

THE ROLE OF AWARENESS IN THE CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

РОЛЬ УСВІДОМЛЕННЯ В МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОМУ СПІЛКУВАННІ

The article presents a variety of processes of interaction between cultures and their influence on the communication results. The meaning of the definition "cultural awareness" is considered and the role of communication in the modern socio-cultural space is revealed.

One of the most important components of human life is communication. In a broad sense, this concept encompasses much more than just the exchange of information between people. It includes channels of means of transmission and receipt of information, which involves artificial intelligence, computer networks and programs, cultural symbols, etc.

With the growth of globalization, the spread of international contacts, the internationalization of society in general, the nature of communication has changed. Establishing business and friendly contacts with representatives of other countries involves knowledge of foreign languages. However, this is not enough, as a serious obstacle to communication with foreigners is ignorance of their ethnic and cultural characteristics.

The success of cross-cultural communication depends not only on knowledge of languages and national characteristics. Language is only a necessary prerequisite for communication, an important role in which is played by a sense of style, the general mood of communication, inherent in a particular culture. To an even greater extent, this applies to a sense of communication style. Knowledge of the peculiarities and even styles of communication inherent in different national communities is necessary first of all for specialists in social communications, specialists in advertising, PR, translators, employees of the tourism industry, etc.

Full knowledge of a foreign language requires a well-established system of knowledge, skills, and perception of language as a component of foreign culture, which facilitates overcoming cross-cultural barriers, provides effective communication with foreigners, in particular, emotional connection and cross-cultural communication. At present, the formation of a full system of knowledge and skills in the use of a foreign language, in particular, the role of foreign language communication in the process of learning a foreign language in the context of widespread use of information and communication technologies, remains out of practice in the educational process of higher education.

Key words: *cross-cultural communication, "cultural awareness", "dialogue of cultures", cross-cultural interaction.*

У статті представлено різноманітні процеси взаємодії між культурами та їхній вплив на результати спілкування. Розглянуто значення визначення «культурне усвідомлення» та розкрито роль комунікації в сучасному соціокультурному просторі.

Одним із найважливіших складників життя людини є комунікація. У широкому сенсі це поняття охоплює значно більше, ніж безпосередньо обмін інформацією між людьми. До неї належать канали засобів передачі та одержання інформації, де задіяні штучний інтелект, комп'ютерні мережі і програми, культурні знаки тощо.

Зі зростанням глобалізаційних змін, поширенням міжнародних контактів, інтернаціоналізацією суспільства загалом змінився і характер спілкування. Налагодження ділових і дружніх контактів із представниками інших держав передбачає володіння іноземними мовами. Однак цього замало, оскільки серйозною перешкодою у спілкуванні з іноземцями є незнання їхніх етнічних і культурних особливостей.

Успішність міжкультурного спілкування залежить не лише від знання мов і національних особливостей. Мова є тільки необхідною передумовою комунікації, важливу роль в якій відіграє відчуття стилю, загального настрою спілкування, що притаманні певній культурі. Ще більше це стосується відчуття стилю комунікації. Знання особливостей і навіть стилів комунікації, притаманних різним національним спільнотам, необхідні передусім фахівцям із соціальних комунікацій, спеціалістам з реклами, піару, перекладачам, працівникам туристичної галузі тощо.

Повноцінне володіння іноземною мовою потребує сформованої системи знань, вмінь, а також сприйняття мови як складника іноземної культури, що полегшує подолання міжкультурних бар'єрів, забезпечує ефективне спілкування з іноземцями, зокрема емоційний зв'язок та міжкультурну комунікацію. Наразі поза практикою в навчальному процесі вищої школи залишаються питання формування повноцінної системи знань та навичок використання іноземної мови, зокрема ролі іноземної комунікації в процесі вивчення іноземної мови в умовах широкого застосування інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій.

Ключові слова: *міжкультурна комунікація, «культурне усвідомлення», «діалог культур», міжкультурна взаємодія.*

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Relevance. The relevance of the problem of studying the influence of communications on the cultural interaction is due to dynamic changes in the surrounding world. In the conditions of the formation of the global communication space, the tendency of intensification of cross-cultural contacts is becoming more and more obvious and has a significant impact on various aspects of modern life society and people themselves.

