

**ETHNIC STEREOTYPES AND THEIR REFLECTION  
IN THE ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGE**

**S.M. Bobrovnyk**

*National Technical University of Ukraine*

*“Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”*

[cindsv@mail.ru](mailto:cindsv@mail.ru)

The article deals with ethnic stereotypes and their reflection in the English and Russian languages on the material of idioms, phrasal verbs and set-expressions. It describes the types of stereotypes, gives their characteristics, and analyzes the meaning of ethnic stereotypes on the material of idioms of the English language. Phrasal verbs, set-expressions and idioms are researched as language stereotypes. The article defines the essence of the notion of stereotypes in the process of intercultural communication. Much attention is paid to understanding and correct translation of these language stereotypes and their usage in speech. Etymological analysis is traced in the origin of the idioms that makes it easy to understand their real meaning and helps to use them correctly. The importance of studying such phenomenon as stereotype is stipulated by the necessity of accurate understanding the origin of the language stereotypes, as there is a big amount of them in the languages. Understanding them and knowing the roots of their origin greatly facilitates correct translation and mutual understanding among the people in our global world and helps to avoid biases and misunderstandings.

**Key words:** stereotype, notion, conception, bias, ethnic, assertion, judgment, behavior, reaction, communication.

**Introduction.** Modern language is characterized by abundance of idioms in the language as the language reflects all ideas and conceptions of human mind based on the experience of people’s communication and interaction. The topicality is stipulated by the problem of the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups living in the world community. The existing perception of one nation about other nations can have a great influence on ethnic interrelations. Knowledge about the origin of stereotypes and mechanisms of their formation plays a primary role in prevention of ethnic prejudicialness. It is possible to gain such knowledge with the help of the language as a brilliant illustrative material in regards of formation and development of stereotypes in public consciousness.

**The aim of the article** is to define the essence of the notion of stereotypes in the process of intercultural communication, to describe the types of stereotypes, give their characteristics, to analyze the meaning of ethnic stereotypes on the material of idioms of the English language.

**The role and understanding of stereotypes in intercultural communication.** Belonging to the certain ethnos greatly impacts the socialization of an individual, their formation as a personality in the frame of the definite national cultural community. This phenomenon was emphasized traditionally in comparison with some cultural images. Famous poets, writers, philosophers said about such things as “German accuracy and punctuality” *немецкая пунктуальность, точность*, “French courtliness” – *французская галантность*, “Russian perhaps” – *русский авось*, “Chinese ceremonies” – *китайские церемонии*, African temperament or Southern temperament – *южный темперамент*. These expressions embody widespread national cultural stereotypes which are based on the experience of the people in the process of communication with the representatives of other nations.

Ethnic stereotypes have attracted attention of linguists lately and they are becoming the object of lingua-cultural research. Typical stereotypes form the culture and act as ethnic-cultural identifiers. Stereotype is a stable combination of valuations, attitudes, consequence of actions or motions which function in this or that situation as a whole regardless the content of the situation. The model which is not adequate to the situation in the present which is not successful from the point of view of this or that social group can be regarded as a stereotype. Stereotype can be an unjustified summarizing in order to save mental energy, time and other resources; such generalization is affectively justified and driven from the mechanisms of the situation valuation or its definite characteristics. Stereotypes become apparent on the verbal associative level. Stereotypes can cause negative emotions because of the deficiency of the information provided by the resources. Stereotypes are connected with the national (group) culture and identification; stereotypes exist as conceptions about the

complicated objects which are organized in a complicated manner with complex functions; it is possible to speak about the stereotypes which are connected with the description of people than things. As a result the attempts to understand and describe the choice of people in this or that situation, other people prescribe them as such “essences”. The data are fixed under the rules of the game in this or that culture or subculture [6].

According to Walter Lipmann, stereotype is the picture of the world in human minds schematically determined by the culture. Our stereotypical world is not as we would like to have. It is a world in our minds that we imagine. If the events correspond to our expectations we have a perception that we move along with the world [4].

