

## Culture vs Stereotypical Thinking vs Language Facts

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### Abstract

The paper considers the topical issue of contemporary Intercultural Communication, Linguoculturology, Psycholinguistics, Psychology, dealing with importance of an individual's awareness of cultural factors of different nations, specificity of national thinking (stereotypical in particular), ability of different languages to reflect reality differently, as well as establishing their interrelation. The findings prove close (integral and interdependent) relations among culture, stereotypical thinking, and language facts. It is stated that all the cultural universals contain a kind of deep structures of human consciousness which correlate with national peculiarities of each separate culture. Any changes in society always cause changes of vital senses and values fixed in cultural universals. Language is a prerequisite and "a verbal expression" of culture. As a sociocultural factor language helps to gain and organize human experience, and any national culture depends upon the character and specificity of a separate language. The results show that thinking is investigated through language analysis. The authors argue that thinking is influenced by national values and customs of the country where a person is brought up, thus confirming the existence of stereotypical thinking. Such stereotypes are rooted in social conditions and prior experiences; they may be neutral or have a positive / negative impact. People should be aware of explicit / implicit stereotypes existence and of an individual's ability to think stereotypically. In this connection language facts (in their relation to stereotypical thinking within various cultures) are readily perceived by most representatives of discrete nations / groups and reflect both the encouraged moral values, and beliefs, as well as stigmatised human vices and ridiculed negative phenomena.

**Keywords:** stereotypical thinking, (implicit) stereotypes, culture, consciousness, language facts.

### Introduction

Relations between language and thinking, language and culture, culture and thinking have been in the focus of researchers for many centuries. However, this issue still

evokes a lot of discussions. A short outline below can give an idea of general state of affairs in this area.

Thus, studying the problem of language, thinking, and culture correlation, Ter-Minasova tends to consider them as closely connected constituents of one and the same unity where each component exists and functions only as a result of existence and functioning of the other two (2000: p.39). She summarizes that language and culture are in the relations of mutual penetration, interconnection, and interaction in their attempt to reflect and fix reality (Ter-Minasova, 2000: p.46). In addition, it is a person who perceives, realizes the results of perception while thinking, and uses words / sentences to formulate them. This makes thinking an intermediary between language and reality explaining differences in the latter reflection by various languages. In other words, “language reflects reality not in direct way but through two zigzags: from the real world to thinking and from thinking to language” (Ter-Minasova, 2000: p.39).

Extending the previous standpoint, Jachin is sure that “phenomena of human living world exist only because they can be talked about” (2010: pp.14, 33). Differences in cultures concern all the dimensions of language. Language enables conveying all the subjective, thoughts, the imaginary, the collective unconscious inclusive (Jachin, 2010: p.28). He calls language a “sample” phenomenon of culture, at the same time both language and culture serve intermediaries in reflexive relation of a person to oneself. Moreover, language and culture commensurate human consciousness in relation to the Other. Language is a basis and a universal model of culture, in Jachin’s interpretation (2010: p.33).

Another Russian researcher Pavlova outlines the problems of language role in culture genesis, specificity of national languages, and phenomenon of cultures dialogue (2011: p.69). To her mind, human ability to talk is closely connected with another human ability – to think. It is language that transmits knowledge of ancient civilizations. She admits language and culture being complex multiaspect interrelated phenomena. They cannot exist without each other. Language embodies an ethnos’s uniqueness, national worldview serving a basis of national culture (Pavlova, 2011: p.72).

Then, in 2013, Naiman, Gural, Smokotin, and Bovtenko found the data according to which approximately 2,500 languages were on the edge of becoming extinct. Such a situation gave rise to a new wave of interest to the problem of languages and cultures: not just from the point of language and cultural policy but in the context of interdisciplinary researches of these phenomena as well as their interrelation and role in ethnocultural identity building (Naiman et al., 2013: p.90). It is certain that the

relationship of language, culture, and thinking cannot be defined as simple; from the standpoint of cultural and ethnographic studies these relations depend upon specificity of reality perception by consciousness resulting in the worldview system (Naiman et al., 2013: p.103).

Naiman et al. consider language to be the most important nationally specific component of culture. It is stipulated by functions of the language to store cultural values in written and oral speech forms, to transmit national cultural heritage to other generations, and to form a person via building a separate vision of the world and mentality (Naiman et al., 2013: p.104). Cultural aspects often find their representation in language idiomacy (Naiman et al., 2013: p.105).

The above-mentioned determines the need to continue studying of the relations of culture, thinking, and language, especially when both the metaphorical use of language and variety of different cultural metaphors availability evidence a kind of dependence among language, culture, and thinking (Lakoff, 1987). Thus, the issue concerning the specifying of this kind of dependence still remains relevant.

The main **purpose** of this paper is to try to establish and describe the connection / links among culture (historic evolution of this notion), stereotypical / template thinking, and language facts. This aim was achieved through explaining the etymology and interpretations of culture in different language dictionaries and special literature; defining (implicit) stereotypes and stereotypical / template thinking (“a predictive brain”); providing language facts that prove the close (integral) links of all three constituents under study (culture / stereotypical thinking / language facts).

The major **methods** employed in this research include observation, critical analysis, deduction, linguistic analysis, synthesis, and description.

### **Etymology and Interpretations of Culture in Different Language Dictionaries and Special Literature**

To check the meanings of the lexeme “culture” and specify its notion, we addressed three English-language dictionaries, Philosophical Dictionary (in Russian), and Linguistic Encyclopedia (in Ukrainian).

