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## **РОЛЬ СТЕРЕОТИПОВ В МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ**

*Аннотация:* в статье представлены основные характеристики стереотипов в различных культурах. Также статья посвящена проблеме межкультурной коммуникации посредством использования иностранного языка.

*Ключевые слова:* стереотип, культура, коммуникация.

## **THE ROLE OF STEREOTYPES IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

*Abstract:* the article reveals main features of stereotypes in different cultures. Also, the article deals with the issue of cross-cultural communication using a foreign language.

*Keywords:* stereotype, culture, communication.

From country to country (in many cases even within the same territory), a huge number of essential life aspects change, therefore it is almost impossible to find identical cultural phenomena.

Studying any foreign language, a person necessarily encounters the cultural and psychological features and native speakers. The last aspect is most important as it affects understanding while communicating. People should take into account absolutely everything, especially the national character and mentality, image of which can be formed through stereotypes.

The process of cross-cultural communication is directly related to the problem of the perception by cultural representatives. Thereby, such a phenomenon is emerging as a stereotype. Based on the opinion of most specialists, stereotype is a typical image or idea about an object, phenomenon, people, country, usually emotionally colored and stable [1, p. 24]. It presents the habitual attitude of a person or group to a situation,

another person, society, and country, formed under the influence of social, political, historical conditions, and previous experience. Moreover, a stereotype exists in the public consciousness.

Scientists identify two main sources of stereotypes:

1. Individual or group's past experiences and a lack of information that people have in a daily life, as well as some specific phenomena that arise in the field of interpersonal communication and interaction (for example, the stereotype that Americans eat only fast food).

2. Purposeful activities of social media and political propaganda (an example is the propaganda of the Western media about Russia as a «despotic country» in connection with the situation in Ukraine) [1, p. 25–26].

Participants of international relations can control the formation of stereotypes. On the one hand, the process requires a huge amount of time and effort; on the other hand, a well-formed stereotype is never to be changed or corrected.

Stereotypes are a powerful tool for manipulating the consciousness of individuals, groups and a whole society in a political field. From this point of view, stereotypes can be defined as standard methods of understanding social and political phenomena, problems like «truths», constantly repeated and used by the political elite as well as supported and disseminated by social media that are constantly declared and imposed.

Ethnic stereotypes are comprehended by people in early childhood and are transmitted in almost an unchanged shape. They are explained by the universal necessity to simplify information, because it is easier for people to describe nations undifferentiated.

The basis of the stereotype is, as a rule, any noticeable sign – skin color, character traits, external features, behavior, etc.: Italians are eccentric and emotional, English people are thin, Scandinavians are blond. Some ethnic stereotypes can be formed around a natural phenomenon: Russia – winter, England – fog. Also, the basis for a stereotype can be formed from products: France – cheese, wine, perfume; Switzerland – chocolate, watches. Stereotypes can be grouped around a historical or natural monument: Japan – Mount Fuji; France – Eiffel Tower [2, p. 40].

The process of cross-ethnic, cross-cultural, cross-state communication is accompanied by a number of difficulties associated with the fact that representatives of different cultures do not have the same information. When meeting people from other cultures, people tend to interpret their behavior from the perspective of their culture, which leads to a misunderstanding of a foreign language, facial expressions, gestures, symbolism, etc. Thus, the roots of ethnic stereotypes lie in repetitive life situations.

The prerequisite for the formation of stereotypes is the human thinking ability to consolidate information about homogeneous phenomena, facts, and people in the form of stable ideal. Stereotypes contain social experience; they are the product of group consciousness. The formation of ethnic stereotypes is also influenced by such a basic personality quality, as ethnocentrism, associated with the idea that one's own ethnic group is the center of everything, while the rest exist mere around it.

A lack of information about a cultural life is also an aspect influencing the formation of ethnic stereotypes, since unknown quickly acquires mystical rumors.

Another prerequisite is the psychological quality of a person, such as the need to cope with overwhelming information and simplify it, classify it into more convenient shapes, which become stereotypes.

Scientists identify several main types of stereotypes:

1. According to the level of perception by the human consciousness, stereotypes of opinion and judgment are distinguished. Stereotypes of opinion are stereotypes that can be easily applied when new information is received. Stereo-types of judgment – stereotypes that have a great power, which can become the motive of human behavior.

2. According to the perceived object, hetero- and autostereotypes are distinguished. Heterostereotypes are peoples' ideas about others, ethnic groups (as a rule, negative features prevail in them). Autostereotypes are the stereotypical ideas of people about themselves (positive ones prevail here).

3. The quality of the assessment is positive and negative stereotypes. As a rule, stereotypes are very complex phenomena that combine the characteristics of all the above groups. Such stereotypes are called ambivalent.

4. According to some students' degree of variation, some scholars allocate basic or modal stereotypes that are unchangeable. Basic stereotypes are ideas about people, which are attributed to isometric, international, political, time factor. They change in dependence on changes in the world, in general, and, as a rule, are connected with history [1, p. 35].

In general, stereotypes have the following functions:

1. Stereotypes are the main tools of knowledge. They help to «save» the thinking with the help of simplifying the map of the practical realization, make thinking process easier.

2. Stereotypes help in the process of a rational adaptation to the conditions of living. They will help to define what kind of rational world an individual or group is.

3. Stereotypes are a way of transmitting a rational, cultural experience.

4. Stereotypes are a sign of crosscultural communication.

5. Stereotypes can be used as a tool of propaganda.

Depending on engaging in a daily life, these stereotypes can be both useful and harmful for international communication. The process of the stereotyping is carried out to develop an adequate actions effect in response to the presentation of another ethos. For this purpose, the stereotype should be approached as information, the description of the phenomenon, and not as informative.

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