

National Stereotypes as Means of Connectedness, Identity and Alienation

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Abstract

The main target of this paper is to discuss national stereotypes of Russia and Russians as means of connectedness, identity and alienation between cultures.

Homogeneous stereotypes (self-stereotypes, i.e. stereotypes of the mother culture) are viewed as a means of connectedness. Stereotypes are, by origin, destined to reflect and to create connectedness, because they have their source in "in-group favoritism" social practice. As soon as a stereotype is born it becomes a means of mutual understanding between the representatives of this culture. For example, in Russian culture a sense of collectivity is very strong and with it a stereotype that only a strong political leader, a tsar, can effectively rule is connected.

Heterogeneous stereotypes are "them"-stereotypes, or stereotypes of other cultures. They are close to prejudices and are considered to be mental constructs which may be barriers for effective communication between nations. Thus they may be understood as means of alienation. For example, the American mass media deliver a stereotype that Russia is not democratic and doesn't want democracy. So, some actions of Russia may be interpreted in the way the stereotype dictates which is rather destructive for mutual understanding between the nations.

Identity stereotypes are intermediate type of national stereotypes which help nations to identify each other's cultural belonging. To this group refer banya, balalaika, bear and other stereotypes of symbolic nature. So, in the globalizing world the problems of alienation between nations may be examined through the prism of stereotypes.

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The main target of this paper is to discuss national stereotypes of Russia and Russians as means of connectedness, identity and alienation between cultures.

What is a stereotype? These are the recurring elements of life. In our view, the stereotype is included into the structure of the concept (frame) as one of its terminals (slot) and is marked as an “a priori” knowledge. Such understanding of a stereotype corresponds to the “frame” by M. Minsky (1975) and “stereotype” by H. Putnam (1975). “Minsky’s frames are equipped with *default values*. These are values for a slot that are used if no specific contextual information is supplied. For example, a default value for tigers will indicate that they are striped. A default value for gold will indicate that it is yellow. Default values define normal cases. But they can be overridden in non-normal situations. Thus, Minsky’s frames can accommodate stripeless tigers and white gold. Hilary Putnam has used the term *stereotype* for roughly what Minsky has described as a frame with default values. A *stereotype* for Putnam is an idealized mental representation of a normal case, which may not be accurate. What we have called social stereotypes are, in a sense, special cases of Putnam’s concept. In Putnam’s stereotypes, tigers have stripes and gold is yellow, despite the real-world occurrence of stripeless tigers and white gold” (Lakoff 1987, p. 116).

Where and how do we find it? We find a stereotype in a discourse frame. A stereotype is a discourse-conditioned mental-lingual construct. A certain kind of discourse poses special, peculiar only to this discourse stereotypes. This point of view is supported by the concept of discourse (and discursive process) by M. Pêcheux. According to Pêcheux, discourse is a material embodiment of ideological formation and determined by periphrastic relations ((inter)discursive processes) in a matrix of meaning inherent in a discursive formation (Pêcheux, Fuchs 1975). To our opinion stereotypes form a kind of “support” for the discourse in its development and provide the formation of the matrix of meanings. In every type of a discourse only particular frames are typically met. For example, if in an article Russian geopolitical behavior is discussed we can conclude that the frame ‘Russia – state’ is used here. The stereotypes concluded in this frame are called geopolitical as they are met in a geopolitical discourse and they are the minor terminals of the ‘Russia – state’ frame.

What stereotypes do we distinguish? P. N. Donets offers the following classification of stereotypes: personal (referring to individuals as members of certain social communities), and substantial (referring to things, events, countries, etc.); pragmatic (associated with reflection of emotions, judgments, etc.), and cognitive (reflecting purely rational information); **hetero stereotypes**, i.e., understanding of others, images of “aliens”, and **auto stereotypes**, i.e. the representation of ourselves as members of a certain ethnic group or culture, the images of “self”; intentional (deliberate) and spontaneous, positive and negative, intense and medial (Donets 2001).