Introduction. Nothing in the world can exist in isolation neither people nor countries or businesses. That

is why the role of awareness of cross-cultural communication is obvious and essential. There are many reasons for that. Firstly, the processes of globalization, which rapidly swept all aspects of the life of cultural entities, revealed a rather contradictory orientation – on the one hand, the strengthening of integration processes between participants in cultural interaction, on the other hand, the emphasis on the originality of cultures. In today's multipolar world, the growth of self-awareness is evident and at the same time, there are processes of disintegration and differentiation.

Secondly, the cross-cultural interaction is an object of study in many sciences and lies in the sphere of an interdisciplinary field, which leads to the development of an interdisciplinary approach in the study of the space of sociocultural communication. A wide range of problems arising in the process of cross-cultural communication is of interest to scientists in various fields of science – philosophy, cultural studies, psychology, ethnology, sociology and others.

But what is cultural awareness?

It is interesting to note that our research of the definition of the term “cultural awareness” surprised us very much, as far as neither in Webster’s dictionary nor in Longman dictionary there is no explanation of this term. There are such terms as consumer awareness, brand awareness, product awareness, even gender-awareness, but there is nothing about one of the most important awareness nowadays “cultural”. So, we continued our research and found the following definitions:

Someone’s cultural awareness is their understanding of the differences between themselves and people from other countries or other backgrounds, especially differences in attitudes and values [9].

Cultural awareness is sensitivity to the similarities and differences that exist between two different cultures and the use of this sensitivity in effective communication with members of another cultural group [10].

To be culturally aware is to understand that cultural differences do exist, and to be sensitive to and respect those differences when interacting with people whose customs and world view may be different from our own [11].

Cultural Awareness is recognition of the nuances of one’s own and other cultures [12].

Thus, we analyzed all the key words in the explanation of “cultural awareness” and created our own definition. We believe that “cultural awareness” is understanding, sensitivity, recognition and respect to the differences and similarities human face in the process of cross-cultural communication.

It is interesting to note that in the process of communication it is not always clear that the interlocutors are of different cultures. Sometimes they speak the same language, visit the same places, go to the same university, but have different cultural background. Or vice versa speak different languages, live in different places, but have similar cultural background.

We believe that the main aim of any cross-cultural communication is understanding, and the background of understanding is awareness.

Thus, we can make a conclusion, that cultural awareness is the main background of understanding in the process of communication. Of course, the desire to learn more about other cultures by reading, googling, searching or observing is also very important.

We often face challenges in communication even with people we know well. Parents don’t understand

children, couples don’t understand each other, friends don’t understand friends. What should we expect from people with different cultural background? We believe the key point is the desire to understand.

In philosophy, representatives of existentialism K. Jaspers, M. Heidegger, J.P. Sartre and others were among the first to address the problem of communication; for the first time the concepts of concrete being, the existence of “here” and “now” were approved, new areas of research of interpersonal communication appear.

K. Jaspers saw communication as an integral part of human existence, emphasizing its importance between cultures and people, as an opportunity to prevent misunderstanding and intolerance towards each other, and identified three levels of the human “I”, which correspond to the ways of human communication. The first level is the empirical “I”, at this stage a person identifies himself with the natural body, the purpose of which is only questions of self-preservation. At this level, communication acts as a utilitarian means designed to be responsible for safety and survival. The second level is consciousness in general, here the “I” is aware of itself as a bearer of knowledge, strives for knowledge and obeys social norms. Communication at this level is presented as an “exchange of thoughts”, communication is based on formal legal norms. At the third level, the individual is aware of himself as a part of the whole, but as something special. This is “I” at the level of the spirit, where communication acts as a means of communication an individual with an organism.

These three levels of consciousness and communication make a person a biological, thinking and social being. At the same time, according to Jaspers, an additional level of communication should be distinguished separately, which affects the depths of the human soul – existential communication, expressed in the ability of people to mutual penetration into each other, empathy and awareness of the other as a value.

Main part. Scientists attributed special importance in communication processes to language, which acts as a universal environment, a kind of totality, and not just as a means of communication. Heidegger’s concept of “communication” is a model of human existence, a unique global communication between an attentive person and a speaker. Tradition is the expression of such an active event, and language can be considered as the most significant and least subject to change.

For culturologists, the closest is the interpretation of the concept of cross-cultural communication as a set of various forms of relations and communication between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures in order to transfer or exchange information through sign systems (languages).

According to G. Treiger and E. Hall, cross-cultural communication is defined as the most effective adaptation to the environment.

