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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND STEREOTYPES

The article is dedicated to the stereotypes and interaction between stereotypes and national culture. The author draws attention to the fact that people's perception of each other is carried out through the prism of existing stereotypes. When meeting with representatives of other peoples and cultures, people usually have a natural tendency to perceive their behavior from the standpoint of their culture. Misunderstanding of a foreign language, symbolism of gestures, facial expressions and other elements of behavior often leads to a distorted interpretation of the meaning of their actions, which easily gives rise to a number of negative feelings: alertness, contempt, hostility. As a result of this kind of intercultural or interethnic contacts, the most typical features characteristic of a particular people or culture are found, and depending on these characteristic features and qualities, these representatives are divided into different groups (categories). This is how ethno-cultural stereotypes are gradually formed, which are generalized ideas about the typical features characteristic of a people or its culture. In the course of the research, the author realizes that the roots of the emergence of stereotypes lie in the objective conditions of people's lives, which are characterized by repeated repetition of monotonous life situations. This monotony is fixed in the human mind in the form of standard schemes and models of thinking. The process of stereotyping occurs due to the ability of human consciousness to consolidate information about homogeneous phenomena, facts and people in the form of stable ideal formations. Stereotypes contain the social experience of people, reflect the common and repeated in their daily practice. They are formed during the joint activities of people by focusing the human consciousness on certain properties, qualities of the phenomena of the surrounding world, which are well known, visible or understandable, at least to a large number of people. According to their content, stereotypes are a concentrated expression of these properties and qualities, most schematically and clearly conveying their essence.

Key words: *stereotype, national culture, nation, communication, cultural communities, linguocultural community.*

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МІЖКУЛЬТУРНА КОМУНІКАЦІЯ ТА СТЕРЕОТИПИ

Стаття присвячена стереотипам та взаємодії стереотипів із національною культурою. Авторка звертає увагу на те, що сприйняття людьми один одного здійснюється крізь призму стереотипів. Зустрічаючись із представниками інших народів та культур, люди зазвичай мають природну схильність сприймати їхню поведінку з позицій своєї культури. Нерозуміння чужої мови, символіки жестів, міміки та інших елементів поведінки часто веде до спотвореного тлумачення сенсу їх дій, що легко породжує цілу низку негативних почуттів: настороженість, зневагу, ворожість. Внаслідок такого роду міжкультурних чи міжетнічних контактів виявляються найбільш типові риси, характерні для того чи іншого народу чи культури, і залежно від цих характерних ознак та якостей дані представники поділяються на різні групи (категорії). Так поступово складаються етнокультурні стереотипи, що становлять узагальнені уявлення про типові риси, характерні для будь-якого народу або його культури. У ході дослідження авторка усвідомлює, що коріння виникнення стереотипів лежить в об'єктивних умовах життя людей, для яких характерне багаторазове повторення одноманітних життєвих ситуацій. Ця одноманітність закріплюється у свідомості людини у вигляді стандартних схем та моделей мислення. Процес формування стереотипів відбувається завдяки здатності людської свідомості закріплювати інформацію про однорідні явища, факти та людей у вигляді стійких ідеальних утворень. Стереотипи містять у собі суспільний досвід людей, відображають загальне її повторюване у їхній повсякденній практиці. Вони формуються під час спільної діяльності людей шляхом акцентування свідомості людини на тих чи інших властивостях, якостях явищ навколишнього світу, які добре відомі, помітні або зрозумілі принаймні великій кількості людей. За своїм змістом стереотипи є концентрованим виразом цих властивостей і якостей, що найбільш схематично і зрозуміло передають їх сутність.

Ключові слова: *стереотип, національна культура, нація, комунікація, культурні спільноти, лінгвокультурна спільнота.*

Formulation of the problem. The relevance of this topic is caused by the interest of the researchers in the interaction of language, culture, and the psychology of the people. The phenomenon and concept of “stereotype” attracts much attention of researchers; many scholars, such as W. Lippman, I.S. Kon, W. Krasnykh, E. Bartminsky, F. Batsevich, N. Sorokina have studied this problem (Кон, 2001; Lippman, 1966; Красных, 2001; Бартминский, 2009; Батевич, 2019; Сорокина, 2014). The novelty of the study lies in the fact that the stereotype phenomenon will be considered in a broad sense, as a concept that includes the ideas of one nation about the culture of another nation as a whole.

The purpose of the work is to explore the interaction of the concepts of stereotype and national character, to identify the features of the reflection of national culture in stereotypes.