*Collins English Dictionary* gives 7 meanings for “culture” (6 for nouns and 1 for a verb): “1 the ideas, customs, and art of a particular society 2 a particular civilization at a particular period 3 a developed understanding of the arts 4 development or

improvement by special attention or training: *physical culture* **5** the cultivation and rearing of plants or animals **6** a growth of bacteria for study” (2011: p.186). It is also indicated that the analysed lexeme originates from Latin *colere* ‘to till’.

*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* also proposes 6 meanings for the lexeme “culture” but differentiates between their areas of usage: the first two concern way of life – “1 [U] the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group: *European / Islamic / African / American*, etc. *culture* ◇ working-class culture **2** [C] a country, group, etc. with its own beliefs, etc.: *The children are taught to respect different cultures.* ◇ the effect of technology on traditional cultures”; the third meaning relates to art / music / literature: “3 [U] art, music, literature, etc., thought of as a group <...>”; the fourth covers beliefs and attitudes: “4 [C, U] the beliefs and attitudes about sth that people in a particular group or organization share <...>”; the fifth meaning deals with growing / breeding: “5 [U] (technical) the growing of plants or breeding of particular animals in order to get a particular substance or crop from them <...>”; the sixth is concerned with cells / bacteria: “6 [C] (*biology, medical*) a group of cells or bacteria, especially one taken from a person or an animal and grown for medical or scientific study, or to produce food; the process of obtaining and growing these cells <...>” (Hornby, 2010: p.357).

*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* also defines “culture” in six areas, such as in a society (“[C, U] the beliefs, way of life, art, and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a particular society <...>”), in a group (“[C, U] the attitudes and beliefs about something that are shared by a particular group of people or in a particular organization <...>”), art / music / literature (“[U] activities that related to art, music, literature etc <...>”), society (“[C] a society that existed at a particular time in history <...>”), medicine / science (“[C, U] *technical* bacteria or cells grown for medical or scientific use, or the process of growing them <...>”), and crops (“[C] *technical* the practice of growing crops <...>”) (2012: p.411).

Based on the provided here data we can conclude that despite lack of uniformity in “culture” definitions in the English-language dictionaries, it still has a lot in common, namely:

- the cultivation of plants and breeding of animals;
- a civilization at a particular period of time;
- ideas, customs, traditions, and beliefs of a separate group / society / nation / ethnos;
- a developed understanding of arts;
- a growth of bacteria.

More detailed information on evolution and usage of “culture” is given in *Philosophical Dictionary* interpreting this term as “a system of historically developing over-biological programmes of human activity, behaviour, and communication as the prerequisite for reproduction and change of social life” (Filosofskij slovar’, 1981: p.271). According to this dictionary, such programmes are represented with all the variety of knowledge, skills, norms, ideals, activity samples, behaviour rules, ideas, hypotheses, beliefs, social goals, values, etc., constructing together historically accumulated social experience. Thus, culture generates these programmes, preserves them, and transmits the models of activity, behaviour, and communication of people to the next generations.

As *Philosophical Dictionary* notes, initially the word *culture* meant “the process of nature domestication (soil cultivation, craft production)”, then “upbringing and education” were added. In the second half of XVIII century European philosophers and historians started to use this term with the meaning of “a special aspect of a society’s life connected with a way of carrying out human activities and characterizing differentiation of human being from animal existence” (Filosofskij slovar’, 1981: p.271). Further evolution of the above notion meanings resulted in *culture* interpretation as of “autonomous systems of values and ideas, defining a type of social organization” with its extension to inclusion of wealth, ethnic customs, diversity of languages, and symbolic systems. Although culture and society are not overlapping, the culture still penetrates all areas and conditions of social life. As an informative aspect of a society culture equals cumulative, historically developed social experience. It usually has a subconscious form and can be transmitted as contents of different semiotic systems, a natural language inclusive.

The system of cultural phenomena is based on worldview universals / cultural categories of two types: those that fix the most general attributive properties of the objects in human activity, and those that define a person as a subject of human activity, as well as his / her attitude to other people, society, aims, and values of social life (Filosofskij slovar’, 1981: p.272). Both types interrelate expressing the most general images of human activity, social links, etc. All the universals contain a kind of deep structures of human consciousness which correlate with national / ethnic peculiarities of each separate culture. Such structures are obligatorily bound with implied sense that can be revealed in natural languages. Therefore, any changes in society always cause change of vital senses and values fixed in cultural universals (Filosofskij slovar’, 1981: p.273).

The Ukrainian philologist Selivanova follows the etymology of the lexeme “culture” to Latin *colere*, as it was already indicated in *Collins English Dictionary*, though with more meanings – ‘to cultivate soil’, later ‘respect, venerate’. She says, “Culture

