Stereotypical Statements as Social-Psycholinguistic Phenomenon

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Anthropological issues have always been in the focus of attention of philosophers and historians, psychologists and sociologists, men of letters and arts critics who have displayed breathless interest for human nature in the course of all times. Linguists also couldn't parry this issue as humans think and live in language. Language is not only a means of communication, but the tool of thoughts and feelings. From this perspective Wilhelm von Humboldt considers language "the basis of true and veritable linguistic investigation" (Humboldt 1985: 377).

As far back as in the early 50s of the 20th century Emile Benveniste, a French linguist, focused his attention on the speaker's ability of 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, his practical attitude towards the outside world and the means of influence upon people" (Shaklein 1999: 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" (Humboldt 1985: 381).

Language functions in the social environment, and the social factors influence on its function and development. "Language serves the 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 language and the same linguistic phenomena differently and, by giving preference to one, they refuse the others" (Shveitser, Nikolskii 1978: 11).

Frequency is a social factor. The frequency of these or those constructions and word-formations is a fact of social preference. Namely, the frequent usage of ready-made linguistic units in their constant combinations and constant meanings has led to the formation of speech stereotype/standard or as for V.V.Krasnikh, to stereotype-presentation (Krasnikh 1999: 270).

The concept "social stereotype" belongs to W.Lippmann. He states that "our world is recreated and reverberated through a stereotype which "decides" what a person should do. Thus, we don't countervail the world as such, but the very world we have created by the images of our minds" (Yazikovoe stroeniye; steriotipi soznaniya i tvorchestvo, 1988: 97). V.V.Krasnykh defines stereotype as "some invariant of behavior, invariant of activity" (Krasnikh 1999: 266).

As for W.Lippmann, the outward features of a stereotype are stability, rigidity, the mastering of "the socially sanctioned information" by an individual, the connection of

the theoretical level of the public consciousness with ordinary/empirical level (Yazikovoye soznanie: steriotipi i tvorchestvo 1988: 98).

The speech behavior of the speaker is defined by "a complex situational-thematic factor" (Lapteva 2003: 56). The situations and aspects of human interaction in their everyday life are often repeated and that is the reason why they are stereotyped. In their turn, the reiteration and stereotype nature of real-life situations have led to the formation of complete stereotype utterances which are known in linguistics as sentence-formulae (O.Jespersen), pattern phrases (L.P.Yakubinski), phraseological units (P.A.Lekant), indivisible (V.Yu.Melikyan) or **stereotypical statements** (A.M. Peshkovski, N.V.Cheremisina).

On 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" (Polivanov 1968: 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**" (Krasnikh 1999: 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… (Krasnikh 1999: 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" (Krasnikh 2004: 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.F. Ufimtseva) **consciousness.**

Hence, L.P.Yakubinskiy mentioned that the mechanism of the establishment of stereotypical statements is defined by the fact that the frequency of the identical speech situations in communication results in the fact that the communicative units typically used for such situations are apprehended as "attached" stable formulae. In his research "On Dialogue Discourse" he writes, "Our routine life is full of recurrence and banality. All in all a considerable part of our interaction with other people belongs to stereotyped interrelations. However, no matter what kind of interrelation we have, it is always accompanied by speech reciprocity, speech exchange and, correspondingly, the stereotype interrelations change into the stereotype speech interrelations…" (Yakubinski 1923: 167). "Speaking in terms of the certain daily stereotypes contributes to the creation of the complete stereotype expressions somehow attached to the given daily items and the stereotype topics of communication" (Yakubinski 1923: 175).

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" (Sokovnin 1974: 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" (Levkovich 1976: 212).

At present, stereotypical statements have been elucidated in terms of psycholinguistics and have been substantiated in "stereo-linguistics". 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 the stereolinguistic approach, a human lives in four concentric spheres. The founder of stereolinguistics, the French linguist J.Duren, refers these spheres to cognition and names them cognitive sub worlds (Duren 2002: 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.Duren calls the fourth, zero sphere which is the nearest to the human body, a situational sphere (Duren 2002: 275-276). J.Duren presents his "ideas" in the form of a diagram with the Leonardo da Vinci's famous picture in the centre (Duren 2002: 277):

Four spheres of cognition

0 the sphere of situation, infra-syntax
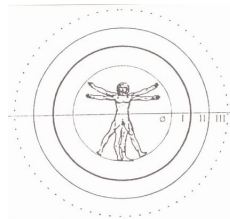
I the sphere of singular, actuality
II the sphere of privacy, non-actuality, the usual
III the sphere of eternity, universality

However, J.Duren 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 philogenesis, ontogenesis, psychology and linguistics can be newly interpreted" (Duren, 2002: 277).

