



UDC 811.161. 2

THE ROLE OF ETHNIC STEREOTYPES IN INTERETHNIC COMMUNICATION**РОЛЬ ЕТНІЧНИХ СТЕРЕОТИПІВ У МІЖЕТНІЧНІЙ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ****Kornienko O.M. / Корнієнко О.М.***c.ph.s., as.prof. / к.филос.н., доц.*

Sumy National Agrarian University,

Sumy, Gerasima Kondratyeva 160, 40021

Сумський національний аграрний університет,

Суми, Г.Кондратьєва, 160,40021

Abstract. *The article analyzes the functioning and role of ethnic stereotypes in the spiritual culture of a multi-ethnic society, in the process of inter-ethnic communication. The role of ethnic stereotypes in interethnic communication is quite controversial. Ethnic stereotypes regulate interethnic communication through traditions, customs, persistent shared values. The ethnic stereotypes primarily facilitate, simplify communication, making it more reliable, providing mutual understanding. The ethnic stereotype reflects both emotionally evaluative attitude to ethnic group and knowledge of it. The main danger of ethnic stereotypes is that they are contributing to the national superstition - undue negative thoughts and attitudes of other people or individual members, a tendency to act negatively towards humans of other people.*

Keywords: *autostereotype, heterostereotype, ethnocentrism, stereotyping, stereotype.*

Introduction.

The relevance of the study of the influence of ethnic stereotypes on the structuring of the communicative field of the individual is particularly significant in the conditions of the polyethnic environment of different regions of Ukraine. A scientific solution to this problem will contribute to the harmonization of interethnic relations.

The term "ethnic stereotype" was first used in science by the American sociologist Walter Lippman in 1922 in the work "Public Opinion" when studying the problems of racism in America. Stereotyping as one of the most important mechanisms of socialization was widely analyzed in the studies of O. Bodalov, E. Erikson, I. Kohn, J. Mead, G. Tard, G. Tedjfel, A. Petrovskiy, V. Petrovskiy, B. Parygin. In the context of social perception, it was considered by G. Andreeva, G. Kelly, M. Kornev, G. Allport, G. Starovoitova, D. Thibault, and G. Fomans. Ethnic consciousness was the subject of study in the works of Y. Bromley, P. Hnatenko, O. Donchenko, H. Lebon, V. Pavlenko, G. Soldatova, G. Tard, and L. Shklyar.

The purpose of the article is to investigate the role of ethnostereotypes in intercultural, interethnic communication.

Main text.

An ethnic stereotype is one of the types of social stereotypes that represents a collective persistent colored emotionally, generalized and simplified idea of one ethnic group about another ethnic group and about itself, which was formed mainly at the level of everyday consciousness and was often transmitted to subsequent generations in the form of unambiguous entities. Let us give the definition of the ethnic stereotype given by A.G. Bayburin: "Stereotypes of behavior are stable, regularly repeated forms of behavior. These are a kind of stamps, templates" [3,3].



In other words, an ethnic stereotype is a schematized and extremely stable image of any ethnic group, easily spread to all its representatives. They are often inaccurate and/or distorted, although they contain a grain of truth. Ethnic stereotypes of behavior in an overt or hidden form exist in all spheres of life of ethnic groups and in each specific era are perceived by the ethnic group as the only possible way of coexistence with other ethnic groups.

In the content of ethnic stereotypes, as a rule, priority evaluative judgments about the psychological characteristics and behavior of people of another national group, its moral, mental, and physical qualities are recorded, but they can also contain instructions for action in relation to people of a given nationality. An ethnic stereotype is not a generalization of the real characteristics of one or another nation, but a product of a corresponding social situation in which the individual qualities of a person are lost under a general and deliberately one-sided stereotype. It is often based on prejudices formed on the basis of limited information about individual representatives of any nation or people, which usually gives rise to biased conclusions about representatives of this community.

