

## ROLE OF STEREOTYPES IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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During the cross-cultural communication one partner perceives another together with his actions and through his actions. Creation of interactions with other person in many respects depends on adequacy of understanding of actions and their reasons [2]. Stereotypes allow the reasons and possible influences of personal and others' acts to be found. By means of people's stereotypes their behavior is predicted. Thus, in communication in general, as well as during the cross-cultural contacts stereotypes play a very important role.

In cross-cultural communication stereotypes become a result of ethnocentric reaction, i.e. attempts to judge other people from the positions only of their culture. Quite often during the cross-cultural communication and evaluation of the partners in the course of communication communicants initially are guided by the developed stereotypes in advance. Obviously, there are no people who are absolutely free from stereotypes. It is really possible to speak only about different extent of stereotyping of communicants [1]. Researches show that extent of stereotyping is inversely proportional to experience of cross-cultural interaction.

According to A. P. Sadokhin, stereotypes «are built rigidly in» our system of values. They are its component and provide a peculiar protection of our positions in society. For this reason, stereotypes are used in each cross-cultural situation. It is impossible to do without the use of these extremely general culturally specific schemes of evaluation, both own group, and other cultural groups [3].

The dependence between cultural evaluation of this or that person and traits of character attributed to him or her is usually not adequate. People belonging to various cultures have different understanding of the world that makes communication from a «uniformed standard» position impossible. The properties attributed to others indirectly reflect features of group in which they are widespread. Being guided by norms and values of the culture, people themselves define what facts and in what light to evaluate. It significantly influences the nature of person's communication with the representatives of other cultures. For example, during the communication with the Italians who are quickly gesticulating during the conversation the Germans who get used to other style of communication can have a stereotype of Italians being «disorganized». In turn, Italians can have a stereotype about Germans as about «cold, reserved» people.

Depending on ways and forms of use stereotypes can be useful or harmful for communication. Most often misunderstanding of foreign language, symbolics of gestures, a mimicry and other elements of behavior leads to the distorted interpretation of sense of their actions that generates such negative feelings as vigilance, contempt, hostility. A real way out to escape negative situations are stereotypes which become hints helping to formulate judgments, assumptions and evaluation of other people.

However, stereotypes quite often carry out also a negative role exactly when they are used by the individual in the course of interpersonal perception at a lack of information on the specific partner of communication.

During the investigation of different kinds of stereotypes scientists concluded that stereotyping helps people to understand a situation and to behave according to new circumstances. Thus, A. P. Sadokhin considers that stereotyping is useful in the following cases:

- if consciously adhere to a stereotype;
- if the stereotype is descriptive, but not evaluative;
- if the stereotype is exact;
- if the stereotype is only a guess about group, but not direct information on it;
- if the stereotype is modified, i.e. based on further observations and experience of communication with real people or proceeds from experience of a real situation [3].

During the cross-cultural communication stereotypes can be both effective and inefficient. They are effective only when they are used as the first and positive guess about the person or a situation, but are not considered as the only right information about them.

Stereotypes become inefficient and even can complicate communication when, being guided by them, people incorrectly describe group norms, when mix stereotypes with the description of a certain individual and when it is not possible to modify the stereotypes based on real observations and experience. In such cases stereotypes can become a serious block at cross-cultural contacts.

Not only negative stereotypes but even positive ones can result in difficulties in establishing mutual understanding between people. If Americans expect that Russians are disciplined and hardworking, then the Russian partners cannot be like this in real life. And Russians expecting from Americans being sociable and kind hearted would be disappointed when realizing that communication in the USA is often defined by the business value of a person.

In general, there are some reasons that can interfere with cross-cultural communication. They usually emerge because of the stereotypes:

- if behind stereotypes it is not possible to mark out specific features of people;

- if stereotypes are repeated and increase certain wrong beliefs and expectations until people begin to associate them as true;
- if the stereotype is based on half-truth or some misrepresentations [4].

In the 50th years of the XX century the hypothesis concerning the amount of true knowledge and false information in stereotypes was put forward. It is also known as the so-called hypothesis of «grain of truth».

The fact is that it goes without saying that the intergroup relations influence stereotypes. It is the nature of the relationships: cooperation or competition, dominance or submission. These determine the content and degree of stereotypes being positive or negative.

Practice of cross-cultural communication shows that people keep the stereotypes even if reality and their life experience contradict them. Therefore, in a situation of cross-cultural contacts it is important to be able to manage effectively with stereotypes, i.e. to know and use them, and also to be able to refuse them if they don't fit the real situation of communication.

#### References

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### **COLLABORATION IN MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS TEAMS: CHALLENGE OF EMPLOYEE ADAPTATION**

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Taking a new job, an applicant is involved into a system of professional and social-psychological relationships which exists in a particular company or enterprise. The process of efficient interaction in a business team requires for an employee to acquire a new social role, learn values and collaboration norms existing in the workforce environment as well as define his/her collaboration approach in accordance with company aims and objectives. Thereby, the employee is to conform his behavior to company rules and regulations.

Adaptation pertains to the process of an employee getting accustomed to an unfamiliar household and social environment. Applying for the job, an applicant pursues his/her own aims, realizes needs and has his own values and behavior principles. Bearing in mind these considerations he imposes requirements to a chosen company and working conditions offered by it. The company or a firm considering its aims and objectives, specifies employee's competences and determines expected employment behavior. Meeting mutual requirements, an employee and management team interact and suit the style of each other, as a result, adaptation takes place. Thus, adaptation in a workplace is a two-way process which occurs between a worker and a social environment which is new to him [2].

More often professional adaptation is referred to as an employee occupational involvement, introduction to conditions and standards of efficient labour. However, adaptation can hardly be regarded only as acquiring a set of technical and professional skills. This process also implies a new worker's accommodation to work environment while getting acquainted with norms of behavior, values which are relevant for a team, thereby, building collaboration relationships which result in productive and efficient efforts in business to the satisfaction of the demands of staff members [1]. The present day reality proves that this aspect of the problem causes the most important hardships in the workplace and can be crucial to wellbeing of a multinational (e.g. multicultural) company.

As globalization eliminates borders, it has made communication between world economies and workers part of many businesses. Multinational companies continue to expand in new territories. A multicultural workforce can offer benefits such as a broader range of perspectives and a greater ability to compete in the global marketplace. Under these conditions effective working in a multinational team of experts for a company which conducts business on an international scale implies understanding the differences between cultures, particularly as they pertain to commerce, communication and personal interaction which are the key to adaptation to diverse cultural setting. New territories, employees and businesses require management and staff to be trained in understanding, working with and managing foreign markets and employees, thus contributing to culture sensitivity of coworkers and business partners and cultivating good business relationships.

“Cultural sensitivity” means being aware and accepting of the differences that exist among people with different cultural backgrounds. Being culturally sensitive enables a person to approach interactions with people from different cultures in a respectful manner, both in workplace and interpersonal interactions. In a diverse workplace, companies need to promote a culture where people tolerate unique and varying views of people from many cultures.

Cultural sensitivity skills are important for the employees to function cohesively as a team that is respectful and courteous to each other regardless of cultural differences. Employees who regularly interact with outside business clients, many of whom may have diverse backgrounds and heritages are supposed to possess cultural sensitivity skills, since it can turn out that one isolated instance of cultural insensitivity can damage the organization.