Representations about Friend and Enemy at Different Life-span Stages

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Abstract

The aim of our research was to study the representations of real personalities, who belong to a certain society or social stratum etc. The everyday representations of Enemy and Friend are formed within the everyday communication, and include the following components: Representations about the relation system of Friend and Enemy towards the Other; Representations of Enemy and Friend’s appearance; Representations of the gender specific characteristics of Enemy and Friend. The study is aimed to define the impact of life-span stage on social-psychological content of representation about Friend and Enemy. The study is aimed to define the impact of life-span stage on social-psychological content of representation about Friend and Enemy. 500 participants at different life-span stages were interviewed with original structured interview. The results revealed several representation types. Representations about Friend and Enemy differ in 1) intensity of positive and negative attitudes towards others; 2) degree of negativity – positivity of other’s appearance evaluation; 3) level of feminisation – masculinisation of others.

Keywords: representation types of Enemy and Friend, formal and content transformations of representations, life-span stages

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1. Theoretical ideas

At the beginning of the article, I’d like to indicate some theoretical ideas which constitute the basis of the research of the everyday representations of Enemy and Friend at different stages of the life span. First: the phenomena «Enemy» and «Friend» function in the system of the intergroup and interpersonal relations independently from cultural, historical, social and economic situation and the level of the society

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In the contemporary social psychology it is established that the image of the Other (personality, group) depends on the dynamics of the individual and collective interpretations of the basic interrelated categories «we-they», «native-foreign», «friend-enemy» [6], [7], [8].

**Second:** in Humanities there is a representation of Enemy and Friend as the dichotomous and simultaneously complementary socio-cultural constructs. But in Social Psychology we can find a stable tendency to pay more attention to the researches that analyze representations of Friend associated with positive interrelations. From our point of view, it is necessary to study the representations of Enemy in order to understand adequately the social relations, because mutual dislike and hostility are parts of the human life.

Therefore, we suppose that the socio-cultural constructs «Friend» and «Enemy» could be defined as representations, which are simultaneously different, connected, and complementary, which do not exist separately from one another.

**Third:** the everyday representations of Enemy and Friend are determined by us as emotional and cognitive phenomena, reflecting the interpretation of the socio-cultural constructs «Enemy» and «Friend» [9], [3], [8]. They are complementary, changing emotional – cognitive phenomena that include the complex of the socio-psychological characteristics: personal features, functions, communication positions, system of relations, interpretation of the actions, appearance.

We are interested, first and foremost, in formal and content transformations of everyday representations of Enemy and Friend, as the subjects of the communication. This perspective of studies is chosen because the everyday representations of Enemy and Friend are formed within the everyday communication, and because this type of representations includes a range of the attitudes towards the Other. The everyday representations of Enemy and Friend contain characteristics of the appearance. The characteristics of the gender identity are incorporated into the representation of Enemy and Friend along with the above mentioned components.

Formal and content changes of the representations are considered as indicators of changes in representations of Enemy and Friend: disappearance /extension, shifting of the elements and their groups from the core to the periphery and vice versa.

### 1.2. Hypotheses of the research:

We suggested that the types of everyday representations of Enemy and Friend differ by the modality and intensity of attitudes, characteristics of the femininity-masculinity and the degrees of the positive-negative evaluation of the appearance subcategories.

### 1.3. Research Methods:

1. Questionnaire «Identification of the Other as Enemy or Friend» of Labunskaya V., Tulinova D[10].
2. Modification of Timothy Leary’s «Interpersonal Behavior Circle»
3. Gender semantic differential, developed on the basis of «The Bem Sex Role Inventory»
4. Questionnaire «Value and Content Interpretation of The Appearance Components» of V. Labunskaya[10].

### 1.4. Components of the representations of Enemy and Friend.

As I have already mentioned, we consider three components of the representations of Enemy and Friend in our research. The first component – the representation of the relation system of Enemy or Friend towards the Other: 1) Questionnaire «Identification of the Other as Enemy or Friend» of V. Labunskaya, D. Tulinova was used to measure this component of the everyday representations of Enemy and Friend. The questionnaire allows to indicate the presence or absence of real Enemies and Friends in the real life of the research participants, their social roles and spheres of communication; 2) Interpersonal Behavior Circle of Timothy Leary.

The second component is the evaluation of Friend’s and Enemy’s appearance. To study the degree of the negative-positive evaluation of Friend’s and Enemy’s appearance we used the questionnaire «Value and content interpretation of the appearance components» of V. Labunskaya. This questionnaire allows to measure: 1)
value-content interpretation of the physical, social, and expressive subcategories of appearance; 2) evaluation of the correspondence of appearance to age, gender, role and status aspects.

The third component is representations of Enemy’s and Friend’s gender characteristics. This component was examined with the help of the semantic differential, elaborated on the basis of the Bem Sex Role Inventory. According to the purposes of research following statistical methods were administered: frequency analysis, the procedure of interquartile range, factor analysis and computed by SPSS 13.0 for Windows.

1.5. Sample:
500 (300 females and 200 males) participants at different stages of the life span took part in our research: youth (20-25 years), adulthood (26-44 years), maturity (45-60 years old).

1.6. Results
Statistical analysis at the first stage of the research has revealed that the most of the participants have both Friends and Enemies. While achieving the maturity stage, the number of the respondents, identifying Others as Friends reduces, and the number of the respondents who consider Others as Enemies increases.

At the second stage of our research we administered the factor analysis and the procedure of the interquartile range of the factor weights of the combined indexes of the attitude intensity, evaluation of appearance, masculinity and femininity within each factor and specified the types of the representations. We discovered three types of the representations about the Enemy: 1) «Enemy – traitor» type describes an insincere, egoistic, suspicious, dependent person; he/she is unsatisfied by his/her appearance; he/she has an androgyny type of gender identity. 2) «Enemy – adversary» type describes an authoritarian, dominant, conceited person; his/her appearance is not attractive enough; he/she has the masculine type of gender identity. 3) «Enemy – aggressor» type defines an authoritarian, egoistic, aggressive, extremely unfriendly person; he/she has an ugly, unattractive appearance; his/her expressive behavior masks his/her real feelings. Diagrams (1,2,3) show the prevailed types of representations of Enemy at different life stages.

Diagram 1. Distribution of representation type “Enemy-traitor” at different life stages.
So, the first representation type «Enemy-traitor» prevails in adulthood. The second representation type «Enemy-adversary» dominates at the stage «youth». The third representation type «Enemy – aggressor» is typical for those period of life named «Maturity».

Now let’s consider the representation types of Friend at different periods of life. With the help of the factor analysis we revealed two types of representations of Friend: 1) «Friend as a kind and sincere person» and «Friend as a nice person». This type describes a person who is kind-hearted, altruistic and friendly; he/she has a handsome and attractive appearance, which completely corresponds to his/he gender, age, professional roles; he/she has a harmonic expressive behavior, which reflects his/her real feelings; this person has predominantly feminine features. Diagrams (4,5) show the prevailed types of representations of Friend at different life stages.
Thus, the received data testify that the everyday representations of Enemy and Friend are formed and transformed during the whole span of the human life. It is not the range of the components which influences the changes in representations, but their socio-psychological contents. According to the modality and intensity of the attitudes included in representations of Friend and Enemy during different periods of life, it is possible to define the direction of their transformations. **The direction of Enemy representations’ transformation:** «Enemy – unpleasant person» - «Enemy – traitor» - «Enemy – adversary» - «Enemy – aggressor».


**References**


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