Ethnic stereotypes are divided into autostereotypes ("We" - Image) and heterostereotypes ("They" - Image). Self-stereotypes are perceptions of members of a specific ethnic group about themselves. In this case, the object of the ethnic stereotype is the most typical representative of their ethnic group. Self-stereotypes can lead to ethnocentrism - the conscious or unconscious superiority of one's people and culture over others. Autostereotypes, as a rule, make up a set of positive evaluations. But sometimes negative self-assessments are also found among ethnic minorities. Such low-status groups may accept their relatively lower position in society. In these cases, they tend to develop negative autostereotypes and positive heterostereotypes. But in general, autostereotypes have a balance of positive and negative elements. In the case of the same minorities, the antiquity and wisdom of their people can be emphasized despite their small numbers. Ethnic self-stereotypes are not constant: in the course of the historical development of the ethnic group, they undergo a certain evolution and largely reflect the level of ethnic self-awareness. A feature of self-stereotypes is the desire of the ethnic community to add something ideal to their content, to emphasize the most distinctive features of the national character. For example, groups with a higher status in the economic sphere tend to characterize themselves as those who have achieved economic success, and groups with a lower status in this sphere - as those distinguished by kindness, cordiality, humanity, with a simultaneous decrease in the importance of those qualities, which provide another group with an economic advantage (business, entrepreneurship, etc.).

Heterostereotypes are images about representatives of other ethnic groups that have formed in a certain group. Heterostereotypes can be both positive and negative, depending on the historical experience of the interaction of these peoples. In their content, a relatively stable core should be distinguished - a complex of ideas about the appearance of representatives of given people, about its historical past, peculiarities of the way of life, and a number of other changing judgments about the communicative and moral qualities of given people. The variability of assessments is related to the variability of the situation in international and interstate relations. At the heart of



heterostereotypes lies such a property as anthropo-stereotypicality, that is, the conditioning of the stereotype by the appearance of the individual. Appearance is often a practically important feature that carries information about the subject's ethnicity. Signs, which consist of appearance and behavior, can have familiarity and perform a regulatory function. In heterostereotypes at the level of everyday consciousness, the appearance of a representative of the relevant ethnic community is most often associated with certain psychological characteristics of a person. On the basis of these stereotypes, appropriate types of interethnic communication and human behavior are inevitably created.

The role of ethnic stereotypes in interethnic communication is controversial. Thus, in everyday consciousness and in mass media, the opinion about ethnic stereotypes as an exclusively negative phenomenon is quite widespread. In many ways, this is due to the fact that negative stereotypes were most often studied in world science, which subjected ethnic minorities to discrimination, which contributed to the identification of stereotypes with superstitions. But, since the 1950s, a hypothesis has become widespread, according to which the volume of true knowledge in stereotypes exceeds the volume of false ones - this is the so-called "grain of truth" hypothesis. Currently, there is no doubt that ethnic stereotypes are not reduced to a set of mythical ideas, they are images of ethnic groups, and not just thoughts about them. They reflect, albeit in a distorted or transformed form, objective reality: the properties of two interacting groups and the relationship between them. However, the persistence of ethnic stereotypes is not absolute. They are capable of gradually transforming over time, undergoing significant changes in their content in the image of the object of stereotyping. Ethnic stereotypes can also change depending on the change in the nature of inter-ethnic relations, or with the increase of inter-ethnic contacts.

In addition, in our opinion, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between stereotypes as a social phenomenon and stereotyping as a psychological process. In the social psychology of recent decades, stereotyping is considered to be a rational form of cognition and a special case of a more universal process of categorization: when creating social categories, people paid attention to the characteristics due to which individuals belonging to one or another group were perceived as similar to each other or different from other people. In everyday life, a person, as a rule, is deprived of the opportunity to analyze critically traditions, norms, value orientations and rules of social behavior. The person also does not always have sufficient information about the events in relation to which it is necessary to express own opinion and assessment. Therefore, in everyday reality, people often act in a patterned manner, in accordance with the formed stereotype. The phenomenon of stereotyping is a characteristic feature of personal processing of external influences. It is closely related to a person's desire to organize the information he has received in his mind. Therefore, in everyday life, the concept of stereotype is often used as a synonym for the words template or standard. Stereotypes contribute to the consolidation of traditions and habits. In this regard, they act as a means of protecting the mental world of an individual and as a means of self-affirmation.

