

## STEREOTYPICAL LAYER OF LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RUSSIAN)

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The article explains the reflex nature of the stereotypical layer of linguistic consciousness, which is confirmed by the modern French linguist J. Dyuren's stereolinguistic approach to the phenomena of language. It is also proved that the stereotype layer may be used by speakers as a structural basis generating different communicative meanings in the process of verbal communication. Non-native speakers of a language cannot decode emotionally conditioned meanings of stereotypical statements without background knowledge. The interpretation of semantically independent expressions cannot be separated from culture.

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As far back as in the early 50s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Émile Benveniste, a French linguist, drew his attention to the speaker's ability of the language acquisition in its application process. V.M. Shaklein at present claims that, "language represents the language of the speaker, as the tool of his actions, the practical attitude towards the outside world and the means of influence upon people" [18, 507]. However, language is social in its nature, "... the origin of language and its formation never belong to an individual, it's a social phenomenon. Linguistic ability is deep in everyone and is put into practice only as a means of communication" [5, 381].

Language functions in the social environment, and the social factors influence on its function and development. "Language serves society in all its spheres; it embodies the reflection of public consciousness, reacts on the changes in all the spheres of social life and, eventually, is created and formed by the same society. Moreover, in social life people treat the language and the same linguistic phenomena differently and, by giving preference to one, they refuse the others" [20, 11].

Frequency is a social factor. The frequency of this or that constructions and word – formations is the fact of social preference. Namely, the frequency of the usage of the ready reproducible linguistic units in their constant combinations and constant meanings have led to the formation of speech stereotype/standard or as for V. Krasnikh, to stereotype-presentation [see 8, 270].

The speech behavior of the speaker is defined by "a complex situational-thematic factor" [10 2003, 56]. The situations and aspects of human interaction in their everyday life are often repeated and that is the reason that they are stereotyped. In their turn, the reiteration and stereotype nature of the real-life situations

have led to the formation of the complete stereotype utterances which are known in linguistics as sentence-formulae (O. Jespersen), pattern phrases (L.P. Yakubinskiy), phraseological units (P.A. Lekant), indivisible (V.Yu. Melikyan) or **stereotypical statements** (A.M. Peshkovskiy, N.V. Cheremisina, L.B. Matevosyan).

From the other hand, the frequent use of the given "expressions" is determined by the fact that as complete phrases they compile "the assortment of lexicographic and phraseological thinking" [16, 59] or inherent vocabulary of people to express certain ideas. They co-exist in the native speakers' consciousness as complete, preliminary determined forms where the speaker makes a choice depending on the tasks, conditions and communicative situations. In other words, the stereotype-situation predetermines the stereotype of behavior and the stereotype presentation, i.e. the speech stereotype which is kept in "the human consciousness in the form of a **frame-structure**" [8, 270]. Thus, the stereotype-situation "transport-ticket" gives rise to the stereotype behavior: "asking the nearest passenger" *to punch the ticket/pass the ticket*, etc... [see 8, 270].

Linguistic consciousness is multifoliated. V.V. Krasnikh distinguishes the following layers in linguistic conscience:

- 1) myth and lyric;
- 2) stereotypical;
- 3) informational;
- 4) metaphoric.

"The stereotypical layer is performed particularly by stereotype-presentations both as images and situations connected with these images" [9, 121].

Therefore, the stereotypical layer along with myth and lyric, informational and metaphoric layers is **the component of the structure of linguistic** or "**linguistic-cultural**" (N.V. Ufimtseva) **consciousness**.

Thought stereotype presumes social structure and is reflected in human behavior, particularly, in discourse behavior. As a rule, the discourse behavior adequately recreates the world around us, particularly, a certain social structure with a certain type of thinking.

The emergence of stereotypical statements is conditioned by language pragmatics, its direction towards communication which is much in demand in the required standard. The role of stereotypical statements is vital in the process of communication. In "About the Nature of Human Communication" V.M. Sokovnin states, "Evidently, the standardization as the process of stereotype establishment in the subject activity and human relations is one of the general principles of the construction of the organized social systems" [21, 105]. The same idea is emphasized by V.P. Levkovich, "In order to function as a whole, as a complicated social system, society should establish such frames of human behavior where it becomes uniform, stable and frequent" [13, 212].

At present, stereotypical statements have been elucidated in terms of psycholinguistics and have been substantiated in "stereolinguistics". The stereolinguistic approach is such a method to linguistic phenomena which is based on the interlocutor's perception of the utterance depending on the distance between the latter and the speaker. According to stereolinguistic approach, a human lives in four concentric spheres. The founder of stereolinguistics, the French linguist J. Dyuren, refers these spheres to cognition and names them cognitive sub worlds [see 3, 275–276]. The first sphere is the sphere of singular or actuality. The second sphere is the sphere of privacy as well as non-actuality, the usual. This cognitive sub world is characterized by the speaker's habitual, routine behavior. The third sphere is the sphere of universality. This huge sub world colossal in its size lays claim to universality. J. Dyuren calls the fourth, zero sphere which is the nearest to the human body, a situational sphere [see 3, 275–276].