Social stereotypes are related to the ideological construction of the model of the “Other”, that allows and justifies the dominance of “Self” over “Others”. In the line with these ideas philosophers, sociologists, linguists analyze stereotypes of gender, age, national and racial stereotypes. In the interpretations of social stereotypes and their main properties, as a rule, negative assessment is provided, which appeared on the first stages of their usage. French word stereotype dates back to the Greek words stereos and typos, that mean impression, *typus* from Latin – image. Stereotype meant “metal print form, copy from typesetting”. W. Lippman was the first who used the word stereotype in relation to society, the main properties of this phenomenon are fixed and motionless, oversimplified and selective that is inevitably in simplification [4, c.43].

Stereotype is interpreted as ‘the result of logical categorization, general for all’. It is the ‘product’ which was formed by the participants of the groups, and also properly by the relationships between the groups and respectively shared by these groups’. By its nature stereotype is an imaginary, unproved knowledge which realizes relations between “Self” and “Imaginary” [3, c.75].

Considering speech stereotypes and translating them as a fragment of foreign speech the following general traits are marked out; unnecessary usage; possibility of their existence only on the background of syntagmatic residue; they must be adequately accepted by those to whom they are addressed; they should bring additional sense to the statement; for their functioning there must be some necessary general fund of knowledge for the society-destination. Otherwise, such stereotypic notions couldn't transfer correct information and can cause mutual misunderstanding among people.

The reason of stereotyping lies in the fact that people do not tend to react on the surrounding phenomena every time in a new manner, but they bring the ideas under the existing categories. In these cases cognitive process remains on the level of the commonplace consciousness restricting itself by the life experience based on the typical for the definite area conceptions. Refusal from stereotypes would demand a constant tension of attention and would turn the life process into the endless line of attempts and mistakes and it is often unsafe. It is easier for people to characterize wide human groups both on the national and social grounds roughly and with bias. Such categorizing has inner tendency to keep stability during the long periods of time. Stereotypes can be digested by children without clear realizing of those groups to which they refer.

The knowledge of stereotypes of national behavior gives the opportunity to forecast the actions, reactions of the individuals belonging to a certain ethnic group. With this the reaction of the individuals in accordance with the stereotypes can become ineffective in conditions of ambiguity of the situation that can lead to deformation of interpersonal communication that can increase misunderstanding. Stereotypes of national behavior in everyday life are in close correlation with the rules and norms of national etiquette. In extreme situations they facilitate the behavior and activity and permit to save time and efforts.

Consideration of some means of expression of ethnic stereotypes in the English language gives separate names of nations besides their direct main meanings,

they gained figurative meanings to the representatives of some ethnos; e.g. *Chinese* in American slang means badly-done, *to Jew* means to haggle (with), *Scotch* means mean, reserved, *Turk* means rude, tyrant, etc. There is a big number of idioms in the English slang with the word Dutch. It is stipulated by the fact of geographical closeness and cultural contacts. Practically in all meanings of the given set word-expressions negative evaluation characteristics are observed. The word *Dutch* very often symbolizes something bad and unreliable. For example, *Dutch comfort* means bad consolation; *Dutch defense* – unreliable or wicked defense; *Dutch gold* – foil; *Dutch treat* is an outing for two or more people where the cost is split among the participants, either evenly or in proportion to what is consumed; *Dutch bargain* is a bargain, a deal made with a bottle of hard drinks; *Dutch act* means suicide, the origin of this idiom could be stipulated by the fact that in Scandinavian countries people often commit suicide. *Dutch feast* is a feast where the master gets drunk before the guests; the idiom *Dutch courage* – is liquor; false courage from drinking liquor. This idiom dates back to the period on English-Dutch war of the end of XVII century, when the captain of the ship made his sailors drink hard drinks to be brave before the battle. *Dutch uncle* is someone who gives avuncular advice, a man who gives advice to one of their relatives. *Dutch auction* is a sale in which the price of something gradually goes down until someone agrees to buy it; *go Dutch* means that each of the people pays for their own meal, drinks, entertainment etc., when they go somewhere together; *in Dutch*, American slang, in trouble. *Dutch barn* is a farm building with a roof but no walls that is used for storing hay. *Irish coffee* is a hot drink made with coffee, Irish whiskey, and cream, *Irish Setter* is a large dog with long dark red hair; *Irish stew* is thick soup made from meat, potatoes, onions, and other root vegetables. *Mexican breakfast* is a cigarette and a cup of coffee or a glass of water; *Mexican brown* is a brownish Mexican marijuana, *Mexican mud* is a weak heroin from Mexico; *Mexican bush* is a low-quality marijuana from Mexico, *Mexican standoff* is a hopeless standoff, a hopeless staring match; *Mexican wave* is the effect that is made when all the people watching a game of football, baseball, etc. stand up, move their arms up and down, and sit down again one after the other in a continuous movement;