Thus, stereotyping is necessary for society to transmit accumulated information in the form of a certain way of organized and structured experience that can be



transmitted over time. And "ethnic stereotypes perform an important function, determining a person's behavior and helping him navigate in an unusual situation" [1,182]. However, on the other hand, it is precisely in an "unusual situation", in non-standard circumstances, that stereotypes (standardized formations) do not work and do not help, but on the contrary, they prevent a person from navigating a new situation not foreseen by a stereotype and, accordingly, adequately reacting to it. Especially in moments of crisis, while consolidating "their own", ethnostereotypes differentiate "strangers" to the same extent. Therefore, pointing to a certain positive and constructive role of ethnostereotypes in the preservation of traditional traits and peculiarities of national culture, one cannot fail to note the negative feature of any stereotype, if it is fed by feelings of contempt and arrogance towards other ethnic groups. The invasion of stereotypes can take the most unexpected forms. This is how R.M. Granovska and Yu.S.Kryzhanskaya write about it.: "The emphatic denial of the "other's" may be connected with the subconscious pressure, which demands to testify one's loyalty and devotion to the world of "one's". Reasonings that prove that if "we" have it (and we, as everyone understands, are good people, as it should be), and "they" have it all wrong, then, therefore, "they" are unworthy people and that justifies any actions aimed at eliminating all "alien", "their" [2,158].

Like any other, ethnic stereotypes primarily facilitate, simplify communication, making it more reliable, ensuring mutual understanding. However, this is possible only in certain situations and to a certain extent. The balance of harm and benefit of stereotypes depends on understanding the limits of their application. "Many people are not aware of their stereotypes. Others are aware but deny their importance, relying on them so often that the habit becomes the norm. Yes, firmness of character is respected among its people. Any desire for compromise is perceived as a sign of weakness and indecision, leading to betrayal. Among foreign peoples, on the contrary, the spirit of unshakable tenacity is considered just a kind of fanaticism. "Our cause" requires unwavering loyalty to principles, and "their cause" would not be hindered by such restraining virtues as moderation and prudence" [2,156].

An ethnic stereotype is an emotionally colored and extremely schematized, standard image of a representative of a specific ethnic group. It should be noted that the ethnic stereotype has an extremely powerful influence on the psychology of an individual due to its primitiveness and emotional load.

Ethnic stereotypes are based on mediated ethnic representations obtained from various secondary sources, including the historically accumulated experience of previous inter-ethnic contacts. People could realize the specificity of their own ethnic group only by comparing and contrasting it with others. It was not a contemplative comparison of qualities, but a living process of communication, tense and conflictual. Therefore, the image of a foreign ethnic group in the mind of the people is determined, first of all, by the nature of their own historical relations with this group. Where the two ethnic groups had relations of cooperation and cooperation, they produced a mostly positive attitude towards each other, which implies a tolerant attitude towards existing differences. Where the relations between the groups were distant and disturbed vital interests, people tend to relate to each other without hostility, but also without special sympathy with the presence of mutual curiosity.



In this sense, a stereotype is a form of transfer of social experience, transfer of thoughts and conclusions from the field of science (where regularities are constant) to the social sphere, where everything changes. Therefore, it is not surprising that, using it, a person may not have any experience of his own, never see a single representative of the nation about which he expresses rather definite and disappointing opinions. Moreover, the awareness of a complete lack of knowledge and experience does not cause any hesitation in the confidence about the validity of the stereotype, does not give rise to a single drop of doubt in it.

Stereotypes, as a rule, are perceived from childhood, regardless of one's own experience and change with great difficulty. They are resistant to new information, can be stored for decades, transmitted from generation to generation, spread among a fairly large number of people of a given nationality. In order to refuse them, an individual needs not only courage of thought, but also civil courage - because it often means a break with the wills of parents and a challenge to public opinion, which is especially characteristic of traditional societies.

At the social level, the ethnic stereotype has two functions: ideologizes (formation and preservation of group ideology, which explains the behavior of the group) and identifies (creation and preservation of a positive image of "we", the formation of which occurs primarily with the help of rituals and non-verbal means).