is a complex phenomenon in life of a certain group, ethnos or civilization, representing stored in their collective memory symbolic ways of material and spiritual perception of world, models of its cognition and interpretation, as well as ways of collective existence of different peoples, one ethnos or its separate group” (Selivanova, 2010: p. 315). Hence, we can come to conclusion that there are special systems enabling us to accumulate, store and transmit collective information, language being one of the most important. Prof. Selivanova dates the appearance of the term culture in the scientific literature to the XVIII century, albeit it was used by Cicero in the I century BC to denote the ‘nurturing’ of a human soul with no scientific grounds. Since that time this term has undergone changes / corrections / improvements in its definition. Nowadays there exist more than 1,000 definitions of culture but majority of scholars agree that “the core of any culture is concentrated in ideas and values transmitted with traditions” (Selivanova, 2010: p.315). Culture can be characterized from historical, genetic, normative, psychological, structural, descriptive, and other standpoints. However, its synergetic nature proves the availability of ethnostereotypes capable to arrange and adapt culture to living conditions of a certain ethnos. Ethnic culture is built through consideration of several significant factors (geographic, economic, religious, etc.), among which language and cognitive-psychological ones play crucial role, in our opinion. It can be stipulated by the fact that “language fixes, stores, and translates ways of categorization and conceptualization of world and inner reflexive experience of people, a cognitive-psychological factor determines the reflection in cultural phenomena of peculiarities of sensory sphere of the ethnos (visual, gustatory, auditory, olfactory, and somatic sensations), its estimates, spatial orientation and assessment, gestalting, ways of thinking, and other cognitive mechanisms” (Selivanova, 2010: p. 316). We support the idea that it is language that functions as a container for culture, as a tool to categorise, conceptualise, and interpret customs, traditions, beliefs, folklore, etc. In this respect it is logical to admit that there exist language stereotypes, semantics of which cover cultural meanings (following Je. Bartmiński). Besides, it is cultural stereotypes that can hinder mutual understanding in intercultural communication.

### **Stereotypes and Stereotypical/Template Thinking**

Like the term “culture”, “stereotype” is also a polysemantic word, albeit with less quantity of meanings. *Collins English Dictionary* defines it as “**1** set of characteristics or a fixed idea considered to represent a particular kind of person **2** an idea or convention that has grown stale through fixed usage” (**2** meanings for

nouns and **1** for a verb (2011: p.789). The origin is given as Greek stereos ‘solid’ + type.

*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* fixes only one meaning for the noun “stereotype”: “a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality: *cultural / gender / racial stereotypes* <...>” (Hornby, 2010: p. 1449).

In *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* “stereotype” is considered to be “[C] a belief or idea of what a particular type of person or thing is like. Stereotypes are often unfair or untrue: *racial / sexual / cultural, etc. stereotype* <...>” (2012: p.1728).

It is obvious that none of the definitions from the three dictionaries deal with the same ‘thinking’ but it is always true that stereotypes are the results of human thinking. That is why we referred to dictionary entries and special literature for “thinking” interpretation, too.

*Collins English Dictionary* gives “thinking” as a noun with **2** meanings: “**1** opinion or judgement: *contrary to all fashionable thinking* **2** the process of thought” + **1** adj (2011: p.840).

In *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* “thinking” is interpreted as: “**1** the process of thinking about sth <...>”, and “**2** ideas or opinions about sth <...>” (Hornby, 2010: p.1539).

Two meanings for “thinking” as a noun are given in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, namely: “**1** your opinion or ideas about something, or your attitude towards it <...>”; “**2** when you think about something <...>” (2012: p.1836).

Having considered the above definitions of *thinking*, it is possible to note that dealing with similar thoughts and producing cognate opinions / judgements after some time ordinary thinking is substituted with stereotypical one (requiring less effects because of built and therefore ready to use thinking models).

To develop the above ideas, in Selivanova’s interpretation, *stereotype* (comes from Greek *stereós* ‘hard / solid’ + *týpos* ‘trace / imprint’) is “a determined by culture or subculture and socium, arranged and fixed structure of consciousness, a worldview fragment that embodies the result of reality cognition by a certain group and that is schematized standard feature, matrix of an object, event, phenomenon” (Selivanova, 2010: p. 689). A notion of *a social stereotype* was introduced by Lippmann (1922) when he noted its rational and irrational types depending upon the correctness of an object reflection in consciousness, and the possibility to be proven. Thus, it is

essential to be aware of an ambivalent function of a stereotype: 1) psychic concerning efforts economy in the world cognition, 2) social dealing with defence of one's position in a society, values and rights. The first statement (efforts economy) is obvious if to consider multiple situations with the same reactions. A person under such conditions fixes the recurrent experience in his / her consciousness with some schemes / models of thinking which become automatic and provide ready solutions for future in case of a similar situation taking place without big efforts. As for the second one (personal defence): being a member of a certain society / group a person behaves in a certain way based on its standard norms / beliefs / values, thus, feeling protected. All the above-mentioned is true but not for all situations, therefore stereotypes application can bring both positive and negative results (especially when individual features are prescribed to all the members of a certain group). The latter can be explained by the ability of a stereotype to simplify the image of a separate object / phenomena through fixing discrete insignificant features (Selivanova, 2010: pp. 690–691).

Prof. Selivanova also says that stereotypes can be established through associative experiment, and linguistic analysis of phraseological units, literary sources, and tokens with historical and cultural information employment.

*Dictionary of Logic Terms* includes the articles on the notions of *a stereotype* and thinking. It gives the etymology of *stereotype* from Greek *stereos* ('hard' / 'solid') + *typos* ('trace' / 'imprint'), proving the information from *Collins English Dictionary and Linguistic Encyclopedia* by Selivanova. It defines the stereotype as "a set system of connections / links existing between the centres of excitation and inhibition in the cortex of the cerebral hemispheres in the brain of humans and higher animals" (Kondakov, 1975: p.570). It also states that to build a stereotype takes multiple repetitions of several complexes change (of one and the same combination) of contingent stimuli in the life of an individual.

As for thinking the definition in *Dictionary of Logic Terms* is as follows: "Thinking is the highest stage of immaterial theoretical activity of a man <...>" dealing with idea, images, and consciousness (Kondakov, 1975: p.366). It is possible to detect several stages in such activity:

- direct observation in the form of feelings, perceptions, and images in a long run accumulates experience resulting in thoughts about objects = the first stage of cognition process development; separate objects properties differentiation and generalization of similar ones lead to abstraction and as a consequence develop abstract thinking in the form of

judgements, conclusions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories (Kondakov, 1975: p.367).