Homogeneous (auto) stereotypes (self-stereotypes, i.e. stereotypes of the mother culture) are viewed as a means of connectedness. Stereotypes are, by origin, destined to reflect and to create connectedness, because they have their source in “in-group favoritism” social practice. As soon as a stereotype is born it becomes a means of

mutual understanding between the representatives of this culture. For example, in Russian culture a sense of collectivity is very strong and with it a stereotype that *only a strong political leader, a tsar, can effectively rule* is connected. So, we call this stereotype by the name the referent is marked in the Russian language – ‘tsar’. Where is it found? In a (geo)political discourse in a concept frame ‘Russia – state’.

What is ‘tsar’ for the Russians? When Russians speak about the ‘tsar’, the stereotype is marked often positively, seldom negatively. It’s a cultural homogeneous stereotype. The discourse under analysis is the American journalistic discourse, thus we deal with hetero stereotypes, but in some texts we see the endeavor of the Americans to understand the Russian culture. In ethno-linguistics the love of the Russian people to the tsar is called tsar-centrism. Stereotypes are rooted in the mentality, in the historical lifestyle of the people. Since the state was perceived by the Russian people as something alien, the relationships between them and the state were possible only due to the mediator and protector of the people – the tsar. So, it’s a characteristic of the Russian mentality to love the ruler, and Russians believed that if he punished he did it because of his ignorance or because of the intrigues of his environment, and he didn’t know the truth (Stefanenko 2003). Ineradicable belief in the tsar was shifted onto the Communist leaders, and then onto the presidents.

‘Tsar’ is a historically and culturally conditioned reality of the Russian life and Russian mentality. ‘Tsar’ is a stereotype that is a part of mega concept ‘Russia’, and is a kind of finalized knowledge (or an ‘a priori’ knowledge) about the historical forms of government in Russia, which still affects the mentality of the Russian people. The content of the stereotype ‘tsar’ may be obtained by synthesizing the most frequent meanings expressed by linguistic signs included into the syntactic structures with the word ‘tsar’. In the content of the stereotype we distinguish the notion, image and values. The notion is formed by the nuclear meanings fixed in dictionaries and most contexts; the image (or the figurative meaning) is formed by the context, i.e. the nearest syntactic environment of the word. The regulative meanings form the values of the concept.

«It is perfectly true that they are very ready to grumble – what peasantry is not? But the grievances are always laid at the door of the nearest master or official, and the fixed idea remains that if only the Father of his people knew the truth about all this he would set it right» (NYT April 9, 1882). This fragment reproduces verbatim the Russian myth: Father the Tsar (tsar-batyushka) does not know about the troubles of his people, and as soon as he finds them out, he will for sure comfort the people and ease their sufferings. An American journalist finds a good equivalent to transfer the myth – *Father of his people*. The ‘tsar’ is paternal to his subjects: *«The Czar, in his paternal tenderness for the Slave race, was ready for substantial backing»* (NYT July 19, 1853). We find the meanings ‘obedient’, ‘slavery’, ‘lazy’ in the Russian mass media discourse: *«Русские традиционно не только рабски покорны и ленивы, это еще и самый талантливый народ в мире, как никакой другой способный на аврал»* (Наша газета, 16 авг. 2005). *“The Russians are not only slavishly obedient; they are the most talented people in the world”*.

What is ‘tsar’ for the Americans? When Americans speak about the ‘tsar’ they mark it negatively, seldom positively and so we determine it as a national heterogeneous stereotype. We must state a very clear and unambiguous attribution of the concept ‘tsar’ to the Russian culture because we see that the word is borrowed. “Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English” gives the following definition of the word ‘tsar’: “tsar, czar, tzar – (until 1917) the male ruler of Russia” (LDCE 1992, p. 1139). The largest number of discourses with the included word ‘czar, tsar’ represents the first meaning of the word: “*Alexander II: The Last Great Tsar* by Edvard Radzinsky” (Free Press). “*Tsar Alexander II, who came to power in 1856, thought he would bring Russia into the modern age, but instead brought a world of hurt down on himself*” (Atlanta Journal Constitution 2005). This is the notion of the stereotype.