Research analysis. For the first time, the definition of the concept “stereotype” was proposed by a well-known person American journalist, political scientist and sociologist W. Lippman in the work “Public Opinion” (1922). He considered stereotypes as prejudiced opinions, which are formed in the society under the influence of mass media and decisively control all the processes of perception. W. Lippman claimed that “stereotypes mark objects either as familiar or as strange and unusual, intensifying the difference according to this parameter: slightly familiar things are presented as very close ones, and a little strange things as completely alien” (Lippman, 1966). He singled out racial, religious and ethnic stereotypes, although he noted that there are many other stereotypes, but less common. The phenomenon of “stereotype” as one of the mechanisms of socialization was studied in the works of O. Bodalev, E. Erikson, J. Mead, B. Parygin, A. Petrovskiy, G. Tarde, H. Tajfel (Tajfel, 1982, 1984; Tarde, 1968; Erikson, 1959; Мід, 2000).

In Ukrainian science, the question of emergence and the functioning of ethnocultural stereotypes were raised in the works of P. Hnatenko, S. Krymskiy, V. Pavlenko, Yu. Rymarenko, V. Sichynskiy and others (Лавінський, 2010; Січинський, 1946; Рымаренко, 1998, 2000). From the beginning of the 70s of the XXth century, scholars begin a more detailed study of the specific forms and types of stereotypes. However, stereotypes continue to be perceived as bearers of false information that negatively affect the ability to be correctly understood in the process of intercultural communication. As a result, such a bias contradicts the main function of communication – to establish cooperation between countries and ethnic groups, national groups, reli-

gious organizations in order to support the integrity of the world sociocultural structure.

Presentation of the main material. For a long time, there has been a debate about the definition of the concept of “stereotype”, attempts are being made to identify ways of forming and spreading national stereotypes in society, the issue of their influence on relations between peoples is being discussed, but there is no consensus among researchers regarding the legitimacy of using the word “stereotype” itself. As we have already mentioned, the term “stereotype” itself was introduced into scientific circulation by the American sociologist W. Lippman, who understood it as a special form of perception of the surrounding world, which has a certain influence on the data of our senses before these data will reach our consciousness (Lippman, 1966: 95).

Another researcher, sociologist R. Binkley, called the stereotype the greatest common denominator. In his opinion, the presence of stereotypes allows a person to adequately assess the political situation, which is too complex for analysis and too remote from his sphere of activity (Binkley, 1928: 393).

American scientists spoke of a stereotype as a stable representation, which does not agree with the realities that it seeks to represent, and which follows from the characteristic, inherent in a person, to first determine the phenomenon, and then to observe it (Katz, Braly, 1933: 288). In the late 40s, a large-scale study was carried out to determine how the representatives of one country perceive the peoples of other countries; what factors determine their perception. The difference between positive and negative answers determined the so-called “the denominator of friendliness” (Katz, Braly, 1933: 96).

Let us dwell on such a type of stereotypes as lacunas. The main feature of them is that they arise in the process of communication, in a situation of contact between two cultures which exchange the texts. Lacunas are divided into four groups: 1) subjective lacunas, reflecting the national and cultural characteristics of communicants to various linguistic and cultural communities; 2) active-communicative lacunas, reflecting the national and cultural specifics of various types of activities in their communicative aspect; 3) lacunas in the cultural space, if we consider the process of communication in a broad sense, or lacunas in the cultural interior, if we consider one or another specific communicative act; 4) textual lacunas that arise due to the specifics of the text as a communication tool; the specifics of the text can be the content, the form of reproduction of the material, and the poetics of the author (Macrae, 1996).

The first group of lacunas is classified as subjective or national-psychological lacunas. They arise as a result of a discrepancy between the national psychological types of communication participants and are of several types. There are three types of characterological lacunas (Тер-Минасова, 2000): 1) lacunas reflecting the traditional and, to a certain extent, stereotyped perception of the national character of another nation; 2) lacunas reflecting discrepancies in how similar qualities are manifested in different peoples; 3) self-reflexive lacunas, reflecting how the bearers of a particular culture understand their national character. The existence of “characterological” lacunas is due to the specific features of national character of the bearers of various local cultures (McGarty, 2002: 12).

As a result of intercultural communication in some cultures, certain stereotypes are formed in relation to other cultures, in particular, those that fix the most characteristic feature for a particular nation, which is less pronounced in other peoples (Ковалева, 2022: 117).