The first stage (of so-called sensual cognition at the moment) allows representation of phenomena / some outer characteristics, while the latter enables a man to consider, compare, conclude, and derive new knowledge based on images stored in the memory. It means that on the second stage of thinking a man is capable of generating new thoughts (giving suppositions / predictions) without addressing his experience.

It is crucial for the thought to reflect general significant features of the whole group of similar objects. It is this knowledge of general significant features that makes possible forecasting and conscious application of laws of nature. Thanks to thinking a human being can build concepts reflecting the essence of objects and phenomena, where practical and scientific knowledge is accumulated.

Transmission from the first stage of thinking to the second is possible only due to labour (as an industrial activity) and language, for thinking is social by its nature. In fact, laws and forms of thinking are in most general way reprocessed in a human brain's reflection of outer world laws.

Thinking strives to search for truth trying to make correct judgements and conclusions, which can be reached only through practice and verification of subjective thoughts by general objective opinion. The discussions in regard of truth still continue, as nothing indeed can be considered absolute being relative and dependable upon the variety of reasons and conditions. Thinking is relatively independent and contains the subjective (it takes place in the brain of a separate individual) and the objective (it is a product and a result of centuries-old manufacturing and spiritual activity of socium, thus being independent from the wish and will of any member) (Kondakov, 1975: p.368). The subjective in thinking may lead to incomplete reflection of an object/phenomenon resulting in erroneous thought/opinion. It should be also noted that thoughts are not material, they do not possess the properties of the objects they reflect, albeit the contents of thoughts fix such properties.

One more disputable issue is the correlation of thinking and language. What is agreed by all the scholars from different areas of science on is the fact that these phenomena are interrelated and even integrated. Since its inception thinking has been linked to language. It is easy to explain because thinking is performed with the help of words and sentences (special signs) that cover / envelop our thoughts. Even deaf and numb people do think with language signs as soon as they have inner speech. Interrelation of thinking and language / speech means that neither thinking is possible without

inner/outer speech, nor speech is possible without thinking (Kondakov, 1975: pp. 367–368).

Admitting that the process of the first generalizations made by a man was accompanied by words / language appearance, we assume the language to be a tool that serves as an envelope for thought and a means to communicate and exchange thoughts in a society. “Language registers and fixes in words and word-combinations in sentences the results of thinking process, and achievements in the conscious work of a person” (Kondakov, 1975: p.369). Thoughts and words, being not the same, relate as immaterial and material: the word assists thinking with generalizing the properties of material objects a person cognizes with further fixing in the mind the results of such thinking activity.

*Philosophical Dictionary* interprets thinking as “an active process of objective world reflection in concepts, judgements, theories, etc., connected with solving some issues, with generalizing and means of indirect cognizing reality; it is the highest-level product of organized in a special way substance – brain” (Filosofskij slovar’, 1981: p.344). It is also mentioned that thinking is connected with both biological evolution and social development (in respect of its origin, functioning way, and results produced). Like *Dictionary of Logic Terms*, it (*Philosophical Dictionary*) declares that human thinking takes place in close connection with speech with language fixing its results, i.e., thoughts (Filosofskij slovar’, 1981: p.345). We can infer that better thinking abilities of a person bring better possibilities to cognize the environment / world. The important postulate concerns fixing human experience in concepts and theories that build foundations for social knowledge for further cognition of reality. Thinking is never separated from the other mental processes; it is never separate from consciousness; it is investigated through language analysis.

Current research in Intercultural Communication, Linguoculturology, Psychology, Psycholinguistics, and other areas of knowledge demonstrate the importance in our globalized world of an individual’s awareness with cultural factors of different nations, specificity of national thinking (stereotypical in particular), as well as ability of different languages to reflect reality differently.

Cuddy et al. in their study of universal similarities and some differences of stereotype content models across 10 non-US nations (cultures) prove that “stereotypes are neither univalent nor unidimensional” (2009: p.3) but rather often they (stereotypes) imply “uniform antipathy towards a social group”. The data received in the scholars’ research “uncover one consequential cross-cultural difference: d) the more collectivist cultures do not locate reference groups (in-groups and societal prototype groups) in the most positive cluster (high-competence/high-warmth), unlike

individualist cultures” (Cuddy et al., 2009: p.1). In our opinion, the right explanation for such results may be an unconscious attempt of the representatives of the more collectivist cultures to avoid envy and neglect from their “competitors”.

Chodzkiene in her course of Intercultural Communication (Chapter “Stereotypes and Prejudice as Barriers for Successful Communication”) states the interinfluence between perception and communication. Furthermore, she is certain “We do not perceive randomly; we organize our perceptions in meaningful ways” (Chodzkiene, 2014: p.240). Cognitive structures / schemata help us to arrange and interpret experience. One of such schemata, we rely on in making sense of phenomena, is called stereotypes. “A stereotype is a predictive generalization about a person or situation based on the category (established by prototypes) in which we place something and how it measures up against personal constructs we apply” (*prototypes* are understood as “knowledge structures that define the clearest or ideal examples of some category”) (Chodzkiene, 2014: p.241). Stereotypes are used to predict what will happen, but they are “selective, subjective, not necessarily complete or accurate”.

McLeod considers a stereotype to be “a fixed, over generalized belief about a particular group or class of people” (2015). One advantage of a stereotype that he mentions is that “it enables us to respond rapidly to situations because we may have had a similar experience before”. “One disadvantage is that it makes us ignore differences between individuals; therefore, we think things about people that might not be true (i.e., make generalizations)”. He concludes that “Stereotypes lead to social categorization, which is one of the reasons for prejudice attitudes (i.e., “them” and “us” mentality) which leads to in-groups and out-groups”.