The main danger of ethnic stereotypes lies in the fact that they contribute to the emergence of national prejudices - an unjustified negative opinion and attitude towards a foreign nation or individual members of it, a tendency to act negatively towards people of a foreign nation.

Superstitions can be considered as stereotypes realized in behavior. Let us emphasize that usually a person uses a stereotype as something indivisible, received by him in a ready-made form and applies it without correlating it with personal experience and modern objective data. In this sense, superstition is an a priori judgment, feeling or assessment that precedes one's own experience. Accompanied by negative emotions towards ethnic "strangers", stereotypes often become obstacles in interpersonal communication, disrupting intercultural communication. Selectivity of perception also plays a role here - people tend to avoid information that brings dissonance into the system of their attitudes and stereotypes. At the same time, they seek actively information that supports their positions, and any ambiguous information is interpreted in favor of their established, sometimes erroneous, views. Sometimes the emphasis on inter-ethnic differences is clearly felt.

Superstition provokes discrimination, which involves condemnation and prejudice against a person solely on the basis of the identification with a certain group. Attitudes to interpersonal communication are conditioned by attitudes to communication between groups and are usually combined with them. When biasing, first of all external data is taken into account. Prejudice is a negative, unfavorable attitude towards a group or its individual members; it is characterized by stereotypical beliefs; the setting derives more from the internal processes of its medium than from an actual examination of the properties of the group in question. It follows from the fact that we are talking about a generalized attitude that is focused on a hostile attitude towards all members of a certain ethnic group, regardless of their individuality. The



irrationality of prejudice lies not only in the fact that it can exist independently of personal experience, it even contradicts it. When people explain their hostility towards any ethnic group, they usually name some specific negative traits that they believe are characteristic of that group. However, the same traits, taken without reference to this group, do not cause a negative assessment at all or are assessed much more mildly. The historical tradition embodied in historical works, literature, customs, and the conservatism of the education system are also indicated here. Education is especially important. Numerous studies show that most people acquire biases in childhood, before they have the opportunity to reflect critically on the information they receive. Ethnic prejudices have a particularly harmful effect on both their victims and their carriers and limit the sphere of communication between representatives of different ethnic groups, cause wariness on both sides, and prevent the establishment of closer, intimate human relations. Alienation, in turn, complicates contacts and gives rise to new misunderstandings. When someone (or something) appears in a person's close environment who does not correspond to the old stereotype, tension gradually builds up in him, which over time leads to a change in the categorical structure of perception. Initially, this change is reflected only in assessments and attitudes towards single objects. Only much later, this change extends to a wider class of related objects, correcting the general hierarchy of personal values, which, in turn, adjusts the perception systems focused on ethnic stereotypes.

But often even the most favorable impression of one representative of a "foreign" group does not touch the value sides of the system of ideas. Gradually, there is only a slight "detachment" of a number of personal qualities from the generalized portrait according to the principle: "In general, they are like that, but my friend (acquaintance) is completely different!" With this evolution of the criteria used, the complexity of the generalized ethnic portrait increases, it becomes gradually stratified and, finally, begins to collapse very slowly. It is important to emphasize the huge inertia of stereotypes. It is explained by the fact that national communities change much more slowly than social upheavals occur in them. In addition, the mythologizing of values makes them more stable and even "untouchable". Therefore, their correction requires the greatest delicacy and inexhaustible tolerance.

In situations of growing national tension, ethnic stereotypes, along with ethnic prejudices, strengthen manifestations of prejudice against members of a foreign ethnic group, increase inter-ethnic alienation, intensify the development of intra-ethnic separation and inter-ethnic polarization. Under appropriate social and political conditions, the effective influence of ethnic stereotypes on the consolidation of an ethnic group and the psychological unity of its members is intensified. Being one of the effective psychological regulators of interethnic relations, ethnic stereotypes reflect the content and dynamics of these relations, acting as an effective indicator of their state, diagnosing the emergence of tension in relationships, or indicating their stability and success. Social stereotypes are rarely manifested at the behavioral level in the absence of obvious hostility in relations between groups, but in conditions of tension or conflict, these stereotypes become defining determinants that are poorly amenable to modification and management, they intensify and begin to play a dominant role in the real behavior of individuals up to open hostility.