It is generally accepted that the main thing in the English national character is balance, in French – passion, in American – pragmatism, in German – punctuality (Кох, 2001: 125). Punctuality can be explained as a relative characterological lacuna for the Spaniards and the Latin Americans in comparison with the carriers of German and Dutch cultures: punctuality is highly valued among the Germans and the Dutch, but means little to the Spaniards and even less to the Latin Americans (Кох, 2001: 126). All characterological lacunas are relative; in national variants of character, these universal human features occupy different places in the value system of the corresponding culture, differing in the degree of prevalence. This position is confirmed by an analysis of such a sign of national character inherent in all peoples as hard work: you can see the difference between the hard work of the Americans and the hard work of the Germans. The diligence of a German is thoroughness, accuracy, conscientiousness, discipline, foresight, but without scope and risk (Гладких, 1999: 59). The diligence of an American is scope, energetic assertiveness, inexhaustible business passion, initiative (Buchanan, Cantril, 1953: 97).

Thus, for the Americans, the content of such a feature as industriousness, in many ways, does not coincide with how the Germans understand it: clearly expressed organizational data, the ability to instantly navigate situations that are typical for the Americans, are lacunas for the Germans, who equate the concepts of industriousness and disciplines. “Self-reflexive” characterological lacunas reflect the understanding and self-image of the bearers of certain cultures.

For a foreigner, for example, it is difficult to grasp the meaning of the Finnish “sisu”, which defines the basis of the Finnish national character. The dictionary defines this concept as “a reserve of vitality, endurance, patience, willpower, courage, boldness, ingenuity” (Павловская, 1997: 53). In life, “sisu” manifests itself, according to the Finns themselves, as determination in the face of difficulties; the Finn turns to “sis” as a reservoir of energy when all other resources have already been exhausted.

Among the national-psychological lacunas, one should single out those that are associated with the national characteristics of the “mindset” of the bearers of different cultures, “sylogistic” lacunas. Researchers note more or less significant discrepancies in this area of national psychology (Харрис, 2003: 84): German thinking is characterized by philosophical breadth and depth of abstraction, British thinking is characterized by the desire not to resort to abstractions (Buchanan, Cantril, 1953); the French are imaginative, preferring ideas to facts; on the contrary, the British are distinguished by restraint of the imagination, they are guided by facts, numbers, and not theories.

National-specific features of the thinking of representatives of different cultures can cause the emergence of “mental lacunas”, which belong to the second group – to the active-communicative lacunas. The existence of mental lacunas is revealed when the recipient solves mental problems characteristic of a foreign linguocultural community (Вунд, 2010). This kind of lacunas occurs when the natives of a certain culture are asked to solve a riddle translated from another language. In this case, the recipients are unable to give the correct answer to the riddle, reflecting the specifics of a foreign culture. In this case, the presence of lacunas disrupts the process of intercultural communication.

In order that intercultural communication can take place, it is necessary not only to translate texts from one language into another, but also to construct them in a form familiar to the native speaker of the TL (translating language), in accordance with the peculiarities of his mindset, to introduce cultural and ethnographic images and symbols. The concept of “behavior” (carriers of a certain culture) includes a large number of aspects: kinesics (facial expressions, gestures) characteristic of a given culture; household (everyday) behavior, due to traditions, customs, way of life accepted in a given culture, as well as communication etiquette, a fragment of which is kinesics (kinesic lacunas), and everyday behavior (routine lacunas) (Бартминский, 2009: 98).

Kinetic lacunas signal the specifics of the gestural and mimic codes of different cultures. A good exam-

ple is the confrontational nature of Ukrainian and Bulgarian gestures denoting agreement and disagreement (“yes” and “no”). Kinetic lacunas can be absolute and relative: in Ukrainian culture, for example, there is no such gesture as knocking the knuckles on the table as a sign of approval, respect, common in German culture (Андреева, 2001: 265); thus, for the native speakers of the Ukrainian language, this gesture is an absolute lacuna.

The handshake gesture as a sign of greeting is known in both Ukrainian and English cultures, but in Ukrainian culture it is used much more often than in English, being a relative lacuna for the English (Ерофеев, 1982). The ratio of verbal and non-verbal means in the male and female versions of communication etiquette can have a laconized character, which in fact are stereotypes of behavior characteristic of a particular society (Тер-Минасова, 2000: 59).

The male type of communication is less flexible, but more dynamic and less interlocutor-oriented communication. The most common genre of communication for men is conversation-information, and for women it is a private conversation. The female type of communication is more focused on the interlocutor, on the dialogue, on the subordinate role in communication, where a man chooses and changes the topic of conversation.