Timerbulatova writes that a contemporary person cannot think individually thus has a stereotypical (so-called social / mass) thinking. On the background of various types of thinking, she names social stereotypes as the constructs of stereotypical thinking (Timerbulatova, 2015: p.206). The scholar outlines the negative influence of social stereotypes but also reveals their valuing / estimating function as of cultural elements being a part of life-practical level of worldview. She stresses on the global character of the problem concerning stereotypical thinking because of its relation to ontological, anthropic, and axiological aspects (Timerbulatova, 2015: p.207). Despite the obvious existence of stereotypes at all times, they do not always deal with truth because of their social nature and lack of correspondence to every separate fact of reality.

Fiske in her research of prejudices in cultural contexts (shared stereotypes (gender, age) versus variable stereotypes (race, ethnicity, religion)) warns of danger of

universalism – it prevents us from being aware of differences / specifics, especially if they are implied. In fact, it means that we are to be cautious with cultural manifestations, often hidden from the sight but being of crucial importance. Considering prejudices as a result of stereotypes work, she is certain about the possibility of changing them, though then we are to catch “the culturally shared and distinctive forms of stereotypes” first. She concludes that ambivalence of cultural stereotypes is unequal, especially when the country is ethnically heterogeneous and thus has more complicated ingroup relations, but “Across culture, however, gender, age, and perhaps social class display shared prescriptive stereotypes that solve common human dilemmas” (Fiske, 2017).

Having studied the reflection of prejudices and stereotypes in cross-cultural communication, Hiyasova, Mustafaeva, & Mustafaev accept that *stereotypes* are “predetermined perceptions”, ethnic stereotype is “a simplified, conceptualized, emotionally coloured and quite sustainable image of an ethnical group easily spread on all its representatives” (2018: p.24). In their paper the authors underline the twofold nature of stereotypes with positive / negative impact. They illustrate some deep-rooted stereotypes about nations, for instance: “German preciseness, pedantry, English politeness and at the same time severity and reservedness, French gallantry and amorousness with carelessness, Italian temper, Finnish slowness, Russian ‘that’s fine as it is’” (Hiyasova et al., 2018: p.25). But the scholars also note that nowadays with the change of reality (= social, political, economic environment) stereotypes may alter, slowly but they do change with time. What is of importance to our research is the authors’ notice of “the implications of stereotype influence with which people who leave their region usually face” (Hiyasova et al., 2018: p.26). As a rule, such influence bears a negative shade for “Stereotypes on the individual level, unfortunately, are rarely reconsidered” plus people usually perceive the behaviour of representatives of other cultures from their own perspective (according to “human psychological propensities”). Hereto the researchers add that “it is impossible to be completely free of the template thinking” which we call a stereotypical one.

The positive influence of stereotypes is in their ability to generalize and schematize the most typical situations preparing us to confront the other nations, to order an unfamiliar world around, reduce culture shock (Ter-Minasova, 2000), but we are not to forget about the possible erroneous side of stereotypes either.

Ryseva and Antropova define a *stereotype* as “a rooted opinion as for certain phenomenon, event, which is formed based on the comparison with individual inner ideal” (2019: p.85). They also note that stereotypes start working much earlier than one’s mind because every person has its own habits but social stereotypes. It means that each person being a member of a certain society follows the standard, norms,

behaviour typical for this very society in accordance with the system of upbringing (Ryseva & Antropova, 2019: p.85). Templates originate from experience and are transmitted from one generation to another in the form of social stereotypes. Stereotypes are always in close connection with socium. Their negative influence can be explained by lack of knowledge and erroneous thinking. Following psychologists, Ryseva and Antropova interpret *template / stereotypical thinking* as a kind of mental activity with uniform thoughts and behaviour models in similar situations.

One of the significant difficulties with interpreting stereotypes is their existence in mostly implicit form. Fiske and Taylor (2013), for example, claim that nowadays only ten percent (10%) of the population (in Western democracies) employ overt stereotypes (Hinton, 2017: p.2). In this respect Hinton notes that implicit stereotypes started attracting attention of researchers some 30 years ago (2017). Having admitted that “Stereotyping is a general feature of human social categorization” (Hinton, 2017: p.2), the author checked the stereotypical associations of “young”, “good”, “old”, “bad” with Implicit Associations Test, and it showed a response bias “indicating evidence of an implicit age stereotype” (even if people try to reject stereotypes consciously). Hinton argues that “the implicit stereotypical associations picked up by an individual do not reflect a cognitive bias but the associations prevalent within their culture – evidence of ‘culture in mind’” (Hinton, 2017: p.1), thus insisting on obligatory examination of them in the communication within social networks. In other words, they are not “a cognitive bias” or “a cognitive monster”, but “learnt associations” of fair-minded people arising from “the normal working of the predictive brain in everyday life” within their cultures (note: an individual’s “biased” cognition/a mental fallacy/misconception is usually considered to be a result of so-called “simplicity” of thought; a term “predictive brain” was proposed by Clark in 2013 to explain the influence of culture on implicit cognition).

Hinton outlines two crucial theoretical concepts behind the notion of “implicit stereotypes” – “associative networks in semantic (knowledge) memory and automatic activation”. The scholar is certain that associated concepts always have stronger links than unrelated ones. Besides people seem to arrange their semantic knowledge in similar to others’ ways. In fact, the nature of semantic association as usual reflects both subjective experience and linguistic similarity.

