a common symbolic designation of any German, so “Ivan” is now not just a Russian name but a popular way to define any Russian person in other cultures. The frequency of usage of the name “Ivan” led it to be singled out as a stereotypical association with the Russian ethnic group in general, and in most anecdotes it is associated with strength, daring and recklessness. These character-traits of “Ivan” are usually manifested in his actions. For example: “There is a competition of athletes. A really hefty American athlete lifts a huge ball of iron. The crowd is delighted and sighs ‘Ah!’ Then Russian Ivan comes up to the ring. There is an iron cube twice as big and heavy as the ball before him. He is told, ‘Ivan, you can find vodka under the cube’. ‘Where?’ he says and raises the cube. ‘Oh, it was just a dream again!’ he says in disappointment.”

In Russian traditional culture there exists one more popular character with the same name – “Ivan-the-fool”. In the “Dictionary of linguistics and culture” “Ivan the Fool” is defined as “a hero of the household tales, who acts like a comic figure, a loser, or a fool [14]. He is always the object of ridicule and laughter, because everything he does is obviously meaningless and useless. He can dance and rejoice at the funeral and cry at the wedding, he adds salt to the river for the horses to drink; he puts warm hats on the pots so they won’t be cold, etc. That is why Ivan-the-fool often gets beaten by people and even thrown to the river for his stupidity. No doubt, that Ivan-the-fool is definitely a comic figure. But, on the other hand, his absence of common sense and his illogical but kind and generous actions resemble those of “the fool in Christ” (or “yurodivy” as such people have always been called in Russia – one of the phenomena of the Russian spiritual tradition) – he is eccentric, insane, committing ridiculous, meaningless acts, but at the same time he has a unique gift of prophecy. It is obvious that Ivan the fool acts as a generalized character, reflecting specific ideas about a typical national hero. For example: “Ivan-the-fool” comes to the king and says, ‘I promised to bring you the dragon’s head. So, here it is’. The king answers to him ‘And I promised you, Ivan-the-fool, the hand of the Princess. There it is’.”

If we compare it with popular Russian jokes that contain German anthroponyms, we can see that the hetero-stereotypes of typical national images are most commonly associated with such names like Hans, Fritz, or Michel. Moreover, in most anecdotes based on the military subjects these anthroponyms have a negative connotation. It is quite obvious that it goes back to the German ethnic image established with the Russians during the Second World War that equaled the status of the enemy. For example: “1945. There is a lesson in a German school. The teacher says, ‘Hans, conjugate the verb *to run*.’ – ‘I run, we run, you run, he runs, she runs’. ‘And they?’ – ‘And they attack, teacher!’

“Fritz asks, ‘Hans, why are you looking at that forest?’ Hans: ‘There is a beautiful Russian girl making eyes at me.’ Fritz: ‘Hans, why have you hidden then?’ Hans: ‘She is making eyes at me through the optical tracker’.”

In modern anecdotes these anthroponyms have a positive connotation and associate German ethnic character with such

qualities as scrupulousness, punctuality, restraint and diligence. For example, the following anecdote demonstrates German professionalism in contrast to the American and Russian representatives: “There is a shooting competition. The target is a girl with an apple on her head. The first shooter comes out, shoots, fails, the bullet does not hit the apple. The commentator says, ‘John Smith, USA’. The second shooter hits the apple. The commentator announces, ‘Hans Muller, Germany, a professional’. Then comes a scruffy bearded man in a quilted jacket, pulls out a shotgun and shoots. The girl’s head turns into a bloody mess. The commentator says, ‘Night watchman Ivan, the village of Babyakovo, an amateur’.”

Thus, we find the anthroponyms to be a typical linguistic means of explication of ethnic stereotypes in anecdotes and popular jokes. They can be considered as linguistic agents of ethnic stereotypes actualization.

#### V. NATIONAL AND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES IN ANECDOTES

National and cultural stereotypes are transmitted and maintained through the anecdotes texts. Anecdote, like any humorous speech genre, uses special mechanisms to produce the humour. Due to its popularity, many jokes are included in the native speakers background knowledge, and in addition to general language and “life” stereotypes, jokes still create their own stereotypes – “stereotypes of anecdotal space”, which can also be ridiculed and overcome in the joke. Anecdotal space stereotypes concern jokes characters - their appearance, behaviour and character; the “comical” stereotypes do not contradict the common national character stereotypes but simplify them. The desire to emphasize the most significant and distinctive national character features is one of the main principles of national Russian and English jokes, as the greatest differences among cultures should be found in the situations of humour.

