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Features of Evaluation of Various Components of Ethnocultural Types of Facial Appearance as a Manifestation of the Discriminating Relation

The article deals with the phenomenon of evaluation of ethnocultural types of facial appearance from a position of the psychology of social knowledge. The article brings forward the results of the comparative analysis of esthetic evaluation of attractiveness and the degree of equivalence of various components (face, constitution, appearance) of ethnocultural types of facial appearance to gender; these are "Slavic type of appearance", "Caucasian type of appearance", and "Asian type of appearance". On the basis of 30 kinds of evaluation of facial appearance types the authors have made the following conclusions: they evaluate facial appearance on the basis of own belonging to a certain ethnocultural type; more often young people discriminate against the persons with "Asian type of appearance"; the gender of the evaluation object influences the expressiveness of discrimination.

Key words: *evaluation, ethnocultural type, appearance, discrimination relation.*

The social psychology of facial appearance developed by both foreign and domestic psychologists [6, 8, 10, 12, 15] has adapted various theoretical approaches to understanding functions of facial appearance in the person's space of being. One of them is the approach created within the psychology of social knowledge which applies to the processes of categorization, identification, evaluation and emphasizes understanding of the problems of cognition of the social phenomena reflecting the direct life experience of each person and various social groups [2]. What are the factors influencing the processes of categorization, evaluation of social phenomena and objects of an "ordinary" person? This question remains urgent at the present time.

The list of sociocultural objects and phenomena includes facial appearance, categorization, interpretation which evaluation is carried out throughout the whole life of a person; from a position of the psychology of social knowledge its evaluation is under the influence of a sociocultural situation and the system of values corresponding to it. Many researchers assert that negative images, stereotypes, prejudices, which grow out of comparison, evaluation of social objects, are included into the structure of the discrimination relation to Another as cognitive components. Studying these phenomena can define the degree of expressiveness of the discrimination relation. Considering the above, it is possible to say that features of evaluation of facial appearance are indicators of the expressiveness of the discrimination relation to Another.

For the last decades they started to study the problem of the evaluation of facial appearance as manifestations of the relation to Another not only in the



context of interpersonal communication [7, 10], but also in the context of intergroup interaction. The person's facial appearance consisting of various components tends to become a subject of empirical researches in the field of ethnic and cross-cultural psychology. They know that the construction of facial appearance according to the requirements of an ethnic group is one of the most widespread ordinary practices of own ethnic identity demonstration [1, 11]. The alienation from an ethnic group is accompanied, first of all, by the change of facial appearance and it is not less important. Conclusions of the works [4] where they consider ethnic motives of change of facial appearance indicate this; these motives are actualized by the goals of adaptation to the new foreign cultural environment, and also by lookism manifestations (appearance discrimination) [12, 14, 16] which intensify in a situation of perception of the facial appearance atypical in the ethnocultural plan.

In modern works they pay attention not only to a racial type of facial appearance and features of its perception, but also to types of facial appearance of the people, differing by the degree of expressiveness of certain traits. The conclusion that features of facial appearance make it possible to distinguish friend from foe is constantly confirmed in researches and is supplemented with the thoughts that the image of facial appearance "... is a structural component of consciousness of the member of each national and historical community" [8, p. 238].

During the study of various mechanisms of intergroup perception they have revealed a number of phenomena: "physiognomic reductionism" [1], "cross-racial effect" [8], "facial appearance discrimination in various spheres of life activity" [12, 14, 16]. Researchers, considering achievements of modern psychology, apply to the study of the features of perception of racial types of facial appearance [3], study of anthropo-aesthetic preferences in various ethnoterritorial groups [8], to consideration of microdynamics of the assessment of individual and psychological features of representatives of various racial groups [5], and also the study of empathy in situations of interaction with the representative of another culture [9]. Besides until recently, social psychologists pay little attention the problem of the evaluation of types of facial appearance which categorization is carried out on the basis of ordinary labels, for example, "persons of Caucasian nationality", "people of Slavic appearance". These designations of facial appearance types penetrate into various spheres of life activity, resulting, according to B.N. Yarskaya [13], in escalation of a "racist discourse", actualization of negative attitudes towards representatives of ethnocultural groups, formation of the "hostility language". The researches carried out in the Moscow subway, which are cited by V. Manukyan (2008)", have showed that among the people with "non-Slavic type of facial appearance" the risk to be stopped by the police officer is 22 times higher than among the persons with Slavic type of facial appearance. Such facts state a problem of studying of estimations of types of facial appearance as lookism manifestation, i.e. the discrimination of Another