Namely, indivisible stereotypical statements, such as *Fat chance! - Еще бы! You bet! - Держи карман шире!* led Duren 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" (Duren 2002: 275).

While emphasizing the zero sphere of cognition, J.Duren is guided by the position of the French psychologist H. Wallon, who sets off practical mind against the discourse or speech mind (Wallon 1982: 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.**

The evolution of language and thinking has taken place in close correlation. The study of language and thinking correlation is still in the centre of linguistic research. Though the Sapir-Worf's hypothesis for the study of this issue was subjected to harsh criticism, it introduced a new research paradigm in scientific practice, "the analysis of the cognitive processes through the contrast of the languages representing cardinally different cultures" (Yazik i Soznaniye: Paradoksalnaya Ratsialnost, 1993: 163) "continues to alarm human mind" (Mechkovskaya 2000: 65).

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" (Pedagogika Visshei shkoli 1972: 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 by reasoning 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" (Humboldt 1985: 47). He also states that "not only the elements of the language, but the languages themselves often obey the rules of general analogy" (Humboldt 1985: 348).

In our opinion, the spoken standard is one of such analogies. The comparison of languages "by analogy with all conceivable rules" (Humboldt, 1985: 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 Japanese languages. The first three languages are in full conformity: some greeting expressions cover broad situations (Russian: *Здравствуй (-те) [zdrastvui (-te)], Привет [privet];* Armenian: Բարև (ձեզ) *[barev (dzez)],* Ողջույն *[voghjuin];* English: *How do you do! Hello!)* and temporary situations (Russian: *Доброе утро [dobroe utro], Добрый день [dobriy den], Добрый вечер [dobriy vecher];* Armenian: Բարի լույս *[bari luis],* Բարի օր *[bari or],* Բարի երեկո *[bari yereko];* English: *Good morning, Good day, Good evening).* According to A.A.Akishina and K.Kamogova (Akishina, Kamogova 1974: 9-24) Japanese 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.

Greetings in the Russian, Armenian and English languages are differentiated according to diverse styles: formal, neutral and informal. Greetings in Japanese 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" (Yazik i Soznaniye: Paradoksalnaya Ratsialnost 1993: 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" (Sabatkov 1999: 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" (Mechkovskaya 2000: 60-61).

According to Worf's terminology these two "linguo-cultural types" belong to the European and Eastern standard. .Sepir and B.Worf assert, that "language is not only the product of society, but also the means of thought and mentality formation"

(Mitrophanova 1999: 345). "If the impact of the culture on language is quite evident and diverse, then the issue about the reverse impact of the language on culture is still open" (Mechkovskaya 2000: 61). As a solution to this issue, modern linguistics attempts to avoid one-sided determinism giving preference to the interdependent one and trying to find correlations between the structures of language and culture.

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.

"Evaluation and emotionality are usually emphasized when defining a stereotype" (Pishalnikova, Sorokin 1993: 96).

Notes:

1. The concept is suggested by B.M. Gasparov. 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.

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Կարծրատիպ նախապաշարմունքները
որպես հանրա- և հոգելեզվաբանական ֆենոմեն

Պատրաստի, անփոփոխ նախապաշարմունքների ցանկը մարդու լեզվագիտակցության շերտերից մեկն է, և խոսողը, հաղորդակցման իրավիճակից ելնելով, համապատասխան ընտրություն է կատարում ունեցած բառապաշարից։ Այլ կերպ ասած, մարդու գիտակցության բաղադրիչներից մեկը կարծրատիպ խոսքային վարքագիծն է, որը պայմանավորված է կարծրատիպ իրավիճակով։ Օրինակ՝ հանդիպելիս («հանդիպում» կարծրատիպ իրավիճակ) մարդիկ իրար ողջունում են (վարքագծի կարծրատիպ) հետևյալ արտահայտություններով` ***Բարև՛, Ողջու՛յն*** և այլն (խոսքի կարծրատիպ)։

Լեզվագիտակցությունը բազմաշերտ է, և նրա կառուցվածքային հենասյուներից մեկը ռեֆլեքսիվ բնույթ ունեցող կարծրատիպ շերտն է։ Թեև կարծրատիպ արտահայտությունները որպես պատրաստի նախապաստության նախապաշարմունքներ առկա են մարդու բառապաշարում, սակայն հիշողության խորքում ի հայտ են գալիս կոնկրետ իրավիճակներում, իսկ որոշ մարդկանց գիտակցության մեջ չեն էլ արթնանում վերջիններիս բացակայության պատճառով։

Կարծրատիպ արտահայտությունների ուսումնասիրությունը, նրանց կառուցվածքային դասակարգումը, բաշխումը` ըստ հաղորդակցական իրավիճակների ու թեմաների, արդիական է լեզվի թե՛ տեսության, և թե՛ դասավանդման տեսանկյուններից։