In his article Hinton notes that in 1970-s conscious / controlled and automatic as two forms of mental processing were differentiated. The first one (conscious) can be employed flexibly, involving attentional resources and dealing with novelty. It takes time and results in slow serial processing of data. Automatic processing on the

contrary is quick, though inflexible (and almost beyond control), operating outside of attention and involving parallel processing.

“Consistency of experience (practice) can lead to new automatically activated learnt associations”, but once learnt they are difficult to unlearn (Hinton, 2017: pp.2–3). “Implicit stereotyping is now viewed as one aspect of implicit social cognition that is involved in a range of social judgements” (Hinton, 2017: p.4). It is the general assumption that implicit stereotypes can affect anyone, albeit not all of them have the same cultural value. Being a part of culture, it may not always be the case that we support / approve of all its aspects, but to function pragmatically in society cultural knowledges is crucial. In his / her life a person is successfully guided by learnt semantic associations forming so-called “predictive brain” (a term of Clark, 2013) models. As soon as “human cognition is functionally driven to pick up regularities and develop implicit associations from the world around us” (“experience develops expectations”), the “predictive brain” “seeks to minimize “surprisal” by a constant process of updating probabilities with each experience”, thus “maximising predictive accuracy” (Hinton, 2017: p.5).

A key point formulated by Hinton pronounces that “the predictive brain operates on the state of the world *as it is experienced* and not on the state of the world *as we believe it should be*” (Hinton, 2017: p.6). “Implicit stereotypes, like other implicit associations can be viewed as cultural knowledge or folk wisdom that the person acquires through experience in a culture” (Hinton, 2017: p.7). Following Lippmann Hinton insists that “it is the culture that is creating the stereotype, not the individual” (Hinton, 2017: p.7; Lippmann, 1922: p.81). “In the communication within any social network there will be regular and consistent associations between social groups and attributes, which will be picked up by its members, through the working of the predictive brain” (Hinton, 2017: p.7). The positive side of stereotypes is that they help to develop common interpretations within social networks, thus transmitting cultural information” (Hinton, 2017: p.8); over time they tend to become more positive. The culture changes result in slow change of the implicit stereotypes (at least for some associations) of its members, in accordance with the predictive brain model. That is why, to understand implicit stereotypes, to properly interpret their nature researchers need to combine cognitive studies with the study of the dynamic of culture. Only then it is possible “to understand the specific associations prevalent in the communication within a culture and their implicit influence on the members of that culture” (Hinton, 2017: p.8).

Thus, being aware of stereotypes existence (explicit / implicit) and of the individual’s ability to think stereotypically (with “a predictive brain”) people can reach a lot more understanding in their outgroup and especially intercultural communication.

## **Language Facts Reflecting Connection between Culture and Stereotypical Thinking**

As it was already highlighted, culture, language, and thinking (“a predictive brain”) are always closely interconnected. Within this paper, proverbs, sayings, set expressions are considered as language facts that build an integral part of world folk heritage and enable researchers to study historical, cultural, and mental peculiarities of a certain ethnos. Such language facts intend to reflect both the encouraged moral values, and beliefs, as well as condemned human vices and ridiculed negative phenomena. It is common knowledge that folk wisdom is universal in the aspect of its general human nature, but specific in its national uniqueness. They serve as an efficient tool in transmitting historical, social, and moral experience from one generation to another.

Bel’chikov thinks that to study culture means to interpret sociocultural and historical information from view of Linguoculturology (2003: p.271). The ability of language units (language categories) to render culturally important data determines two research directions: 1) a discrete language unit → nationally oriented sociocultural and historical interpretation; 2) a representative fragment of a separate national culture (folklore, for instance) → language units rendering semantic and expressive contents. He also notices that contrasting different cultures reveals nationally specific forms and ways of expression / reflection of the universal (“a unified field of world culture”) in each separate culture and language (Bel’chikov, 2003: p.272). Language is a prerequisite and a product of culture; culture is not a closed system.

New language contexts give birth to new cultures in a society, however language and culture are connected bilaterally – language absorbs cultural heritage, when any national culture depends upon character and specificity of a separate language (Bazarova, 2007: p.73). Culture does not exist beyond human activity and society/social groups. Language as a sociocultural factor helps to earn and organize human experience. Bazarova supports most Russian philosophers (for example Atanovskij, Brutian, Markarian) who follow one-way connection between language and culture, namely from ability of language to reflect reality to culture being an integral part of the reality a person faces, thus language being a simple reflection of culture. Influence of culture on language seems to the scholars obvious, when a reverse connection – the impact of language on culture is still open (Bazarova, 2007: p.75). If to take into account that every language speaker is a carrier of culture at the same time, then it is possible to say that language signs can function as culture signs, and thus serve as a means of presenting major cultural attitudes. That is why the author infers that language can reflect cultural national mentality of its speakers (Bazarova, 2007: p.76).

It is certain that language facts (in their relation to stereotypic thinking within various cultures) do not always prove the real state of affairs in modern society, but as a rule they are readily perceived by most representatives of discrete nations/groups to render a common idea or to ground one's personal opinion with the help of a proverb/saying aimed at reinforcing the emotional effect or just making the necessary impact on an interlocutor depending upon the communicative situation.