However, J. Dyuren himself, taking into consideration the heuristic nature of his approach, finds that "... due to it, the solution to different issues in the sphere of human phylogenesis, ontogenesis, psychology and linguistics can be newly interpreted" [3, 277].

Namely, indivisible stereotypical statements, such as *Fat chance! – Еще бы! You bet! – Держи карман шире!* led Dyuren to the discovery of the fourth, zero sphere, the closest to the human body. "Time and space of the zero sphere are narrowed down almost to a dot; the space is the place occupied by the given essence or the bearer of the given feature, and its

immediate proximity; the time is the given instant without any conscious past or future. The human being who has just felt the button under his bare feet, has rapped out and mouthed curses gives an idea about the speech (and non-speech) behavior within zero sphere" [3, 275].

While emphasizing the zero sphere of cognition, J. Dyuren is guided by the position of the French psychologist Henry Wallon, who sets off practical mind against the discourse or speech mind [23, 264–265]. H. Wallon provides the following example as an illustration of the practical mind. The chimpanzee sees a hanging banana, cries out and flings its arms. Then it suddenly drags the box, climbs on it and grasps the banana. But if the banana and the box aren't in the field of its vision at a time, it does not make the right decision. There are species who cannot find a way out at all.

Although the human conscious vocabulary possesses stereotype expressions as complete sentences, they come to the surface of the memory only in certain situations (the situation carries out the function of the box in H. Wallon's example). Some people do not recall them at all, since the capacity of the operative memory of the human isn't large and varies in different people. **Stereotypical statements are arbitrary reactions on the external stimulus, which is a situation. The situation here has a conditional reflex function. Thus, linguistic consciousness is multilevel and the reflex-driven stereotype level is considered to be one of its structural supports.**

One of the essential peculiarities of human character is the self-acting behavior in certain situations, i.e. without preliminary consideration and often against objective logic. However, the automation in human actions is not only and so much the corollary of the biological stipulation as the result of the social ascendancy over the individual. The biological factor here embodies "the reduced socialized form" [15, 121]. The stereotype of thought and speech behavior is apparently conditioned by the fear of people to stay in "isolation".

The main difficulty of any teaching, including language teaching, is to develop and evolve the right skill to remember the claimable rule. Despite the specific nature of certain languages, linguistics defines them using principally the same model. The similarity of such models is not commissioned only with a priori and deduction, but with the specific material of different languages. Wilhelm von Humboldt considers that "the principle aim of comparative linguistics is the thorough and circumstantial research of different methods through which different nations solve

the universal task of the creation of language” [5, 47]. He also states that “not only the elements of the language, but the languages themselves often obey the rules of general analogy” [5, 348].

In our opinion, the spoken standard is one of such analogies. The comparison of languages “by analogy with all conceivable rules” [5, 346] will help to comprehend and reveal the mechanism of the language and thinking interaction in the process of speech activity.

It is important and expedient to reveal and describe routine and emotional life situations and, consequently, speech situations in mass communication, since each life situation is guided by the formation of speech and the availability of the list of the communicative units serving for the given situations practically to help the teacher in foreign language teaching.

As an example we will provide the comparison of the following greeting expressions in the Russian, Armenian, English and Japan languages. The first three languages are in full conformity: some greeting expressions cover broad situations (Russian: *Здравствуй (-me)* [*zdrastvui (-te)*], *Привет* [*privet*]; Armenian: *Բարև (ձեզ)* [*barev (dzez)*], *Ողջունի՛ւ* [*vogd-juin*]; English: *How do you do! Hello!*) and temporary situations (Russian: *Доброе утро* [*dobróie utra*], *Добрый день* [*dobryi den*], *Добрый вечер* [*dobryi vecher*]; Armenian: *Բարի լույս* [*bari luis*], *Բարի օր* [*bari or*], *Բարի երեկո* [*bari eréko*]; English: *Good morning, Good day, Good evening*). According to A.A. Akishina and K. Kamogava [see 1, 9–24] Japan greetings are namely distinguished by situational fraction relating to the situations of the speakers’ location, for example the greeting expressions while entering and exiting the building are different.

The greetings in the Russian, Armenian and English languages are differentiated according to diverse styles: formal, neutral and informal. The greetings in Japan differ due to the level of politeness (informal familiar and respectful).