It is important, in our opinion, for solving the problem of the influence of communications on cross-cultural interaction, is the isolation of the characteristic features of the communication process, which is reflected in the works of the founder of the theory of cross-cultural Edward T. Hall communications:

- participants in communication are always representatives of different cultures;
- the communication of communication agents is often associated with difficulties in understanding, caused by the difference in expectations and prejudices;
- the peculiarities of interpretations of the same phenomena and events by agents of different cultural formations.

It is impossible to imagine the existence and functioning of any culture in the modern media space without the implementation of communicative ties at various levels, be it relations between ethnic groups, nations, social groups, or individuals. "The media, migration flows, the globalization of the distribution of a cultural product bring alternative styles, images, symbols, values, standards of behavior that have formed as elements of alien cultures" [1]. As a result of these interconnections, new elements and forms of culture appear, value attitudes, behavior models, lifestyle changes, new meanings, and meanings are born.

Note that this problem in domestic science attracted the attention of researchers at the end of the 70s of the XX century and intensified with the growth of interethnic tension after the collapse of the USSR and the intensification of migration flows in the post-Soviet space. Most often, research is associated with the study of cross-cultural interactions of various ethnic groups within the country. So, A. Leontyev, whose research is devoted to studying the relationship between language and culture, highlighted the national characteristics of communications for the first time.

Carrying out intensive cross-cultural contacts at various levels, a person is faced with one of the most serious problems of the present time, the problem of identification in a multicultural space. An increasing number of people in their daily life are involved in various forms of cross-cultural interaction in various fields and fields of activity. Relationships and contacts of people who are owners of excellent friends from a friend's cultural values, traditions, norms of behavior, stereotypes greatly complicate the processes of self-identification of a modern person. The problem of identity, unconscious in ordinary life, manifests itself as contacts with people and groups of other cultures arise.

As a result in socio-cultural communications, there is a comparison of "ours" and "aliens", which leads either to the strengthening of one's own identification or to its erosion. Because "each participant in cultural

contact has his own system of rules, functioning in such a way that sent and received messages can be encoded and decoded" [2]. In other words, another culture is a coded system, the codes of which must be deciphered. In addition to cultural differences, the communication process is influenced by gender, age, profession, social status and experience of agents, etc.

Within the framework of an interdisciplinary approach, the concepts of "cross-cultural communication", "cultural interaction", "cross-cultural dialogue" are categories of a different order, carrying a different semantic load.

The next construct that is not important for our research is the interaction of cultures – "one of the less general processes of cultural studies, which allows us to understand culture as a living, developing, in contact with other phenomena, possessing internal laws and characteristics" [3].

At present, interaction is the central principle of cultural development. The processes of globalization exert a colossal influence on interaction states, qualities, values, areas of activity, new forms of cultural activity are born, as well as the transformation of behavior models. Exchange of information, short-term contacts, economic transportation of goods, forms of contacts of different cultures. The interaction of cultural studies was investigated by S. Arnavtovsky, S. Arutyunov, D. Gudkov, G. Drach, S. Erasov, N. Ikonnikova, K. Levi-Strauss, G. Hershkovets, O. Stoppel, and others.

Let us turn to the dictionary: "the interaction of cultures is a special type of direct relations and connections that develop between different cultures, as well as those influences, mutual changes that appear in the course of these relations" [4]. Any cross-cultural interaction is always two-way character. The content side of this process lies in communication, exchange of meanings, and cultural values, which are expressed in the form of traditions. The interaction of cultures is a fairly important and effective way of cultural communication.

Summarizing the above, we can conclude that not all communication between subjects is identical to cross-cultural interaction.

A specific feature of modern global thinking is the polyphony of opinions, ideological attitudes, views of the world, which is a prerequisite for the search for points of mutual understanding of different cultures, the possibility of dialogue. Cross-cultural dialogue as a socio-cultural factor unfolds in the context of interaction between countries, peoples, and ethnic groups contribute to the construction of a whole system of multicultural contacts, emphasizes the gravitation of original cultures to foreign values and patterns.

"The life of any organism, including an ethnic one, is an exchange with the outside world. And the more we can give, share, the more significant our baggage". If the culture is focused only on absorp-

tion from the outside, but is closed from the world in everything else, and does not share anything with it, then, in the end, it is rejected by him [5].

