



**Andrew HOWARD**  
English Language Fellow  
Urgench State University



**Feruza MASHARIPOVA**  
Senior English Language Teacher  
Urgench State University  
[masharipova07@gmail.com](mailto:masharipova07@gmail.com)

## 'STEREOTYPES' LESSON: AN EXAMPLE OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

Ушбу мақола тил ўрганишда *коммуникатив ёндашув* оркали эришиладиган таълимий мақсадларнинг қисқача тавсифи билан бошланади. Бунга қўшимча равишда коммуникатив тил ўргатиш маданиятлараро бир-бирини тушуниш умумий концепциясига асосланган бир неча дарслар тавсифи ва стереотиплар тўғрисидаги махсус тасаввурлар асосида иллюстрация қилинган. Ушбу ғоя халқаро микёсда, Марказий Осиё ва Ўзбекистоннинг ички бозорида қўлланилади. Дарс саккизта Европа мамлакатларидаги стереотиплар тақдироти билан бошланади.

Статья начинается с краткого обзора образовательных ценностей коммуникативного подхода к изучению языка. В дополнении к этому проиллюстрировано применение КМО (коммуникативный метод обучения) на основе описания нескольких уроков, основанных на общей концепции межкультурного понимания, и специфическое представление о стереотипах. Идея применяется на международном уровне, на региональном уровне в Центральной Азии и в Узбекистане. Урок начинается с презентации примеров стереотипов в восьми европейских странах.

This article begins by briefly reviewing the educational values behind a communicative approach to language learning. It then illustrates an application of CLT by describing a set of lessons based on the general concept of *intercultural awareness*, and the specific idea of *stereotypes*. The idea is applied internationally, regionally in Central Asia, and domestically

within Uzbekistan. The lesson begins with a PPT demonstrating examples of stereotyping among 8 European countries.

**Калит сўзлар:** стереотиплар, маданиятлараро мулоқотни хабардорлик, танкидий фикрлаш, ўхшашлик, коммуникатив тил ўқитиш, интеграллашган тил кўникмалари.

**Ключевые слова:** стереотипы, межкультурная осведомлённость, критическое мышление, индивидуальность, КМО (коммуникативный метод обучения), интегрированные навыки.

**Key words:** stereotypes; intercultural awareness; critical thinking; identity, CLT, Integrated Skills.

By now, it is a commonplace observation that English is becoming a virtual lingua franca, a second language for people all over the world. The value of language learning is not to be able to answer questions about the language, but to be able to use the language for real communicative and learning purposes. In their past schooling up to university level, students in Uzbekistan have had very little opportunity to use English in this way. However, following the famous presidential decree #1875 in 2012, which recognized the importance of teaching English, efforts have been continually made to update and strengthen methods of teaching English. In our Integrated Skills classes, our approach is built on the framework of the PRESETT curriculum, piloted in 2007 and launched nationwide in 2013. We have tried to provide opportunities for students to practice all language skills while presenting topics of common intercultural interest. Students here have a strong interest in other cultures, especially modern western cultures. So using English to explore such themes is a natural way for students to practice and learn the language, reinforce language skills, and develop intercultural knowledge all at once, in a motivating context. This is how we strive to achieve the goal of using English for real communicative and learning purposes.

In using a non-native language, there are the dual problems of 'what to say', and 'how to say it'. By using common topics already familiar to students, such as family, relationships, food, etc, they can draw on their own experiences for content ['what to say']. This also often provides motivation, by giving opportunities for genuine self-expression. For example, in an early lesson on relationships, we read excerpts from people talking about important photographs they keep. We showed our own family photographs, and spoke about when they were taken and why they were important to us. Students had the task of bringing a photo of someone important to them, and sharing it with the class by speaking about the relevant 5W interrogative questions [who what when where why]. This was an assignment that

all students could complete with enthusiasm and we think it also helped group unity, since it allowed students to learn more about their groupmates, who were still relatively new to one another.

A major theme of our class is intercultural awareness. As noted above, it is always useful to start from the known [students' personal knowledge] and build outward from that framework. We created an arc of lessons building from the idea of *personal* identity [what makes you *you*?] to the idea of a *national* identity, then applied that to countries known [Uzbekistan] and less well known [western English-speaking countries]. Students did group work projects and presentations on these topics. We capped this off with a pair of lessons about *stereotypes* that tried to illuminate the concept and have students recognize the almost inevitable functioning of this response to contact with outside groups, whether halfway around the globe, or within your own country's borders. Students naturally have some instinctive awareness of this notion, but examining it in detail builds up their intercultural awareness, self-awareness, and encourages critical thinking as well.

The first lesson begins with a short PPT we created, based on a single chart about European stereotypes – views that 8 European countries had about each other regarding the traits of *trustworthiness*, *arrogance*, and *compassion*. The data in the chart is presented in restricted sets, to highlight different aspects of the overall data and to show some consistent patterns not readily evident when viewing the entire chart at once. The objective of this introduction is to demonstrate concretely the widespread and persistent existence of national stereotypes.

After this introductory presentation, we put students to work with some activities taken from a lesson plan about stereotypes created by Sarah Sahr (2) (*Lesson Plan: Stereotyping* TESOL Connections, February 2013). The crux of these activities is to have individual students generate common views about people and cultures in different regions of the world, then as a class, identify the regions to which they apply, and work with partners and small groups to organize them into positive and negative characteristics. See the following lesson plan for details.

At several stages of the activity, students must get up and move around the classroom to complete various tasks. Sometimes students are initially uncomfortable doing this, since it breaks the traditional model of sitting and passively receiving information from the teacher. However, by involving students in different ways, mentally and physically, their engagement with the material is deeper, and learning retention is strengthened. This is one of the foundations of a learner-centered approach to language teaching.

The next lesson continues the examination of stereotypes, but it brings it closer to home. We begin by dividing the class into two groups, representing Central Asia and the Rest of the World. If possible, move the two groups physically apart. Using labels written on cards is a useful aid. Sub-divide the 'Rest of World' group by handing out some cards labeled with the names of 5-6 countries of some interest to students, such as USA, Russia, China, Korea, Germany, Great Britain, Dubai, etc. However, do not use any Central Asian countries. After giving some time for talking it over in their groups, have the two sides offer their opinions about the other side, and put them on the board. Central Asia side gives its views of the different countries used for Rest of the World, and you can give those countries a chance to respond if you want.

The harder part is for the Rest of the World side to give its views about Central Asia, because this asks students to imagine how other parts of the world view them, and they may well have little idea about this.

The next step is to divide the whole class into five groups, each representing one of the 5 countries of Central Asia. Write the five country names on the board and give each group a sign. In turn, ask students to talk about people from each of the other countries, and write their views on the board. For example, 'what do you all think of people from Tajikistan? What are they like? good/bad aspects, etc. Then give the Tajik group a chance to respond. This is the liveliest part of the lesson and generates lots of discussion back and forth.

Finally, bring the lesson even closer to home. Have students form groups to represent several different regions of Uzbekistan – Tashkent, Fergana Valley, Khorezm, Karakalpakstan, Silk Road cities. Repeat the process used above to solicit opinions about how people in Uzbekistan may view each other.

This look at stereotypes introduces the concept, takes it worldwide, then brings it back right into the students' own home. They see that what they are learning is not just about 'other people', other places; it is also about themselves. In this article, we focused on the Stereotype lessons as a clear example of the approach we want to use, not just to have students learn a new language, but to have students use a new language to learn.

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