The image of the ‘tsar’ is identified by analyzing the meanings of the words surrounding the word ‘tsar’. First of all, in the American journalistic discourse the ‘tsar’ is endowed with social attributes of **will and power**: «*The Czar, says the News, knows our weakness; he has an eye on our one great sore, and whenever affairs in Europe come into such a state that it is not pleasant to have us watching their complications, he stretches out his Imperial finger and presses upon it till we wince*» (NYT Aug. 18, 1854). «*Then the Czar inspired South Carolina to kick up the Nullification muss, which the back-bone of General Jackson and the diminishing tariff of Mr. Clay were but just equal to*» (NYT Aug. 18, 1854); «*But Louis Napoleon is evidently by no means satisfied of the continuous support of the Czar. He is not certain that the jealous arms of Russia may not be turned against him if he shall become involved in an effort to extend his domination*» (NYT June 28, 1852). «*...and as the common soldiery believes absolutely that the Czar is the supreme and rightful disposer of events on earth, they only wait the word to march with alacrity wherever their master may bid them*» (NYT March 13, 1852).

The ‘tsar’ is endowed with social attributes of **talk**: «*Hon. Stephen A. Douglas went to Russia, and he had a good time and many a quiet and entirely confidential talk with the Czar*» (NYT Sept. 8, 1854).

The ‘tsar’ decides the questions of **war and peace**: «*The whole conduct of the negotiation had evinced a ready willingness on the part of the Czar to attain his ends by war, if not by diplomacy; and as no mediation can induce Turkey to forgo a position, for assuming and maintaining which she has secured the applause of the whole civilized world, war is the only alternative*» (NYT July 20, 1853).

The ‘tsar’ possesses vassals and empires: «*His sentiments do not concern American the people. If it should so suit him, he might proclaim himself a vassal of the Czar...*» (NYT May 31, 1853). «*The power of Russia seems really ubiquitous in the Northern hemispheres of the world. Wherever the nations turn, there they see that huge power towering and frowning before them. The Empire of the Czar marches with the most widely dissevered countries*» (NYT Oct. 28, 1852).

The 'tsar' stereotype is one of the mental constructs, which predetermine the perception of the most Russian leaders. It's a tradition to compare Lenin, Stalin and other political leaders with tsars. So, in the American journalistic discourse Stalin is called 'the Red Tsar': «*Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* by Simon Sebag Montefiore (Knopf). Montefiore uses fresh archival material to reveal more about the Soviet leader's private life and political purges and the sexual peccadilloes of his friends» (Atlanta Journal Constitution 2004). Even Chernomyrdin may be called a tsar: «*The Imperial Bank, for example, sprang from Gazprom, the gas monopoly run by oil and gas tsar Viktor Chernomyrdin before he became prime minister*» (Christian Science Monitor 1995).

The discourse, which was analyzed (the American journalistic discourse of the 19th century and the modern American journalistic discourse) suggests us an unambiguous evaluation of such a historical reality and a stereotype of Russian life as 'tsar'. The Anglo-American culture, with its liberal values, love of freedom, independence, and individualism views the tsar almost exclusively from a negative point of view. The native cultural patterns are evaluated positively; foreign cultural models are evaluated negatively. The negative evaluation of the 'tsar' stereotype is seen vividly in the associations of the 'tsar' with despotism and tyranny: «*It is but a few short years since this same Nicholas landed upon English soil. Poland then, as now, lay desolate, and Siberia was aden with the sighs of exiles. He was then **the same despot of the North, the same mereiless tyrant** he is represented now – and yeall England pored out to bid him welcome. Her armies were reviewed; her beauty and chivarly gathered to do him honor; and from one end of he island to the other, high and low vied to do him reverence, and bowed in slavish adulation before him*» (NYT Sept. 8, 1854). But there is also another tendency, which is marked by some scientists. We see the ideological confrontation between the two polar states, powers-antipodes, each of which considers itself a messianic state. The Russian messianism is associated with the Orthodox religion and the idea according to which the tsar embodies the divine will: «*It has always been the policy of the Czars to invest themselves with the peculiar **sanctity of the priesthood**, along with the imperial purple. Their manifestoes always abound with assumptions that **as the chiefs of the Holy Russian Empire, they but execute the will of the Almighty** <...> The Czar does not speak in political character. His real political designs are not referred to. **It is the head of the Church, the vicegerent of God exhorting a vast nation to do battle for their religion.** The Cross and not the black eagle is to be the blazon of the fight: it is a crusade rather than a war*» (NYT July 20, 1851).

