

Cultural stereotypes

Pre-task:

Complete the second half of this joke together:

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

Task 1:

Which adjectives are often associated with people from your own country and the country of your language partner? Have a look at the following list:

Punctual	Outgoing	Hospitable	Aggressive
Tolerant	Nationalistic	Talkative	Polite
Romantic	Well-dressed	Sociable	Rude
Respectful	Humorous	Serious	Arrogant
Hard-working	Lazy	Quiet	Ignorant
Emotional	Sophisticated	Formal	Casual

Task 2:

- What do you understand by a stereotype? Where do they come from?
- Can seemingly harmless generalizations about nationalities be harmful? Can you think of examples?

Follow-up activity:

Watch the following short [video](#):

Introduction:

A business meeting is about to start. The man is in need of a translator. The woman offers to translate from English into seven different languages.

Transcript:

Woman: “Are you alright?”

Man: “No, I am having a bit of a nightmare, actually.”

Woman: “What’s the matter?”

Man: “Well, I’ve got all the international CEO’s from around the world in this room. In ten minutes the annual summit is supposed to take place. They’ve come thousands of miles to get here and my translator hasn’t turned up. I need to find someone who can translate into seven different languages.”

Woman: “Well, I can do that...Yeah; I did a TEFL in my gap year.”

Man: “Welcome back to London, ladies and gentlemen. This is Helen Marsh, who will be our interpreter today. So, without further ado, let’s address section 1.1 Multinational profiteering, for the financial year 2005 to 2006

Woman: “translates” into seven languages

- What do you think?
- How do you think your own language sounds to non-native speakers?
- What are typical sounds in your language and the language of your language partner?
- What do people think of when they think of your language? For example, many people believe that French sounds very romantic...
- To you, which language sounds the most appealing and why?

Sources

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XY66ZJ0TFUI>