A characteristic feature of many interethnic anecdotes is that they are used to reflect a cultural group’s perception and evaluation of other ethnic groups (often negative) or even inflict offense at members of other cultures [4].

Protecting their national values and demonstrating the individuality of their ethnic group, the creators of anecdotes give “their” hero certain stable positive characteristics, while representatives of other nationalities, appearing in the same joke, bear the stamp of stereotypes that reflect only negative qualities attributed to the whole ethnic group.

Anecdotes about different ethnic groups’ representatives are of great importance in studying national characters stereotypes. V. Maslova thinks that that “most anecdotes about the national character are based on stereotypes, and the objects of evaluation in anecdotes can become not only character traits, but also traditions, customs (for example, to make visits), models of daily behaviour, anatomy features” [6].

One of the most popular sources of national character stereotypes is “interethnic” anecdotes. As a rule, this group of popular jokes is based on a template plot and narrates “standard” stories of different ethnic representatives’ behaviour in similar situations. The basic principle of creating

a comic effect in such anecdotes is based on the fact that all characters must respond to the situation strictly in accordance with the stereotypical features of their national character. Some modern European stereotypes are clearly visible in the following joke:

“Paradise is where cooks are French, mechanics are German, policemen are British, lovers are Italian, and it is all organized by the Swiss. Hell is where cooks are British, policemen are German, lovers are the Swiss, mechanics are French, and it is all organized by Italians”.

In this anecdote the paradise is represented by means of standard positive stereotypes: excellent cooking skills for the French, perfect ability to work for the Germans, exclusive love passion for Italians and organized nature for the Swiss. Hell, on the contrary, comprises stereotypical negative features of the same ethnic representatives: inability of the British to cook, cruelty of the Germans, self-restraint of the Swiss, the lack of technical skills of the French and distractibility of Italians.

The British have a similar anecdote: “There have been many definitions of hell, but for the English the best definition is that it is the place where the Germans are the police, the Swedish are the comedians, the Italians are the defense force, Frenchmen dig the roads, the Belgians are the pop singers, the Spanish run the railways, the Turks cook the food, the Irish are the waiters, the Greeks run the government, and the common language is Dutch” [1].

Here, the hell is represented by negative ethnic stereotypes: the cruelty of the Germans, the lack of sense of humor in the Swedes, the distractibility of Italians, the laziness of the French, the tendency to excessive alcohol consumption in the Irish and so on.

Thus, we can see that “interethnic” anecdotes reflect both the features of other ethnic groups’ national characters, as well as the attitude of representatives of the linguistic and cultural environment in which the anecdote was created.

#### VI. ETHNIC AUTO-STEREOTYPES IN RUSSIAN POPULAR JOKES

As for the auto-stereotypes in Russian popular jokes, we can say that most of them narrate about different accidental meetings of representatives of various ethnic groups in specific circumstances. There is a great variety of combinations of possible characters – a Russian, a Frenchman and an Englishman or a Russian, a German and a Pole, etc. But there is always one universal property in all of them – the tendency to ridicule popular ethnic stereotypes. Getting in any comical situation in accordance with the plot of the joke, our hero (a Russian) always acts or speaks out the last of all. His word is always the last one, which means that compared with other characters he is definitely must defeat his rivals’ values and win. To illustrate this, let us consider the following example, which is based on the stereotypes about relations between men and women in different European countries:

“On a desert island in the Pacific Ocean there lived - two Italian men and an Italian woman, two French men and a

French woman, three Germans – two men and a woman, three Greeks – two men and a woman, two Englishmen and one Englishwoman, three Bulgarians – two men and one woman, two Swiss men and a Swiss woman, two Irish men and an Irish woman, two Swedish man and a Swedish woman, and at last, two Russian men and a Russian woman. A month later: one Italian man killed the other one for the Italian woman; all the three French united in a happy marriage; Germans “shared” their woman, strictly observing the schedule; the Greek men lived together and the Greek woman did cooking and washing for them; the British were desperately waiting for someone to come and introduce them to the Englishwoman; the Bulgarians looked at their woman and swam to the opposite shore; the Swedes had been thinking of committing suicide, but consoled themselves by the fact that it didn’t snow on the island and they did not have to pay taxes while their woman was demonstrating complete independence; the Irish men had built a distillery and forgot about the Irish woman after a couple of liters of whiskey, feeling glad that the British would not get it; one of the Russians married a Russian woman and soon divorced her, another Russian made money – he killed the Irishman and sold visas to the Bulgarians. Then he spent the money he had got from that on the shares of the distillery, began to sell whiskey to the British and hired the Greeks as sellers, and the Germans as bodyguards; and the three Swiss had their territory surrounded with a fence and swore not to interfere with all these matters”.