So, let's resume. The representations of the concept-stereotype 'tsar' are the words 'tsar', 'czar'. The notional meaning of the stereotype is 'the ruler of Russia until 1917', and it is implemented in most contexts. The Russian tsar is a symbol of despotic power and it forms the content of the American stereotype 'tsar'.

In the American journalism we do not meet the images of wise tsars or zany tsars, which are characteristic of the Russian culture. However, in the discourse under analysis the concept 'tsar' is marked by the value 'father'. The power held

individually is the basis for transferring the ‘tsar’s’ values onto the other leaders – presidents, communist leaders, etc.

Heterogeneous stereotypes are “them” –stereotypes, or stereotypes of other cultures. They are close to prejudices and are considered to be mental constructs, which may be barriers for effective communication between nations. Thus they may be understood as a means of alienation. For example, the American mass media deliver a stereotype that *Russia is not democratic and doesn’t want democracy*. So, some actions of Russia may be interpreted in the way the stereotype dictates which is rather destructive for mutual understanding between the nations.

For sure, this stereotype is connected with the ‘tsar’ stereotype. The love of the Russian people to ‘tsar’, their sense of collectivity and desire to obey somebody who is strong and clever means that Russia is not ready for the responsibility of democracy. Democracy in Russia is understood as a legal foundation of a state, equality and independence for everybody (Sergeeva 2005, p. 249). Stereotypically democracy is not characteristic for Russia. It is something **new** for her: *«The danger, next time around, is that awkward questions simply won’t be asked, never mind answered. **For Russia’s nascent democracy, that would be a far greater setback than any terrorist act**»* (NW Nov. 11, 2002 p. 19).

Russian journalists are denied to talk freely about the domestic situation, and thus we conclude that democracy for the Americans is connected **with freedom of speech**. *“Russia claims to be a member of the global community of democratic nations. **But democracy is not functioning when citizens are denied basic information with which to judge the actions of their leaders.** We are often told, for example, that the Russian government’s policies in Chechnya are “popular” at home. But can we hold Russian citizens responsible for what their country does if they do not know what it is really doing?”* (WP July 10, 2009).

‘Non democratic Russia’ is a stereotype which is associated with other stereotypes, for e.g. with geopolitical stereotypes. It’s widely spread ‘a priori’ knowledge that Russia is a vast country and it’s only a strong political will that could rule effectively over such big territories. A lot of Russians think so, too. So, **Russian big territories** are responsible for the absence of democracy in this country. *«Sergei Ivanov’s bluff was immediately called by U.S. Senator John McCain. **The Arizonan had accused Putin’s regime of a «creeping coup» against democracy within Russia, as well as a campaign to intimidate and reassert control over states – from the Baltics to Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine – that our victory in the cold war had liberated from Soviet rule**»* (NYT Feb.9, 2004). Of course, for Russia, which is in real world seeking for democracy such statements may seem to be accuses. Thus, sometimes negative stereotypes do not contribute into mutual understanding between the nations.

Identity stereotypes are intermediate type of national stereotypes, which help nations to identify each other's cultural belonging. To this group refer Russian stereotypes *banya*, *balalaika*, *bear* and other stereotypes of symbolic nature.