generated by the features of facial appearance fixed in the phrases entering into the "racist discourse". This problem acquires special urgency in those regions of Russia where various ethnocultural groups differing by a facial appearance type live. The Southern federal district, where, speaking ordinary language, "persons of Slavic type of appearance", "persons of Caucasian type of appearance", and "persons of Asian type of appearance" traditionally live, is one of such regions. In scientific literature these types of facial appearance are named as "Slavic type of facial appearance", "Caucasian type of facial appearance", "Asian type of facial appearance".

Thus, the research purpose is a definition of features of evaluation of various components of ethnocultural types of facial appearance as a manifestation of the discriminating relation. Considering the gender discourse influence on the processes of categorization, comparisons, and evaluation, the research hypothesis was formulated as follows: the estimations of facial appearance may be caused by its belonging to a certain ethnocultural type and may differ in result of the influence of a gender of the object of evaluation.

The research procedure and techniques

At the first investigation phase by means of the technique "Identification of visual representations of ethnocultural types of facial appearance" developed on the basis of the technique of K.I. Ananyev [3] we have showed photos of a woman's and man's face of a northern Russian, southern Asian, and Caucasian type. The research participants had to correlate the photos of various types of facial appearance to such verbal designations as "Slavic facial appearance", "Caucasian facial appearance" and "Asian facial appearance". At this investigation phase we have obtained the data which testify to the effect that the participants of research (more than 90 %) clearly correlate verbal designations of facial appearance types to their visual representations; otherwise, they have made the images of "Slavic, Caucasian and Asian types of facial appearance". Therefore, at the following investigation phases it was possible to refuse visual representations of facial appearance types and to use their designations which actualize the created images and emotional and evaluative judgments entering into them. At the second investigation phase we have used the questionnaire created on the basis of the technique "Estimated and intensional interpretation of facial appearance and its correspondence to gender and age constructs" developed by V.A. Labunskaya [6, 7]. The difference between the questionnaire and the basic technique is that in the questionnaire facial appearance types: "Slavic facial appearance", "Caucasian facial appearance", "Asian facial appearance" are the objects of evaluation. We have offered the participants of research to estimate the degree of correspondence of judgments to a certain type of facial appearance according to the 10 scoring system. In this research the judgments are grouped according to the main functions of facial appearance considered in a number of works [6, 10, 12, 15]. First of all, these are esthetic functions of



facial appearance: beautiful – ugly, and also emotional and esthetic functions: expressive – inexpressive; attractive – not attractive; charming – charming. This type of judgments was called “An esthetic evaluation of facial appearance”. The function of regulation of relations and relationship, including relations between men and women, is also an important function of facial appearance. This function of facial appearance is traditionally called “An appeal of facial appearance to the opposite sex”. Together with it they attribute the function of construction of the gender and the “masculinity – femininity” representation is attributed to facial appearance [12, 15]. In the research this function is called “The degree of correspondence of facial appearance to the gender”. The participants of research have had to evaluate facial appearance types on the basis of the judgments reflecting basic functions of three components of facial appearance: face, constitution, appearance. Besides, the research participants have evaluated facial appearance types proceeding from their gender belonging. Thus, in result of the study of estimations of facial appearance and its components (“Slavic facial appearance (a woman, a man)”, “Caucasian facial appearance (a woman, a man)”, “Asian facial appearance (a woman, a man)”) we have received 30 types of estimations: “esthetic estimations of face, constitution, appearance”; “estimations of attractiveness of facial appearance for the opposite sex”; “estimations of correspondence of facial appearance to the gender (masculinity – femininity of facial appearance).

For the purpose of definition of distinctions between estimations of “Slavic facial appearance” (men – women), “Caucasian facial appearance” (men – women), and “Asian facial appearance” (men – women) we have used Wilcoxon’s nonparametric Z-criterion (SPSS 16.00 program).