*Mexican rank* is a temporary rank. *French bean* is a bean with a long green case that is picked when it is young and soft, *French bread* is white bread in the shape of a thick stick; *French chalk* is chalk used for drawing lines on cloth when making clothes; *French doors, French windows* means a pair of light doors made of glass in a frame, usually opening out on to a garden or balcony; *French dressing* a mixture of oil and vinegar that is put on raw vegetables, *French fry* is usually especially in American English, a long thick piece of potato cooked in fat; *French horn* is a horn that is shaped like a circle with a wide bell-like opening; *French polish* is a clear liquid put on wooden furniture to protect it and make it shine; *French seam* a double seam used when making clothes, which hides the edges that have been cut. The expression *to assist in the French sense* means to participate without taking participation; *French leave* means to go without saying good-bye. The expression in the Russian language sounds like to leave in the English way has the same meaning. *English breakfast* is a large cooked breakfast consisting of bacon, eggs, toast; *English muffin* is a round flat piece of bread that you toast before eating it. *Indian gift* is a gift in return for which an equal gift is expected; *Indian club* is a bottle-shaped club, for use in gymnastic exercises; *Indian ink* is black ink made in China and Japan, used when writing ideographs with a brush; *Indian file*, old-fashioned, a line of people, with each person walking behind another; *Indian hay* in American slang means marihuana.

All these idioms appeared in the language as a cause of human experience, travelling and learning other cultures. Understanding and correct translation of such idioms can help understand the origin of such set-expressions, idioms and the history of human relationships, studying the history of the appearance of these idioms opens historical pages of interaction of the neighboring peoples. Mental stereotypes presuppose the existence of the model of evaluation building. This model cannot be reduced to the list of personal features and cannot be correlated with the integral mentality. Mentality is defined as the system of images which are at the heart of human understanding of the world and their place in this world, and thus determine

the actions and behavior of people. Representatives of different cultures use different ways of “measurement” and description of personalities in everyday life. For example, representatives of western cultures (European or North American) describing themselves and other people often use abstract character traits, while the Chinese, Japanese or Koreans are much more likely to use role descriptions, e.g. *I am a friend of somebody*, or situational, instead of.. *I am shy...*, the Japanese would say in an unusual surrounding ... *I am usually not talkative*.

Stereotypes are historically changeable. For example, such formulations which were typical in the definite period of time in one culture, e.g. *stable and politically literate* or *efficient, ambition manager* differ in time and situations of the usage, as they were typical for the certain period of time and history of the definite nation. The fact that the system is switched from one stable state to another can be judged as the change in mental stereotypes.

Stereotype can be an operative model with the help of which a society can be regulated and controlled. Stereotype can be considered as a cultural category which has an impact on formation of collective cultural identity. It can be described as collective, as it is shared by all the members of the community providing them mutual understanding; and also it can be normative as all the members of the community usually consider a stereotype as a norm or rule; stereotypes are reproducible, as they are regularly reproduced in unchangeable form in verbal texts.