One of the stereotypes of Russian life is a stereotype 'banya'. **What is 'banya' for the Russians?** 'The Dictionary of the Russian Language' notes that the first meaning of the word 'banya' is as follows: special building or premises where people wash and steam. *Wash in banya. Russkaya b. Finnish b. (= sauna). White b. (with a stove, the chimney of which is on the roof, as opposed to black, where the smoke goes out through the door, and that's why it's black inside). Black b.; drink tea after banya.* The second meaning is formed with the help of mental operation of analogy: just as a person in the bath is steamed, so the products are processed with steam. *Heating smth. with the steam from the boiling water, the method of preparing food. Cutlets on a steam bath. Put the pudding in a water bath.* The third meaning is of metaphorical nature: to set a bath – 'задать баню' – to punish so that the person was sweating. *About strict punishment, scolding.*

In 'The Etymological Dictionary of the Russian Language' M. Vasmer gives the etymology of the word 'banya'. The word appeared in the 11th century, in the Ukrainian, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian there was the same root with the meaning 'wash'. By M. Vasmer, the word is borrowed from Latin – (Gr. βαλανετον; French. Bain, It. Bagno) (Fasmer 1986, p. 121-122). The dictionary 'Russia' refers to the fact that the first mention of 'banya' is found in the most ancient Russian chronicles 'The Tale of Bygone Years' (12th century). Since then, the design of 'banyas' has not changed, only the furnaces are made of steel now.

Thus, the notional meaning of the stereotype 'banya' is as follows: it is a wooden building, premises, where people wash and steam. When it is hot people go sweat and such a condition is associated with a visit to 'banya'; a special treatment of something with the help of steam is also called 'banya'.

Figurative meanings of the concept are found in the combinations of the name of the concept 'banya' and different verbs and adjectives. Thus, 'banya' acquires nationality signs: 'banya' may be *Russian, Turkish, Russian, Italian, Finnish, Roman*. Bath is evaluated aesthetically – it may be *wonderful*, from the utilitarian point of view it may be *useful*. In terms of normative assessment 'banya' may be *real, good*. The highest 'banya' evaluation is *super, excellent* 'banya'.

A good 'banya' is *well heated* and happens *on Saturdays*. From the time point of view there is a *weekly* 'banya', *regular* 'banya', *Christmas* 'banya'. 'Banya' is differentiated by gender: there are 'banyas' *for men*. Socially 'banyas' are divided into 'banyas' *for sailors*, *public* 'banyas', special 'banya' *for strollers*, *liberal* (not overheated), *own* 'banya'. 'Banyas' differ on the basis of locus – there are *city* 'banyas', but, as a rule, 'banya' is located *in the country, in the village*. From a geographical point of view *Siberian / Moscow* 'banyas' are distinguished.

Numerous contexts actualize the hedonic signs of 'banya' concept. 'Banya' brings a good mood, fun. 'Banya' has a direct access to the Russian soul. In our opinion, the denominative sentences are one of the syntactic forms of the stereotype actualization. In such sentences the connection of several stereotypes often happens: «*Dacha-banya-sneg-motocikli-otdih!*» (Komsomolskaya Pravda, 2006.02.28.)

Thus, it is possible to identify the chain of associations, containing the stereotypes associated with a specific concept. The chain 'Russia – Siberia – snow – 'banya' – vodka – dacha – samovar' may be updated in the discourse in the reverse order. In the discourse we may see an incomplete chain of associations, where the other stereotypical elements may be recovered from the context. For example: '*And what about this strange sauna where naked women beat naked men with brooms, then kick them into the cold water and give them vodka to drink?*' 'Banya' – *I laugh. 'Wonderful!'* (Komsomolskaya Pravda, 2007.03.23.)

'Banya' is considered to be a symbol of Russia. '*Whatever you say, vodka is a symbol of Russia, as well as 'banya', caviar and beauties in the headdress*' (Trud-7, 2007.01.31). These fragments demonstrate the relationship of the 'banya' stereotype with the other stereotypical elements of Russian life, such as caviar, icons, spinning-wheels, samovars, sledding, pelmeni, borscht. Some of these stereotypes are the symbols of Russia and numerous cultural meanings are attached to them. These symbols refer in general to the concept 'Russia'. Each of them is related to the central Russian concept 'Russian soul'.

