

**ETHNIC STEREOTYPES IN THE PSYCHOLINGUISTIC  
STUDY OF THE MODERN IMAGES  
OF *WAR AND PEACE* (BY THE MATERIAL  
OF THE RUSSIAN, ENGLISH  
AND JAPANESE LANGUAGES)**

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**Abstract.** In modern society, in the epoch of the globalization and escalation of the world, the social war and peace phenomena play an important role, since they occupy one of the main places in the life of any nation. Despite the fact that images of war and peace have been the objects of the research in a number of theses, they were not the objects of the comparative analysis of linguistic consciousness of the native Russian-, English- and Japanese-speaking people. Especially they were not the objects of the psycholinguistic experiment as ethnic stereotypes to identify the specifics of the three cultures in the aspect of civil and military society in the Russian Federation, Great Britain, the United States of America and Japan.

The object of the study is the ethnic community as a carrier of national specific features and as a subject of interethnic dialogue of three different cultures – western, oriental and Eurasian.

The main method of the research was comparative analysis. Along with this, the study used the method of free associative experiment, the method of directed associative experiment, method of subjective definition, method of “Semantic gestalt” (Yu. N.

Karaulov), method of field stratification (I. A. Sternin, A. V. Rudakova), the method of statistical analysis.

When analyzing the results of our study, we tried to identify a number of ethnic stereotypes that are particularly characteristics of each ethnic group separately, thus trying to draw preliminary conclusions about differences in the linguistic consciousness of the native Russian-, English- and Japanese-speaking people within the framework of understanding the two modern social war and peace phenomena. Thus, the study findings consist in the identification of the Russian, English and Japanese ethnic stereotypes about the two social war and peace phenomena, confirmed by the results of a psycholinguistic experiment.

**Keywords:** ethnic stereotype, psycholinguistic experiment, ethnos, war, peace

## **Introduction**

Ethnic stereotypes summarize the social and historical experience of the nation; accumulate all the good and evil from the past. On the one hand, the ethnic stereotype is a kind of accumulator of the traditional experience, and on the other hand, it is an axiological standard. Many of the ethnic stereotypes date back to the times of the antiquity and folk epics. The ethnic stereotypes owe their origin to the national customs, traditions and mores.

The ethnic stereotypes are stable behavioral patterns developed within a given linguistic and cultural area. The existence of the ethnic stereotypes occurs at the level of the everyday consciousness and determines the mode of behavior of the ethnic group as a collective personality. The ethnic stereotypes form a complex system of norms, assessments, positions and regulations that model the world of the ethnic group as a specific reality. The ethnic stereotypes are relatively stable, inaccurate, emotional and evaluative judgments about the system of the ethnic and cultural characteristics of particular people, the typical intellectual, moral, physical and spiritual qualities and properties that characterize this ethnic group.

## **Object**

The **object** of the study is the ethnic community with the combination of the national and specific features; a subject of the interethnic dialogue of three different cultures.

## **Purpose**

The **purpose** of the study is comparison of the ethnic stereotypes analyzed on the images of *war* and *peace* in the linguistic consciousness of the Russian, English and Japanese respondents from the two social groups – the civilians and military personnel.

## **Methods**

The main **method** of the research was comparative analysis. Along with this, the study used the method of free associative experiment, method of directed associative experiment, method of subjective definition, method of “Semantic gestalt” (Yu. N. Karaulov), method of field stratification (I. A. Sternin, A. V. Rudakova) and method of statistical analysis.

## **Discussion**

An ethnic stereotype is “a schematized image of one's own or someone else's ethnic community that reflects simplified knowledge (sometimes one-sided or inaccurate, distorted) about the psychological characteristics and behavior of the representatives of a particular ethnos and on the basis of which a stable and emotionally colored opinion about this or that ethnos is formed” (Krysko V.G., 2008: 71). V.G. Krysko notes that the social stereotype is generic in relation to the ethnic one.

An ethnic stereotype is a collective image that reflects the ethnic characteristics of the ethnos. Based on his/her own experience, a person usually classifies the familiar things as “his/her own”, and the unfamiliar things – as “someone else's”. The first, as a rule, receives a positive assessment, and the second receives a negative one. National attributes are evaluated with a “plus” sign, and everything foreign that goes beyond the familiar gets a negative rating (Krysko V.G., 2008: 71). V.P. Trusov and A.S. Filippov argue that ethnic stereotypes are generalized ideas about the different ethnic and cultural communities. These generalizations

are characterized by increased emotional stability and do not always adequately reflect the real features of the object of stereotyping. The formation of stereotypes is based on the principle of saving cognitive resources for mastering a large amount of information, formulated by W. Lippman, as well as the desire to protect group values (Trusov V.P., Filippov A.S., 1984: 18).

A.K. Baiburin rightly believes that ethnic stereotypes are inseparable from the public consciousness and self-consciousness of the ethnic group representatives. The mechanism of stereotyping allows not only to accumulate socially useful knowledge, but also to organize it in a certain way. “Storage, transmission and accumulation of social information involve its ordering and, secondly, the selection of the most significant fragments” (Baiburin A.K., 1985: 38).

I.B. Hasanov concludes that an ethnic stereotype is a special case of implementing a social stereotype. The scientist believes that the ethnic stereotype is similar in nature to the social setting. Ethnic attitudes incorporate people’s judgments about the ethnic community to which they belong. Hasanov understands the ethnic stereotype as “a stable, schematic and emotionally colored opinion of a nation about another one or about itself” (Hasanov I.B., 1998: 199).

Z.V. Sikevich believes that ethnic stereotypes act as an empirical indicator of the national character of a certain ethnic community.