Students – 37 women and 15 men at the age from to 25 years – took part in the research; the majority of these students identify themselves with the ethnic group “Russians”.

Results and conclusions

The comparative analysis of 30 types of estimations of the types of facial appearance belonging to certain ethnocultural groups has showed that there are significant distinctions (at $p < 0,001$) in estimations of types of facial appearance of women and men belonging to certain ethnocultural groups.

1. “Esthetic estimations of face” of women representatives of “Slavic type of facial appearance” are significantly higher than “Esthetic estimations of face” of women representatives of “Asian and Caucasian types of facial appearance” ($Z = -5,758$; $Z = -4,251$). “Esthetic estimates of face” of women representatives of “Caucasian type of facial appearance” are significantly higher than “Esthetic estimations of face” of women representatives of “Asian type of facial appearance” ($Z = -3,826$). The same regularity is in esthetic estimations of the constitution of women representatives of “Slavic, Caucasian and Asian types of facial appearance” ($Z = -3,838$; $Z = -5,156$; $Z = -1,930$ at $p = 0,054$).



2. Significant distinctions are also found in estimations of appearance (clothes, hairstyle, make-up, and other accessories). "Esthetic estimations of appearance" of women representatives of "Slavic type of facial appearance" are significantly above than "Esthetic estimations of appearance" of women representatives of "Asian and Caucasian types of facial appearance" ($Z = -4,628$; $Z = -5,045$). Unlike the data given above we did not find distinctions between "Esthetic estimations of appearance" of women representatives of "Asian and Caucasian types of facial appearance".

3. "Esthetic estimations of face" of men representatives of "Slavic type of facial appearance" are significantly higher, than "Esthetic estimations of face" of men representatives of "Asian and Caucasian types of facial appearance" ($Z = 3,748$; $Z = 5,713$). "Esthetic estimations of face" of men representatives of "Caucasian type of facial appearance" are significantly higher than "Esthetic estimations of face" of men representatives of "Asian type of facial appearance" ($Z = -2,593$). The same regularity is in esthetic estimations of the constitution of men representatives of "Slavic, Caucasian and Asian types of facial appearance". The constitution of the men belonging to "Slavic type of facial appearance" is estimated significantly higher than the constitution of the men belonging to "Asian and Caucasian types of facial appearance" ($Z = -3,431$; $Z = -5,356$). "Esthetic estimations of appearance" of men representatives of "Slavic type of facial appearance" are significantly above than "Esthetic estimations of appearance" of men representatives of "Asian and Caucasian types of facial appearance" ($Z = 3,748$; $Z = 5,713$).

4. We have found significant distinctions between "Estimations of attractiveness of types of facial appearance for the opposite sex". Estimations of attractiveness of female and male Slavic type of facial appearance for the opposite sex" are significantly higher, than "Estimations of attractiveness of female and male Caucasian and Asian types of facial appearance for the opposite sex" (at $p < 0,001$). The lowest "Estimations of attractiveness of facial appearance for the opposite sex" are obtained by the female and male type of Asian facial appearance.

5. "Degree of correspondence of facial appearance to the gender (masculinity – femininity)" was also estimated depending on a facial appearance type. "The female Slavic type of facial appearance" is estimated as more feminine than "the female Caucasian and Asian types of facial appearance" ($Z = -4,720$; $Z = -6,126$). "The male Slavic type of facial appearance" gets more estimations of correspondence to the gender (masculinity), than "the male Caucasian and Asian types of facial appearance", but "the male Caucasian type of facial appearance" is estimated as more courageous, than "the male Asian type of facial appearance" (at $p < 0,001$).

Conclusion

Thus, in result of the carried out research we have revealed that the discrimination relation to groups with a certain type of facial appearance is expressed



in various levels of estimations of components of facial appearance and in such its integrated characteristics as attractiveness of facial appearance to another person, masculinity–femininity presentation. The revealed manifestations of discrimination belong to the sphere of prejudices. These prejudices are that Russian students (the majority of the research participants) consider that both men and women having “Slavic type of facial appearance” are more beautiful, attractive, charming, attractive to another person, more masculine or feminine, than the persons of “Caucasian or Asian type of facial appearance”. The discrimination relation presented in different types of estimations was shown to people with “Asian type of facial appearance” in a greater degree.

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