

Stereotypes and generalisations

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Observing One of the causes from which wrong communication can arise lies in the fact that everyone observes in a different manner.

A couple of small exercises for the illustration:

- Draw from your head the logo of the National Railway Company. Compare your drawing with your neighbour. What does it say about your perception?
- Look 30 seconds out of the window. Write on what you have seen. Compare your list with your neighbour. Are there differences?

Meanings

Words may have different meanings, but also appeal to different associations. There is a difference between the bald meaning of a word and the associative meaning.

The bald meaning is where the word refers, e.g. mountain village is a village in the mountains.

The associative meaning are the ideas/thoughts, feelings and perception which a word can question.

Instruction

Which bald meaning and which associative meaning will you give to the following words: mountain village, apple, water, sex, peace. Compare the meanings in a subgroup.

Stereotypes

People find their own culture always "normal". Logically, the values and standards in which you are raised are obvious for you. The moment you are faced with groups of people which have other values and standards, you want to find a declaration for that difference. When do you speak of stereotyping?

Stereotyping is attributing personal properties or singularities to [all] members of a certain group. Characterising for stereotypes

is that they are recognizable for many people.

There exists therefore a certain consensus about it. Stereotypes which attribute invariable characteristics or moods/feelings to groups, support racist or sexist judgements, for example: 'Moslems are cruel' or 'women are sensitive'.

Other examples:

- Belgians always eat French fries (chips)
- Dutch are stingy
- Women cannot drive cars
- Moroccan young people are aggressive
- Chinese people are intelligent?
- Blonde women are stupid?
- A woman with a hijab is not emancipated
- Antilleans can dance complete well.
- Gypsies are robbers
- Fat people are sociable people