Each nation according to its national and cultural peculiarities has its world outlook, attitudes towards life being based on “the language frame” [25, 163]. R.B. Sabatkoyev states, “Caucasian nations have strictly regulated forms of addressing, greeting, parting, expressing condolences used to express the benevolence, respect and sympathy towards people. Some of them to a certain extent differ from the corresponding Russian speech formulae” [17, 472]. N.B. Mechkovskaya mentions, that “The category of politeness contains seven levels in Korean:

- 1) deferential;
- 2) respectful;

3) the form of politeness characteristic of female speech;

- 4) polite;
- 5) personal;
- 6) familiar;
- 7) protective.

Each form of politeness has its own set of grammatical, word-building and lexical markers. There are also grammatical and lexical synonyms which mainly differ by various levels of politeness” [14, 60–61].

According to Worf’s terminology these two “linguo-cultural types”<sup>1</sup> belong to the European and Eastern standard.

Stereotypical statements are combined in the groups based on thematic unification and similar situations, the so-called **thematic-situational groups**. Separate thematic-situational groups are combined in larger groups, as “Urban stereotypes”, “Speech etiquette”, “Keeping contact”, “Expressing different emotions” constituting the essence of the lively speech of the Russian language. The last group is perhaps the most interesting and less examined.

Emotionality is considered to be the pronounced stress on the feelings and their free expression. According to T. Kozlova [7, 232] expressivity is a common feature of the Russian culture of communication and according to the surveys conducted by A. Wierzbicka [24, 33–34], Russian speech is characterized by intensity of emotions and abundance of linguistic means to express emotions and emotional overtones.

In accordance with a Harvard study of the Russian national character, the Russians are considered to be “expressive and emotional”, they are characterized by “general expansiveness”, “easiness in expressing the feelings”, “impulsivity” [2, 141]. The Chinese scientist Li Inann, considers that the Russian national character “strikes out for being irrational, emotional, affective and polar <...>. The specificity of the Russian character seems to involve a combination of inconsistent features expressed in a bright, affected way with sharp and unpredictable changes of emotion and mood” [6, 153].

J. Dyuren considers emotions to be physiological reactions that occur in usual real-life situations and are “either simply a shout or an utterance of one or several words” [3, 278]. Intonation (a manifestation of the emotional and expressive function of speech) is used to express the speaker’s emotional state as well as

<sup>1</sup> The concept is suggested by B.M. Gasparov [4]. He distinguishes between Eastern and Western European standards. R. Kipling’s famous words “Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” immediately come to mind.

his/her attitude to the content of the utterance (approval, reproach, mockery, etc...). J. Dyuren claims, that “intonation is usually more important than the segmental, lexical and grammatical structure of the utterance” [3, 278].

Russian colloquial speech is full of polysemantic utterances with various meanings. As a rule, the polisemy is developed when the speaker emotionally reconsiders the utterance, which is possible, according to Leontev due to “the double life of the meanings” [12, 136]. On the one hand, meanings are included in the social memory of the society; on the other hand, they are an integral part of the inner world of any human being [11, 49]. Such meanings (that are implicitly contained in the expression) are differentiated in the process of perception of meaning through intonation.

Hence, the Russian expression *I have no time for you (Mne ne do tebya/bas)* means, first of all, that the speaker is busy. The meaning of this expression can be interpreted in at least two ways:

- 1) *I am very busy now;*
- 2) *I am sad now*, with the general meaning, ... *that is why I cannot spend time with you (talk to you, help you, etc...).*

In certain contexts the expression *I have no time for you (Mne ne do tebya/bas)* can express “dissatisfaction”. For example,

[Viktor:] *Go away, Afonya, I have no time for you... (Uydi, Afonya, ne do tebya...)* (A. Arbuzov, *Irkutskaya istoriya*)

Or the ***Big thrill/deal! (Podumaesh!)*** expresses, first of all, something that does not deserve serious attention from the speaker’s point of view. Cf.:

– *He is injured! (– U nego travma!) – Big thrill! A small bruise. (– Podumaesh, nebolshoy ushib.)*

– *I have received a watch as a gift! (– Mne chasi podarili!) – Big thrill! And I have a tape-recorder. (– Podumaesh, chasi! A u menya magnitofon est’.)*

The expression ***Big thrill/deal! (Podumaesh!)*** implies disagreement with the interlocutor’s opinion. In a certain context it can express “discontent”. Cf.:

[Viktor:] *Old chap, Irina Sergeevna called again. Left a message that she is waiting for your call. [Tumanskiy:] Ok. What? Irina Sergeevna? (Abruptly) Mind your own business! [Viktor:] Big thrill! You did ask me, and now – “mind your own business”.* (A. Afinogenov, *Mashen’ka*)

[Viktor:] *Starik, opyat’ zvonila Irina Sergeevna. Prosila peredat’, shto ona zhdyot tvoyego zvonka. [Tumanskiy:] Khorosho. A? Irina Sergeevna? (Rezko) Ne lez’ ne v svoyo delo! [Viktor:] Podumaesh! Ti sam prosil, a to – “ne lez’”.* (A. Afinogenov, *Mashen’ka*)

Native speakers easily perceive implicit meanings. But foreigners often do not understand such meanings and that is the reason why this fact should be focused on when teaching Russian to foreigners.