The Ukrainian researcher Shutova finds it logical to talk about ethnocultural stereotypes as a symbiosis of ethnic (= products of the collective unconscious / so-called archetypes of consciousness) and cultural (= mental artefacts of national consciousness) ones that represent cultural and ethnosocial phenomena (2016). She offers to interpret ethnocultural stereotypization as a linguocognitive process determined by human consciousness ability to categorize/classify different objects/phenomena/representatives of various ethnocultural groups and ethnoses. According to Shutova, ethnocultural stereotypes include signs of traditional culture, mental signs, and language phraseological signs. In her research she provides the portraits/profiles of the Englishmen and Ukrainians stereotyped in collective consciousness of each ethnos and fixed in phraseological units. We confirm appropriateness of considering the latter as stereotypes because of their stability in both meanings and forms.

Through establishing motivators for phraseological units building (various artefacts, plants, and animal nominations) Shutova constructed stereotypic portraits of the Englishmen which cover such traits as anger, ruthlessness, indifference, stinginess, extravagance, reliability, courage, hypocrisy, intelligence, material condition, etc. As for Ukrainians they are characterized with emotionality, talkativeness, flattery, cunning, arrogance, treachery, etc. (Shutova, 2016).

One more Ukrainian scholar Orlova in her study of archetypical and stereotypical mapping of the concept 'human age' in the consciousness of Ukrainian, Russian and English native speakers (2019) establishes both universal and specific values of all three cultures (reflected in languages respectively). Her research was done based on 55 lexicographic sources and 7 collections of proverbs / sayings (Orlova, 2019: pp. 3-4).

The major results are as follows:

- 1) a universal value stereotype: "to achieve success is necessary at a young age";
- 2) specific values in Slavic culture: "it is easier to raise children for a wealthy man", "it is bad for an old man to have a young wife (or

marry at all), and for a young woman to have an old husband”, “old people need peace, lead a passive lifestyle”;

- 3) universal positive stereotypes: “children – joy, happiness, love, wealth, fun life”, “young people are energetic, cheerful, active, able to take risks”, “young people are active, strong but inexperienced / and smart”, “youth is noble, young people are blameless”, “young people have hope for the future”, “young people are unpretentious”, “young people have good mental abilities, desire for knowledge”, “old age – experience”, “elderly people – loyal, loving / patient”, “elderly people are cheerful, young at heart”;

neutral stereotypes: “women usually tend to hide their own age”;

negative stereotypes: “children – a burden”, “young people – inexperienced, immature, naive”, “raising children is a difficult and responsible job”, “old – stubborn”, “old age – misfortune, evil, disease, insecurity, death”, “old – stupid, greedy, physically weak, unattractive, unable to work for society, not useful”, “old people – vicious, depraved”, “old people have a decay intellectual abilities, stupidity, forgetfulness”, “elderly women – talkative”, “elderly women – quarrelsome and tearful”, “elderly women – unattractive”;

- 4) negative stereotypes in Slavic culture: “old – introverted, aimed at the past”;

- 5) negative stereotypes in Russian and English cultures: “young people are impudent, spoiled, demanding”;

- 6) ethnospecific negative stereotypes in Russian culture: “young / old – impoverished”, “young people have a changeable nature” (Orlova, 2019: p.6).

Based on the above-mentioned resources Orlova has managed to establish stereotypical oppositions with both regularities and differences in the three cultures:

“youth (strength) – old age (wisdom)”;

“the old are experienced, good counsellors / inexperienced, stupid”;

“old – physically weak / strong”;

“old age (experience) – youth (lack of experience)”;

“small children (small worries) – adult children (big problems / great trouble)” (2019: p. 15).

Mukarapova admits close relations between language and culture viewing the language “as a verbal expression of culture” (2019: p.90). She also assumes that thinking is influenced (to a certain extent) by national values and customs of the country where a person is brought up, thus confirming the existence of stereotypical/template thinking. Following Moore (2006), the scientist defines stereotypes as “schematic, standardized images, conceptions, or opinions of individual members of a culture (or group) as a whole about some social phenomenon or object, usually emotionally charged and having stability” (Moore, 2006: p. 35; Mukarapova, 2019: p.90). She also emphasizes that stereotypes are rooted in social conditions and prior experience.

The scholar argues about negative connotations of the words “stereotype” and “stereotypical” in English and Russian languages because of availability in the meanings of such semes as “hackneyed, lacking originality and expressiveness”. However, she absolutely supports their positive and even important role in cross-cultural communication where they help cope with the other nations’/ethnoses’ values, beliefs, and norms (Mukarapova, 2019: p.90).

In conclusion Mukarapova states that stereotypes are “steady, one-sided and emotionally coloured” views of one nation of another or of itself (2019: p.94). Of interest is her highlighting of the fact that “nations with a high level of economic development emphasize in themselves such qualities as intelligence, efficiency and initiative, but nations with a low level of economic demonstrate kindness, “warmth”, and hospitality” (Mukarapova, 2019: p.89). We can agree here for lower level of economy always signifies higher extent of dependence on circumstances and “neighbours” resulting in more modest and adaptable behaviour of “lower” nations versus more confident and superior attitude of “higher” nations.

To illustrate the above-mentioned, we have looked through several collections of proverbs/sayings in different languages (in both paper and digital versions) and offer to examine just one proverb with the same meaning for the languages given. The interpretations and even structures of the proverb coincide in the represented languages which can be determined by its Latin origin. The basic meaning is as follows: “Be patient. Important work takes time.”

