

# On using ethnonyms in the cooperative situation of interethnic interaction

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Paper received 25.05.18; Accepted for publication 03.06.18.

<https://doi.org/10.31174/SEND-Ph2018-166VI49-05>

**Abstract.** The present paper deals with the notion of ethnonyms and their usage in the cooperative situation of interethnic interaction. The latter are studied on the basis of British and American media discourse, which spreads information about life in ethnically heterogeneous countries. Typology of the ethnonyms used in British and American media is given in the present paper. Moreover, vivid examples of different types of ethnonyms are considered.

**Keywords:** media discourse, ethnonym, cooperative situation, interethnic interaction, reference.

**Introduction.** The human interaction in the modern world takes place between representatives of different ethnic and cultural groups. Hence, the notion of situation of interethnic interaction arises. When communicative aim is achieved one can say about cooperative interaction. The latter can be spread via different forms and media discourse is one of them.

Modern media contain names of nation representatives that are participants of interethnic interaction situations. Native speakers, the English language in particular, describe representatives of other nations with the help of ethnonyms.

Ethnonyms of the modern English language are subdivided into official and figurative ones. The official ethnonyms are proper names or popular personal names of a nation representative, while the latter refer to appearance, racial identity, cultural peculiarities, such as lifestyle, typical behavior and food preferences, e.g.

*spaghetti bender, moustache Pete* – for Italians, *frogs* – for the French [2, p. 103].

It should be mentioned that the word “ethnonym” originates from the Greek *éthnos* or “people” and *ónoma* or “name”, it is one-word non-discriptive name referring to people on the national or state basis, e.g. *American, Chinese, Maltese* [1, p. 8]. Ethnonyms are based not only on the basis of a national origin, but also on the place of living. Such definition describes modern ethnic situation when representatives of different ethnic groups live on the territory of one state.

There is one more definition of this notion. It defines nominative unit with neutral or even positive attitude towards certain ethnic group, e.g. *Brazilian, Canadian, Estonian* [3, p. 22]. The opposite group of ethnonyms should be considered which has the name “ethnophobisms”. They are defined as onomastic units used to nominate certain ethnic groups. Furthermore, these units are

used to offend representatives of out-groups, e.g. *Chink, Chinky* referring to the Chinese [3, p. 22].

Ethnonyms are different from linguonyms or language names, e.g. *English, German, Finnish* [5, p. 8]. Ethnonyms and linguonyms are separate notions. They can coincide, but not necessarily.

Ethnonyms and ethnophobisms are used for evaluation of representatives of out- and in-groups. They are certain ethnic images [4, p. 83]. E.g. African Americans who succeed are called *firsts, fat cat*, people from the East – *little people, ricer*. Ethnonyms *apple (red on the outside, white inside), Uncle Tomahawk* are widely used among Native Americans.

It should be mentioned that ethnonyms can often provoke ethnic bias.

**Methods and corpus.** The present research was conducted on the material of British and American media which spread information in multicultural Great Britain and the United States of America. A series of articles taken from those media was studied. It should be mentioned that articles were chosen from both tabloids and qualitative press.

The critical discourse analysis is the main method used while carrying out this research. The above mentioned term is used to denote the critical linguistic approach of scholars finding the larger discursive unit of text to be the basic unit of communication [6, p. 6]

**Results and discussion.** The findings of this research show that ethnonyms of cooperative situation of interethnic interaction in the British media are divided into *official* and *figurative* ones. Furthermore, official ethnonyms refer to *national origin of participants of communication* and *place of living*. It should be mentioned that figurative ethnonyms apart from place of living of individuals in the British media refer to their *religion* [see Table 1].

**Table 1.** Types of ethnonyms of cooperative interethnic interaction situation (British media)

Official ethnonyms		Figurative ethnonyms	
National origin	Place of living	Place of living	Religion
<i>UK-Spain police, Spanish counterparts, British victims, a Spanish judge, British</i> [20]; <i>Polish painters, British producers, Polish plumbers, Polish artists, British film-makers, British artists</i> [17]; <i>Wealthy Arabs, Americans, Egyptians, American tourists, Australians, Germans, French</i> [18];	<i>US tourist, Wills, from Texas in the US</i> [20]; <i>a student from China, graduates from Chinese universities</i> [15]	<i>a Scotland Yard spokesman</i> [19]	<i>Muslim staff, Muslim population, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Muslim workers, Muslim employees</i> [16]; <i>a Muslim, Muslims</i> [14]; <i>Sikhs, Hindus, Christians and people of other faiths</i> [21]; <i>Jews, Jewish people living in Britain, Jewish people, the Jewish community</i> [21]

Ethnonyms in the British media discourse designate participants of cooperative communication. Moreover, they show their cultural and ethnic identity.

Ethnonyms of the British media are additional means of creating ethnic images.

The findings of this research also indicate that ethnonyms of cooperative situation in the American media dis-

course are also represented by *official* and *figurative ethnonyms*. The former are subdivided on the basis of *national origin* and *place of living of individuals*. Whereas figurative ethnonyms indicate *place of living, religion and ethnic and racial identity* of communication participants [see Table 2].

**Table 2.** Types of ethnonyms of cooperative interethnic interaction situation (American media)

Official ethnonyms		Figurative ethnonyms		
National origin	Place of living	Place of living	Religion	Ethnic and racial identity
<i>US airmen, Chinese sailors</i> [13]; <i>British man, British officers</i> [7]; <i>American citizens</i> [11]	<i>Chicago's Nepalese community, Chicagoans from Nepal, Local Nepali community, the Nepali community in Chicago</i> [8]	<i>the black Florida teenager</i> [10]	A <i>Muslim woman</i> [12]	<i>Hispanics</i> [11]; <i>Minority students, white enrollment, white majority, black, black student population, white students</i> [9]

Ethnonyms of American media create ethnic images of the communication participants. Moreover, ethnonyms apart from nominating representatives of in- and out-groups, help to create positive image for American society. At the same time ethnonyms are the factors of emerging ethnic and racial prejudice.

Therefore, ethnonyms of both British and American media are the linguistic units that create native speaker's

images of in- and out-groups. Such images form characteristic features for some ethnic groups. That is why the system of ethnonyms is represented by official ethnonyms used for describing national origin and place of living of communication participants. Figurative ethnonyms indicate racial and religious identity of the participants.

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#### Использование этнонимаций в кооперативной ситуации межэтнического взаимодействия

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**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена изучению этнонимаций в кооперативной ситуации межэтнического взаимодействия. Вышеупомянутое понятие исследовано на материале британского и американского масс-медийного дискурса, которые вербализуют информацию о жизни в этнически неоднородных странах, таких как Великобритания и Соединенные Штаты Америки. Также в статье представлена типология этнонимаций, использованных в британских и американских масс-медиа. Кроме того, представлены яркие примеры различных типов этнонимаций.

**Ключевые слова:** масс-медийный дискурс, этнонимации, кооперативная ситуация, межэтническое взаимодействие, номинация