The content of ethnic stereotypes is determined by three groups of factors: 1) the characteristics of the ethnic group, its ethnic psychology, the system of values fixed in culture and everyday consciousness and formed in the course of socio-historical development; 2) the socio-political and economic conditions of the development of ethnic groups and the peculiarities of the relations between them that have developed at the moment; 3) the duration and depth of historical contacts with other ethnic groups. Regarding the third group of factors, it should be noted that not all interethnic communication creates positive interethnic stereotypes.

Conditions for optimal organization of contact between ethnic groups are:

- a) recognition of the unconditional equality of the parties;
- b) presence of an atmosphere of openness and trust;
- c) acceptance of common, significant goals for both parties;
- d) respect for each other's traditional norms, values, rules of conduct, lifestyle.

The fulfillment of the listed conditions requires the presence of non-competitive, non-discriminatory strategies in the national ideologies of the ethnic groups in contact, and this is possible only if the ethnic groups have strong, mature elites corresponding to the ethnic group.

Conclusions.

The role of ethnic stereotypes in interethnic communication is quite controversial. For each member of the ethnic community, ethnic stereotypes, mediating institutional norms, act as a regulator of social behavior. Ethnic stereotypes regulate interethnic communication with the help of traditions, customs, stable universally recognized values.

Ethnic stereotypes, forming a single symbolic environment, act as a kind of information filter. In today's multiethnic society, a person is unwittingly involved in a constant flow of diverse and often internally contradictory information. Ethnic stereotypes not only order, but also systematize it from the point of view of culturally accepted ethnic values and ideals

Ethnic stereotypes contribute to the satisfaction of a person's need for a certain psychological stability and certainty. The actualization of ethnic stereotypes is a protective reaction of the psychics to the uniformity or instability of the ethno-cultural and ethno-political environment. A change in social, and in particular political, determinants destroys the valuable world of a person, while the immutability of ethnic stereotypes, traditional as opposed to social innovation, counteracts the development of social frustration and anomie. Ethnic stereotypes are conservative, and in a crisis or conflict situation, a person tries to hide in them.

But paying attention to the positive and constructive role of ethnostereotypes in the preservation of traditional traits and peculiarities of national culture, one cannot fail to note the negative feature of any stereotype, if it is fed by feelings of contempt and arrogance towards other ethnic groups. Being a kind of ethnic code, the stereotype sometimes simplifies reality, idealizes it to a certain extent, and even mythologizes it. Negative, destructive sides of ethnostereotypical reactions manifest themselves more often in crisis situations and, as a rule, lead to ethnic, national conflicts, which in turn turn into violence and bloodshed.

**References:**

1. Bromley, Y. (1983). Essays on the theory of ethnos. [In Russian]. - Moscow: Nauka.
2. Granovskaya, R., Kryzhanskaya, Yu. (1994). Creativity and overcoming stereotypes. [In Russian]. St. Petersburg: OMS Publishing House.
3. Baiburin, A. (Ed.) (1985). Ethnic stereotypes of behavior. [In Russian] - Leningrad: Nauka.

***Анотація.** В статті аналізуються функціонування і роль етнічних стереотипів у поліетнічному суспільстві. Роль етнічних стереотипів у міжетнічному спілкуванні досить суперечлива. Етнічні стереотипи регулюють міжетнічне спілкування через традиції, звичаї, стійкі спільні цінності. Етнічні стереотипи передусім полегшують, спрощують спілкування, роблять його надійнішим, забезпечують взаєморозуміння. Етнічний стереотип відображає як емоційно-оцінне ставлення до етносу, так і знання про нього. Основна небезпека етнічних стереотипів полягає в тому, що вони сприяють розвитку національних забобонів, недоречному негативному ставленню до іншого народу або його окремих представників, схильності до негативних дій по відношенню до людей іншого етносу.*

***Ключові слова:** автостереотип, гетеростереотип, етноцентризм, стереотипізація, стереотип.*