In Russian culture 'banya' involves a lot of regulatory meanings. Thus, the dictionary 'Slavic Antiquities' shows the importance of Russian 'banya' in each stage of life – birth, marriage, death. 'Banya' is a place of devilry (a specific sort of evil spirit live in 'banya'), illness is left there, and the dirt is washed off and left there. 'Banya' is a place of deals with the devil, a place for divination and witchcraft.

The value component of the concept 'banya' is found in proverbs and sayings of the Russian people and phraseology. Phraseological unit 'to set a banya' has a meaning 'to strongly criticize, scold', in the same sense we use synonymous units «давать духу», «давать пару», «давать жару», «давать жизни». The Russians say *С лёгким паром!* 'enjoy your bath' *Прилип как банный лист* 'cling like a leaf from a birch broom'. Anteroom is a room behind the room of a boss.

So, the value component of the concept 'banya' is as follows: purification brings health; a process that is perceived as flushing off the evil may be not only physical, but also a spiritual cleansing. 'Banya' is not a place for human; it's a place of 'alternative' human existence where a human is only a guest, a visitor.

What is ‘banya’ for the Americans? The consideration of the concept ‘banya’ as a stereotype of Russian life in the American discourse should begin with indicating the status of this concept in the American culture. ‘Banya’ refers to the Russian cultural concepts, i.e. those that have a great significance for a definite (Russian) culture.

In the American English the stereotype ‘banya’ is represented by the borrowed word «banya». The exotic nature of the reality is emphasized by the borrowed word. So in the texts of the American journalistic discourse the word ‘banya’ is often surrounded by the synonymous language means. In English, the token «bath» is a means of explaining the concept ‘banya’. «Bath» (as we understand it) is a bathtub; the vocabulary fixes such phrases as *steam bath, Turkish bath, the bath of blood* (the latter is the same as the *bloodbath* in the Russian language).

‘The Etymological Dictionary of the English Language’ points out the Indo-European root *bhe – ‘to warm’ with the meaning ‘heat without water immersion’ (www.etimonline.com). The English word ‘bath’ is not enough to adequately update the concept, often additional methods of designating the stereotype are used: «*Throughout the New York City there are a handful of banyas, traditional Eastern European bath houses that can make for a hot date, literally, for those who know each other well*» (NYT Feb.11, 2011).

Different definitions attribute such conceptual features to ‘banya’ as: *traditional, Eastern European, Russian, Russian sauna*. So, the nationality of ‘banya’ is reduced up to ‘Russian’. Other ‘banya’ concept values are not as rife as in the Russian ‘banya’ concept. It is *wooden, steam bath, hot, nice, is located in the country, peasant, Slavonic*.

Since the concept is not well-known for the Americans in the American discourse the verbalization of the frame in whole is relevant: ‘Bath – brooms – stones – steam – hot – cold – vodka – washes – treats’: «*The idea for the **bath house, Russian Bath**, was born in 1980, when a friend told him about an apartment building in Sheepshead Bay that had an unused swimming pool in the basement. As far as Mr. Zaslavsky knew, south Brooklyn had no **Russian baths, or banyas**, as they are called, despite the fact that the area was home to a growing number of immigrants from the former Soviet republics. He leased the space, cleaned out the pool, and added the **steam rooms and saunas** that transformed the facility into a **traditional banya**, complete with **fiery rocks** over which water is poured to create **steam***» (NYT May 22, 2005).

In some discourses some frame elements may be omitted and it is important to note that the frame includes not only ‘banya’s’ articles, but also virtual components. The traditional character of ‘banya’ is emphasized; in ‘banya’ a special Russian discourse has developed; ‘banya’s’ ability to heal the body and soul is outlined. ‘Banya’ has been the focus of Russian life for centuries. «*...The **banya**, with its attendant rituals of eating, sleeping and massages, has been a focus of Russian life for centuries*» (NYT Dec. 21, 1997).