The following joke justifies the urgency and the necessity of the present research: “A Russian woman, an Englishwoman and a Frenchwoman share the same hotel room. In the morning the Frenchwoman discovers that her shoes are lost. She does not speak Russian, but speaks a little English. The Englishwoman speaks a little Russian and French. The Russian woman does not speak any language except Russian. The Frenchwoman asks the Englishwoman to find out if the Russian has taken her shoes by mistake, and the Russian replies: ***Hello, I am your aunt (Zdravstvuyte, ya vasha tyoty).*** The Englishwoman translates: ***She says good morning and says, that she is your aunt.*** The French is outraged: ***I have never had any relatives in Russia. Let her give my shoes back!*** Hearing the translation the Russian replies ***A fat lot of use her shoes to me! (Ochen’ oni mne nuzhni!).*** The English translates ***She needs your shoes badly.*** The French is confused: ***But I also need them!*** After this translation the Russian retorts: ***Horseradish I give her back! (Khren ya ey vernu),*** and the translation follows: ***She says that she will give you some vegetable instead...<sup>2</sup>***

This dialogue includes such stationary sentences as ***Hello! I am your aunt, A fat lot of use her shoes to me, Horseradish I give her back! (Zdravstvuyte, ya vasha tyoty; Ochen’ nuzhni oni mne! Khren ya ey vernu!),*** which are used in daily Russian speech both in direct and figurative meanings (***Hello*** – as a “greeting” and as a “surprise”; ***I am your aunt*** – in direct meaning and as a “surprise-contradiction”; ***A fat lot of use her shoes to me!*** – as necessity and vice versa; ***Horseradish I give her back*** – in the direct meaning and in the meaning “I will give you back nothing” The homonymy of the given expressions is the result of the emotional reconsideration by the speaker. The linguist-practitioner should consider the task of describing the homonymous expressions while teaching Russian as a foreign language, because, as we can see, homonymous expressions very often hinder and even, in some cases, endanger the communicative process: the speakers cannot understand each other in a right way.

<sup>2</sup> There are no equivalents in English for stereotypical statements *Zdravstvuyte, ya vasha tyoty* and *Khren ya ey vernu*. To avoid misunderstanding, word for word translation is made.

The translator in the joke did not understand the Russian expressions in a right way (if we exclude the factor of the translator's "deafness" to intonation). The translator did not know that these expressions have a figurative meaning in Russian, i.e. the accumulative function of the language, the function of accumulation of the public experience and knowledge equals zero. The next reason is that the given meanings do not exist in her native language: the given expressions are used in the mentioned meanings neither in French nor in English.

Anna Wierzbicka mentions that the Anglo-Saxon culture disapproves of emotional behaviour [24, 41]. "When comparing English language with Russian it is particularly interesting to note that the Russian language [...] particularly attaches much more attention to the emotions and has the copious vocabulary of lexical and grammatical expressions to distinguish emotional expressions" [24, 44].

Communication and mutual understanding are facilitated by the ability to feel and perceive all emotional and expressive shades of meaning, to choose the right expression in various situations and to find the correct intonation. The expressions set the style and determine the tone of the dialogues.

Like other linguistic units, stereotypical statements are less informative than non-stereotypical statements due to their frequency in speech. However, this fact does not diminish the significance of their research, since stereotypical statements are the result of the action (manifestation) of such a linguistic function as the function of acquisition of public and historical experience (coined by A.A. Leontyev) or the accumulative function, i.e. the function of accumulation of public experience and knowledge (coined by V.A. Avrorina)<sup>3</sup>. Foreigners cannot decode emotionally conditioned meanings of stereotypical statements without background knowledge.

The interpretation of semantically independent expressions cannot be separated from culture. V. Telia's [22, 226] "...the idiom is another culture" is true for stereotypical statements whose content is not motivated and consequently is not transparent and reflective. The stereotype layer, which is considered to have a reflective nature and to be the structural basis of linguistic consciousness, is included in linguistic and cultural consciousness of the speaker. However, it is not reflected in the inophones' consciousness. In our opinion, this is a field of study to be considered by Communicative Linguistics, or more precisely, Communicative and Cognitive Linguistics.

<sup>3</sup> About the functions of language see 19, 10–11.

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