Thus, the paper collection published in Ukraine (Zhovkivskiy, 2004) provides the proverb in 9 languages: Ukrainian, Latin, English, Spanish, German, Polish, Russian, Romanian, and French (because of the authors’ team and their possibilities to verify the given wordings in those languages):

(Ukrainian) **Київ** не відразу був збудований;

(Latin) *Alta die solo non est exstructa* **Corinthus**;

(English) **Rome** was not built in one day;

(Spanish) *No se hizo* **Zamora** en una hora;

(German) **Rom** ist nicht an einem Tag gebaut;

(Polish) *Nie od razu* **Krakow** zbudowano;

(Russian) **Москва** не сразу строилась;

(Romanian) **Lumea** nu s-a făcut într-o zi;

(French) **Paris** n'a pas été bâti en un jour (Zhovkivskyi, 2004: p.89).

It should be noted that literally (word by word translation) the proverb means: 'building of a town/a city/something else takes time'. For Ukrainian, Polish, Russian, and French it is building of a capital city (*Kyiv*, *Krakow*, *Moscow*, and *Paris*) with the stereotype that it is the capital city being the most important place in the country/state, it must be bigger than the other places and thus it takes more time and hard work to build it. For English and German such a city is *Rome* as a historical centre being a major human settlement for over two millennia having influenced the world culture a lot. Moreover, both England and Germany were part of the Roman Empire for many centuries. For Latin it is *Corinthus* (Corinth) as one of the greatest ancient cities the building of which was overcomplicated by its geographical location (a city-state on the Isthmus of Corinth, the narrow stretch of land that joins the Peloponnese to the mainland of Greece – roughly halfway between Athens and Sparta). For Spanish the reference is to the city of *Zamora* (the capital of the province of Zamora) having witnessed abundance of various historical events / battles (literally Zamora was not won in an hour) and preserving 24 Romanesque-style churches. For Romanian with its multi-ethnic society it is *Lumea* ('peace') that requires a lot of time to be struggled for and finally won.

Online collections of proverbs / sayings are represented in this paper with *Lyrics Translate* [<https://lyricstranslate.com/>]. We looked for equivalents / correspondences for (Latin) *Alta die solo non est exstructa* **Corinthus**. The link also gives the explanations of the meanings of the proverbs in the language of the proverb. Among the others we found equivalents in Spanish, German, French, English, Russian, and Turkish, all of which but for Russian refer to *Rome*:

(Spanish) **Roma** *no se construyó en una día / Roma no se hizo en un día* (Que tengas paciencia);

(German) **Rom** *wurde auch nicht an einem Tag erbaut* (Es gibt Dinge, die sich nicht in einem Tag erledigen lassen. Große Projekte dauern länger);

(French) **Rome** *ne s'est pas faite en un (seul) jour* (Il faut du temps pour accomplir un projet important);

(English) **Rome** *wasn't built in a day* (Be patient. Important work takes time);

(Russian) **Москва** *не сразу строилась* (Большие дела делаются постепенно, требуют времени и усилий, а не происходят в один миг);

(Turkish) **Roma** *bir günde inşa edilmedi* (Sabırlı ol, önemli işler zaman alır) [<https://lyricstranslate.com/>].

The linguo-cultural analysis shows that most languages present several versions of one and the same proverb/saying having adapted their constituents (so-called cultural symbols) to make the meanings more comprehensive for the modern societies. Herewith we can face with the changing of a stereotype during a long historical period and adapting to contemporary requirements.

## Conclusion

Despite establishing the close relations (of integration and interdependence) among culture, stereotypical thinking, and language facts, it is not possible yet to label the status of 'solved' to this problem. The results of the paper outlined the etymology and interpretations of culture in different language dictionaries and special literature; specified definitions of (implicit) stereotypes and stereotypical / template thinking ("a predictive brain"); provided language facts to prove the links of all three constituents under study.

The following major conclusions are drawn:

- all the cultural universals contain a kind of deep structures of human consciousness which correlate with national / ethnic peculiarities of each separate culture;

- such structures are obligatorily bound with implied sense that can be revealed in natural languages;
- no culture is a closed system;
- any changes in society always cause change of vital senses and values fixed in cultural universals;
- language is a prerequisite and “a verbal expression” of culture;
- language as a sociocultural factor helps to earn and organize human experience;
- language is a tool that serves as an envelope for thoughts and a means to communicate and exchange thoughts in a society;
- any national culture depends upon the character and specificity of a separate language;
- thinking is never separated from the other mental processes;
- thinking is investigated through language analysis;
- thinking is influenced (to a certain extent) by national values and customs of the country where a person is brought up, thus confirming the existence of stereotypical / template thinking;
- stereotypical thinking can be seen from ontological, anthropic, and axiological standpoints;
- stereotypical thinking is the problem of global character albeit it reveals the valuing function of cultural elements being a part of life-practical level of national worldviews;
- stereotypes are rooted in social conditions and prior experience;
- social stereotypes may be neutral or have a positive/negative impact;
- people should be aware of explicit/implicit stereotypes existence and of an individual’s ability to think stereotypically (with “a predictive brain”);
- language facts (in their relation to stereotypic thinking within various cultures are readily perceived by most representatives of discrete nations/groups to render a common idea or to ground one’s

personal opinion with the help of idiomaticity (proverbs/sayings/set expressions/phraseological units);

- language facts reflect both the encouraged moral values, and beliefs, as well as condemned human vices and ridiculed negative phenomena;
- language facts reflecting folk wisdom may be universal (in the aspect of general human nature) and specific in rendering national uniqueness;
- language facts serve as an efficient tool in transmitting historical, social, and moral experience from one generation to another.

Thus, studying the typical patterns of stereotyping in different cultures as their embodiment in different languages gives understanding of the essential people's knowledge about themselves and their behaviour in society from historical and sociocultural viewpoints and reveals specificity of "a predictive brain"/stereotypical thinking of each nation/ethnos.

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