In addition, numerous fragments show how to wash in 'banya': «*The damp heat inside the **wood**-lined banya, or Russian steam bath, was prodigious. It stung the eyes and the flesh of the seven people who were sitting in their bathing suits, dripping sweat. "You are going to sit here," said Alex Beigelman, a 46-year-old office manager, explaining the process. "Then you take a **brush of leaves** and rub yourself ..." With that Mr. Beigelman **took a squat bouquet of brownish oak leaves soaked in water, waved it majestically and brought it flopping down on the back of his 25-year-old son, Eugene. After a few minutes the younger Mr. Beigelman left the banya and jumped into a cold pool***» (NYT 21 Dec. 1997).

There are fragments that describe 'banya' design: «*Inside a cabin with a sun porch on one side, there is a small parilka, or steam room, with stones heated by a wood fire ...*» (NYT July 8, 2007). Bath is a cause for borrowing other Russian words: parilka, bling, borsht, dacha, vodka, troika. These realities are included in the 'banya' frame because they are Russian, too, and could be met together.

'Banya' is endowed with sacredness. In 1994 the American magazine «Newsweek» published an excerpt from Boris Yeltsin's memoirs 'The Struggle for Russia'. This publication describes how in a crowded Moscow 'banya' an inspiration came to Boris Yeltsin: he is no longer a Communist. There has been a kind of reincarnation: a member of the Politburo, Yeltsin became a politician: «*It Happened in a Steam Room. The year was 1989, and political maverick Boris Yeltsin had just returned from his first visit to the United States. In a crowded Moscow **banya**, revived by the goodwill of ordinary Russians, Yeltsin suddenly realized that he was no longer a communist. "That moment in the banya was when I changed my world view," he writes in his new memoir, "The Struggle for Russia." Yeltsin's book, exclusively excerpted in the pages that follow, is a deeply personal account of his pilgrimage from the comfortable clubhouse of the Soviet Politburo to the raw and risky frontier of political and economic reform*» (NW May 2, 1994).

Thus, the analysis of the two concepts, cultural stereotypes 'banya' in the Russian and English languages, allows us to make some conclusions about the differences in the perception of Russian 'banya' by the representatives of different linguistic cultures. The meaning of the word 'banya' is revealed through an inadequate equivalent 'bath' and a stereotype 'banya', which describes the washing procedure in the Russian 'banya'. The figurative meanings of 'banya' are not as diverse as in the structure of Russian 'banya' concept. In the American journalistic discourse 'banya' is practically always Russian. The value of the concept is represented in Russian proverbs and sayings; banya has the status of a stereotype, as it is revealed through the procedure of washing in 'banya' and it is contained in the frame 'banya', which is represented in the narratives 'I was attending a Russian 'banya' or 'how to construct and what they do in the Russian 'banya'.

Thus, we suggest

1) to view a stereotype as a concept (frame) terminal. Each type of frames appear in specific discourses: in geopolitical and political discourses we find geopolitical and political frames, geopolitical and political stereotypes. 'Tsar' stereotype is found in 'Russia – state' frame in a (geo)political discourse, 'no democracy' stereotype is found in 'Russia – state' frame in a political discourse, 'banya' stereotype is found in 'Russia – country' frame in a socio-cultural discourse;

2) to qualify stereotypes according to the culture they describe and belong to. Auto stereotypes are positively marked and describe our own cultures; they contribute to the nation connectedness. Heterogeneous stereotypes describe the perception of our cultures by the representatives of other countries. Until they do not describe politics they may be neutral and thus they identify a nationality (as in the case with 'banya'). Once they deal with politics and ideologies they acquire a negative mark and may become a means of alienation (as in the case of 'no democracy' stereotype).

So, in the globalizing world the problems of alienation between nations may be examined through the prism of stereotypes investigation.

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