Language stereotypes can be represented by sentences, paragraphs, texts. Stable non-metaphoric word-combinations or discourse stereotypes are of great interest. For example, *пушкинский гений, братские чувства, материнская ласка*. Discourse stereotypes are culturally specific. It should be mentioned that cultural specificity is not synonymic to national specificity. Different cultures can be the same in variable degrees that leads to the coincidence of cultural connotations. Cultural connectedness lies in the foundation of stability and repeatability. In fact they are quotations of different types of discourse. They are deprived of authorship. They are normative and usual and they have all properties of stereotypes. Such stereotype

word-combinations are language “habits”, eternal sublimations of ideas. To some extent it is possible to say that these stereotype word-combinations fix the time, slowing down its way. Consequently ageing of discourse stereotypes points out that definite change took place in the discourse, that in its turn points to the times changes. In this case it is possible to say about their historicity. Historicity of discourse stereotypes appears explicitly when they focus on historical personalities or historical events, for example, *наполеоновские планы* (great, big plans). Respectively, they can be regarded as a cultural code, as fragments of collectively reproducible cultural and historical interpretation. Some stereotypes are formatted inside the cultural model on the basis of real facts. Such stereotypes are manifested in the mythologizing of real persons, for example politicians, poets, scientists, etc. Historical figure such as Napoleon is constructed in cultural language model as “Great Conqueror”, “Winner”, we say *Napoleonic ambitions*, *Napoleonic syndrome*, and there are no such set-expressions as “*Napoleonic failure*” as *Napoleon* as a historical personality is culturally stipulated. Stereotype of “Genius” is associated in Russian culture with Pushkin. We say: the genius of Pushkin, *пушкинский гений*, *талант Пушкина*. It is a strong stereotype. Let’s consider some examples of stereotypes in the world literature. For example, stereotype of “Beauty” “, Feminity” is associated in Russian culture with the characters of Ivan Turgenev. These stereotypes are kept in combinations *тургеневские девушки*. This comparison is applied when the author wants to emphasize emotional subtlety and demanding nature of a personality. Stereotype of selflessness and generosity is connected with Don Quixote. There are such word-combinations in the language as *воевать с ветряными мельницами*, *рыцарь печального образа*. Stereotype of “Suffering Philosopher asking questions about the sense of life is depicted in the image of Hamlet – to be or not to be, *гамлетовский вопрос* [3, с.80].

**Conclusion.** Studying stereotypes on the material of idioms, phrasal verbs and set-expressions we learn the history of human relationships of the neighboring countries, their interaction during the certain periods of time. Learning the world



literature gives the opportunity to understand the origin of such set-expressions and idioms, to understand the content of the discourse and correctly render the meaning of them, consequently all this knowledge makes it easier to understand other people in intercultural communication and facilitate mutual understanding. Ethnic stereotypes as ideas of other nations are reflected in the languages, they are represented in the idioms and set-expressions. Undoubtedly they enriched the languages giving a broad understanding of human communication.

Бобровник С.М.

#### Етнічні стереотипи та їх відображення в мові

У статті розглядаються етнічні стереотипи, їх відображення в англійській та російській мовах на матеріалі фразеологізмів та ідіом. Описуються типи стереотипів, надаються їх характеристики, аналізується значення етнічних стереотипів. Сталі вирази та ідіоми розглядаються як мовні стереотипи. Стаття визначає сутність поняття стереотипів в процесі міжкультурної комунікації. Багато уваги приділяється розумінню і правильному перекладу мовних стереотипів та їх використанню в мовленні. Прослідковуються історичні корені походження ідіом, що значно полегшує розуміння їх реального значення і допомагає зробити правильний переклад.

**Ключові слова:** стереотип, поняття, упередження, співтовариство, судження, твердження, етнічний, поведінка, реакція, спілкування.

Бобровник С.Н.

#### Этнические стереотипы и их отражение в языке.

В статье рассматриваются этнические стереотипы, их отображение в английском и русском языках на материале фразеологизмов и идиом. Описываются типы стереотипов, даются их характеристики, анализируются значения этнических стереотипов. Устойчивые выражения и идиомы рассматриваются как языковые стереотипы. Статья определяет сущность понятия стереотипов в процессе межкультурной коммуникации. Много внимания уделяется пониманию и правильному переводу языковых стереотипов и их использованию в говорении. Прослеживаются исторические корни происхождения идиом, что значительно облегчает понимание их реального значения и помогает сделать правильный перевод.

**Ключевые слова:** стереотип, понятие, предубеждение, сообщество, суждение, утверждение, этнический, поведение, реакция, общение.

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