On the one hand, society has developed such stereotypes of behavior, according to which a woman plays a subordinate role in front of a man, she must be a good housewife, capable of doing any job, and she must be kind, patient, obedient, gentle, faithful, and beautiful. The absence of a husband in this model is seen as a departure from the norm, and leaving the husband as a rebellion. The language fixed the patriarchal attitude: stereotypes are firmly entrenched in it, according to which many vices are inherent in a woman; therefore, while comparing a man with her, a man always carries a negative connotation: talkative, curious, flirtatious, narcissistic, capricious, hysterical like a woman, female logic; a woman, however, is only adorned by a comparison with a man: a masculine mind, a masculine grip, a masculine character (Сорокина, 2014: 76).

The subgroup of kinesic lacunae includes mimic lacunae that occur when the mimic codes that exist in certain cultures do not match. One of the mimic signs is a smile. In different cultures, smiles can, depending on existing etiquette norms, have different iconography and meanings. One of the strange features of the representatives of Ukrainian culture in the eyes of the West is gloom, coldness, lack of a smile. The Ukrainian people, having got into the English-speaking world, are perplexed about smiles. In the view of the

Ukrainian people, a smile is an integral part of the Western culture, inextricably linked with the norms of behavior.

In the Western world, a smile is not only a biological reaction to positive emotions, it is a sign of culture (culture in the ethnographic sense of the word), it is a tradition, a custom (Сорокина, 2014: 75). In American culture, smiling is also a social sign of prosperity. Keep smiling – the motto of the American way of life: “whatever happens – smile”. Fake optimism in any situation is a feature of the American national character, which is officially approved and implemented by all means, including language (Buchanan, Cantril, 1953). A special group of behavioral lacunas are “everyday” (“routine”) lacunas, indicating the traditional way of life, habits, and features of life. It is customary for the British to drink tea at five o’clock in the evening, but other European nations do not have such a custom. Many Europeans are surprised that the Ukrainians wash themselves using a running stream of water, while they themselves draw water into the sink to wash themselves. Let us consider such a stereotype of behavior as secular talk. Dictionaries define it as “empty, meaningless talk” (Ахмадова, 1969); “chatter, light talk”; “light conversation on insignificant or frivolous topics” (The Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture, 2008: 1275); “a conversation on everyday and minor secular topics” (Hornby, 2005). The ability to choose the right topic for conversation is very important when communicating with representatives of a different linguistic and cultural community.

“Safe” conversation topics that are considered appropriate for communicating with strangers vary from country to country. Recommended topics for secular talk in English-speaking countries are: travel, weather, work (but not salary and other similar issues related to money), origin, hobbies, and news, but not related to politics. As for the topics to avoid in conversation, the Americans argue that it is dangerous to talk about two things: politics and religion. In England, such issues also include the following topics: the royal family, race relations, wages / incomes, health, pets, and Northern Ireland (Ерофеев, 1982).

In Ukraine, however, many of these topics are the most popular among educated people when they get together on any occasion. So, the existence of different types of etiquette norms and, as a result, the rejection or disapproval of stereotypes of behavior characteristic of representatives of another culture, can create difficulties in communication. As a result, misunderstanding may arise between the communicants (for example, in case of incorrect, opposite interpretation of gestures of a foreign cul-

ture that have no equivalent in the native culture for the recipient) or one of the interlocutors may have an unfavorable impression of the other (in Japanese culture, it is considered unacceptable to sit cross-legged or stretching them out; and for the British, this posture is a behavioral norm); that is why those people who communicate may be in a state of “culture shock” (Красных, 2001).

So, our study allowed us to draw the following conclusions: 1) the main feature of stereotypes is their determinism by culture – a person’s ideas about the world are formed under the influence of the cultural environment in which he lives; 2) stereotypes are shared by the majority of people, but they can change depending on the historical, international, and domes-

tic political situation in the country; 3) a stereotype is a relatively stable, generalizing image or a set of characteristics (often false), which, in the opinion of most people, are characteristic of representatives of their own cultural and linguistic space, or representatives of other nations; 4) in the process of perceiving the stereotypes of the culture of another people, a certain attitude is formed towards them, most often they are perceived as something alien; this is how a conflict of cultures arises – the result of discrepancies between what is accepted in domestic and foreign, for the recipient, cultures; 5) clash of stereotypes characteristic of different cultures can create difficulties in communication, cause “culture shock” and, thus, lead to a misunderstanding of other people’s culture.

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