In the context of this anecdote, we can distinguish a number of stereotypical ideas and views on the relationship between the sexes, which in this case are realized through such ethnic character-stereotypes as Italian emotionality, French liberty in relationship and choice of a partner, propensity to homosexual relations traced back into history of ancient Greece, English gallantry, feminist views of the Swedes, Irish propensity to excessive use of alcohol, as well as Russian adventurism and an entrepreneurial spirit.

An adequate perception of stereotypes manifested in ethnic anecdotes often depends not only on the public consciousness, but also on the complementarity of a certain culture. Such conceptualization stresses both the merits and the drawbacks of the national character, and in an ethnic joke it appears as conventional, revealing, however, the most striking features of the representatives of each culture.

Here are some examples that reveal typical features of the Russian character – ability to survive in even the most difficult and unbearable conditions, and an unexplainable passion for ‘banya’ (Russian sauna):

“Cannibals catch a Russian, a Frenchman and an Englishman and start thinking how to cook them. They decide to put each of them into an open pan and boil. The cannibals have been boiling the captives for two hours, then decide that they must be ready to try. They look into the pan with the Englishman - he is completely ready and well cooked, so they can eat him. Then they look into the pan with the Frenchman - he is so muscular that has not become completely ready yet and needs a little more time to cook. They open the lid of the pan with the Russian, and he looks out and says, ‘Hey, guys! Can you give me a sauna whisk?’.”

The stereotypes origin is not always clear or obvious. Sometimes it comes from the country's policy (e.g. non-intervention policy of the Switzerland), or most frequent professional sphere or occupation of immigrants residing in the country (Greeks – sellers, Russians – mafia, Bulgarian women - nannies). Needless to say, such stereotypes are not always adequately perceived by the representatives of these nationalities.

In our research we analyzed Russian anecdotes verbalizing character traits inherent to the Russian ethnic group and were able to identify the following auto-stereotypical positive qualities and character traits of “typical a Russian man”: patience, resourcefulness, persistence, generosity, recklessness, honesty and kindness. However, apart these positive qualities an auto-stereotypical image of a Russian man includes some negative characteristics. For example, among the most common ones we can point out love of fight and revelry and excessive drinking. No wonder, that even if the nationality of such anecdote characters is not mentioned, the reader can easily determine who they really are. Moreover, in Russian anecdotes when there is some international competition in drinking alcohol a Russian always wins. Russian “heroism” in the consumption of alcohol in anecdotes implicitly indicates that a Russian person, on the one hand, likes to be the first even in the most unexpected and ridiculous situations. On the other hand, his “superiority” never develops into “complacency” as for him there is always room for self-irony. As for the Russian cocky attitude and tendency to fight, in anecdotes it usually appears as a consequence of drinking alcohol and a tradition to visit friends and relatives on public and family holidays. Such auto-stereotypical models are often intentionally combined with hetero-stereotypical ones, especially in comparison with representatives of other ethnic groups.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The study of different Russian anecdotes and popular jokes about “typical” representatives of the Russian ethnic group allowed us to draw the following conclusion.

Russian jokes mainly reflect auto-stereotypical view. Among the ethnic auto-stereotypes we were able to identify predominantly positive qualities that indicate moral and ethical characteristics of the group in general. These are, first of all, resourcefulness, persistence, patience, generosity, honesty, recklessness and kindness.

A “typical” Russian man is a “man of extremes”, which is quite obvious from his dashing courage and “great-

heartedness”; he is also self-ironic, hospitable and sociable; he is quick thinking as well. Among other intellectual qualities of the Russian ethnic group, we can distinguish the resourcefulness of the Russians. Russians consider themselves to be creative, unpredictable personalities who are always ready to come up with something new and unusual. The negative qualities of a “typical” Russian man include a love for excessive drinking as well as cocky attitude and tendency to fight.

In our opinion, specific language means and methods which help to express ethnic identity and stereotypes in popular jokes and anecdotes should become the object of further consideration and research.

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