The methodology of the interaction of cultures, in particular, the dialogue of cultures, was the central theme in the works of M. Bakhtin. Dialogue is always development, interaction, and progress. Dialogue is an indicator of the general culture of a society. "Dialogue is not a means, but an end in itself. To mean to communicate dialogically. When the dialogue ends, it all ends. Therefore, the dialogue, in essence, cannot and should not end" [6]. According to M. Bakhtin, each culture lives only in the questioning of another culture, and that great phenomenon in culture are born only in the dialogue of different cultures, only at the point of their intersection. The readiness of one culture to master the achievements of another is one of the sources of its vitality. "A foreign culture reveals itself more fully and deeper only in the eyes of another culture... One meaning reveals its depths, meeting and touching another, someone else's meaning... a kind of dialogue begins between them, which overcomes the isolation and one-sidedness of these meanings, these cultures... With such a dialogical meeting of two cultures, they do not merge and do not mix, but they are mutually enriched" [7].

Copying a foreign culture or complete rejection of it should give way to dialogue. For both sides, the dialogue between the two cultures can be fruitful. "We pose new questions to a foreign culture, which it does to itself did not pose, we are looking for an answer to these questions of ours; and a foreign culture responds to us, revealing its new sides to us, new semantic depths" [8].

Dialogue interaction is based primarily on the principles of equality and mutual understanding. None of the participants in the parties can claim a central position, otherwise, the dialogue acquires features of asymmetry and a tendency to turn into a monologue.

Analyzing various conceptual developments in the field of cross-cultural communications, researcher S. Lebedev formulates "ideal types" of the interaction of cultures, among which he distinguishes active exchange – dialogue.

According to the scientist, interaction by the type of active exchange, or cross-cultural dialogue, corresponds to the mutual openness of cultures. This type of interaction implies the possibility of borrowing, which the counterparties' cultures do from each other. The characteristic feature was highlighted of this type of interaction – borrowings enrich only the periphery of the culture that perceives them, while the core is subject to only an indirect insignificant influence.

Defining culture as a mechanism of collective memory, collective "non-rational" consciousness (concept of Yu. Lotman), one can imagine culture as a level of mastering by the subject of programs and means of a social imagelife that differs from other cul-

tures in its representations (language, religion, etc.). The opposition of some closed cultures to others is inevitable. Each of the cultures develops defense mechanisms that prevent the penetration of alien elements, which undoubtedly provides significant resistance to the effective implementation of communication. Therefore, the antinomy "friend or foe" is quite relevant in the system of local cultures, where one's own is positioned as truly correct, and another's is hostile, false.

K. Yakima's writes about this very figuratively:

"Another's religion is superstition. Someone else's logic is absurd.

Other people's values are prejudices. Someone else's order is chaos" [8].

We are living in times when it is common to think of "identity" and "belonging" in preconceived ways, as given by the distinctions – perhaps the myths – of country, race, class and religion. Thinking along these lines has become really quite dangerous, because it's leading to the vilification and indeed harm of people considered to be on the outside of these divisions – particularly with the escalation and greater prevalence of a politics of resentment and national disengagement.

Yet, on the ground, cultures and identities are constantly on the move; they're mixed, and they cross borders. Our affiliations de facto are plural because of our social engagements and mobility, because of our consumption and travel, because of global interaction. If you look further back, human history itself is actually a history of shared needs and aspirations, common ideals and philosophies, and an awful lot of cultural borrowing and exchange [13].

However, if cultural contact leads to a positive perception of a "foreign" culture, then customs, knowledge, values are borrowed, and this process can be called cross-cultural dialogue. In other words, there is a certain "cultural compatibility" of the parties involved in the interaction.

Conclusion. Today people eager to communicate more and more openly. There are less boundaries between countries, people can travel a lot, social media and social networks give on-line multicultural nonfiltered content, which introduces the ideas, traditions, ways of communication, behavior and values to people worldwide. There are less an less boundaries between people who meet each other on-line, create multicultural families and friendship communities, give birth to multicultural kids, who don't feel and notice any cross-cultural differences, children who are aware of different cultures since they are born and accept that differences as one single own culture.

Influence is a multifactorial phenomenon, it is difficult to predict it, but it is obvious that it is largely determined by the situation and tradition of cross-cultural contacts. Unlike a dialogue that can go on forever influences are limited in time and have a directional

vector. That is why it strengthens the relationship between cultures in their development.

The presented research methods do not exhaust the whole variety of approaches to the study of the essence, dynamics, and results of cross-cultural interaction. Sociocultural processes contribute to the emergence of specific characteristics of the interaction of cultures, this allows us to rethink traditional research methods and apply new methodological approaches.

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