At the same time, an ethnic stereotype has a number of features:

- 1) reliability (the inconsistency of the stereotype depending on sympathy or antipathy that one can feel towards another people);
- 2) projection (individual psychological characteristics that one can find in new expressions or non-standard situations);
- 3) reverse influence (the ability of a positive stereotype to provoke a negative one when comparing two ethnic groups);
- 4) the property of positive stereotyping (Sikevich Z.V., 1999: 180).

According to A.P. Sadokhin, the content of an ethnic stereotype reflects a fragment of the worldview and exists in the human mind.

The ethnic stereotype is a mentally rigid (due to the ethnic and cultural peculiarities) understanding of the subject or situation. The scientist believes that ethnic stereotypes are often primitive, is a product of ordinary consciousness. It often results in assigning a “label” to the object of stereotyping. The content of stereotypes is determined by a group of factors such as:

- 1) specificity of the stereotyped group (social and cultural features of this ethnic community);
- 2) social, political and economic conditions for the development of a particular ethnic group;
- 3) duration and depth of historical contacts with other ethnic groups (Sadokhin A.P., 2006: 191).

Linguistic perspective for understanding the nature of the ethnic stereotypes, according to L.P. Krysin, consists of two stages. The first stage is aimed at identifying the characteristic of intellectual, psychological, anthropological and other features of a particular ethnic community. At the same time, the criteria of frequency, mass character and temporal resistance serve as conditions for crystallization and cementing of stereotypes of everyday consciousness. The second stage involves the analysis of the linguistic units that can be interpreted as linguistic tools and speech forms of ethnic stereotypes explication (Krysin L.P., 2002: 171-172).

## **Results**

As a result of our psycholinguistic research of the modern images of *war* and *peace*, we were able to identify the most striking ethnic stereotypes of the native Russian-, English- and Japanese-speaking respondents.

The Russian linguistic consciousness is characterized by the following stereotypes:

- 1) the perception of war as part of the history of the country;
- 2) predisposition to decisive actions, a sense of danger, aggression;
- 3) the need to protect their homeland on their land from the encroachments of enemies;
- 4) the militarized nature of the Russian linguistic consciousness;

- 5) the idea of armed conflict as violent death and destruction of the enemy;
- 6) the ineradicable collective memory of Russians about wars with those ethnic groups that did not capture the defeated, but destroyed them.

The English linguistic consciousness is characterized by the following ethnic stereotypes:

- 1) perception of war as a means of solving global problems in the sphere of maintaining peace and tranquility on the planet;
- 2) identifying war with the idea of success and effectiveness of combat operations;
- 3) conducting armed actions on the territory of other countries to protect their interests;
- 4) rejection of the ethics of war;
- 5) the idea of competition;
- 6) the collective memory of the Englishmen goes back to the medieval code of chivalry.

The Japanese linguistic consciousness is characterized by the following ethnic stereotypes:

- 1) the perception of war as a way to maintain state sovereignty and resolve international disputes;
- 2) development of the national security concept with the right to “collective self-defense”;
- 3) conducting the fight against international terrorism in order to solve their own problems in the field of national security;
- 4) focusing on the independence of the nation;
- 5) the idea of protecting the state;
- 6) the collective memory of the Japanese people represents “defensive nationalism” and protective patriotism.

As it turned out, the native Russian-, English- and Japanese-speaking respondents have a similar understanding of the social phenomena of *war* and *peace*. At the same time, both in the minds of the civilian people and among persons directly related to the war (military personnel), they are clearly divided as absolute opposites. All respondents distinguish these images as something extremely

negative (war) and positive (peace). This proves their rejection of war and their desire for peace.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, the identified stereotypes for images of *war* and *peace* directly depend on the level of development of the respondents' linguistic sense. The psycholinguistic experiment allows you to "get" into the linguistic consciousness of native speakers and is one of the best ways to solve this matter.

Analysis of the experiment results with their subsequent interpretation helps to determine the respondents' real understanding of the social *war* and *peace* phenomena. The psycholinguistic experiment occupies a special place among other methods of reconstruction of linguistic consciousness, since the researcher can get to the verbal memory and thinking of a certain ethnic group as close as possible.

Besides, the results obtained during the study of images of *war* and *peace* as two interrelated social phenomena can help in anticipating tensions in the world and balancing international relations that help to strengthen the unity of the multinational world.

The analysis of the revealed ethnic stereotypes shows that the characteristics of the armed conflict and the attitude to peacetime in the three compared ethnic groups are almost identical. However, there are also differences. In the Russian linguistic consciousness, *war* is perceived as violent death and deprivation of life. In the English linguistic consciousness it is perceived as a contest, dispute or struggle of the strongest. In the Japanese mind war is an absolute rejection of any kind of cruelty that results in armed conflict or fight.

All respondents are unanimous in their opinion, associating the image of *peace* with harmony between people and the fact that there is no war as such, i.e. the correct way of life, the prevalence of positive emotions and compliance with the system of values adopted in a particular culture and satisfaction with life.

In addition, we found that the linguistic consciousness of the civilians and military personnel in the Russian, English and

Japanese languages has a number of distinctive features. First and foremost, the military and civilian respondents have unique cultural and social experiences that are influenced by social and living conditions, service hierarchy, military service procedures and legal status. Secondly, the linguistic consciousness of the military and civilian respondents is based on a set of concepts that are individual for each social group. Thirdly, in comparison with the military respondents, the linguistic consciousness of civilian respondents is not subject to such drastic changes, since the study of linguistic consciousness is strongly linked to the linguistic worldview, reflecting national and specific features of thinking and its relationship with the surrounding reality. Representatives of certain cultural environment often share common perspectives of the worldview. This cultural interpenetration is manifested in social identity and understanding of the surrounding world and all social phenomena associated with it from a certain angle.

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