

Chen Yao
Perm State University
Perm, Russian Federation
chen.yao@yandex.ru

Perceptions of Chinese women and men character: A cross-group study

Abstract

This article explores the auto- and hetero-stereotypes of Chinese women and men character. Autostereotype is compared to heterostereotype. The focus is made on detailed description of the informants' reactions, identification of similarities and differences in auto- and heterostereotypes of the two sexes. The material for the study was collected during sociolinguistic experiment conducted in the form of a questionnaire with 60 Chinese participants (30 women and 30 men). As a result, 288 reactions about Chinese women character and 304 reactions about Chinese men character were obtained. The analysis showed that, in general, auto- and hetero-stereotypes about Chinese women character were similar, the core of stereotypes being formed by the same character traits (Chinese women are gentle, kind and caring). In addition, female autostereotype was more positive than heterostereotype. Auto- and hetero-stereotypes about Chinese men character were not similar. Due to a large set of individual reactions in the two types of stereotypes structure, it was impossible to identify the core and the middle zone. Chinese men autostereotype was less positive than heterostereotype. The share of negative reactions in Chinese men's stereotypes about themselves and Chinese women proves critical attitude of Chinese men towards themselves and others. In general, it can be said that the ideas about Chinese women character are more stereotyped than those of Chinese men.

Keywords: character, autostereotype, heterostereotype, Chinese, men, women, semantic feature

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