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ROLE OF CULTURAL CONCEPTS IN THE PROCESS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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In the modern globalized world, intercultural communication is an important factor in effective interaction between representatives of different cultures. It covers various spheres of social life – from everyday communication to international cooperation. In this process, cultural concepts are of particular importance as basic units of collective consciousness, reflecting the system of values, norms and ideas of a certain society [2].

Cultural concepts act as peculiar cognitive structures through which a person perceives and interprets the world. Their correct understanding is a

necessary condition for successful intercultural communication [4]. A cultural concept is a complex mental formation that includes conceptual, figurative and value components [1]. It is formed under the influence of historical, social and cultural factors and reflects the specifics of the national worldview. Concepts are fixed in the language through lexical units, phraseological units, metaphors and symbols. They can be universal (for example, “life”, “love”) or nationally specific (“will”, “soul”, “honor”) [3].

The peculiarity of cultural concepts is that they accumulate the collective experience of the people and transmit it between generations, forming a cultural identity. In intercultural communication, concepts perform the function of semantic landmarks that determine the perception and interpretation of information [6]. They influence communicative behavior and the formation of speech strategies. Differences in the conceptual systems of different cultures often cause communicative barriers. For example, different understandings of politeness, social distance or the role of time can lead to misunderstandings [8].

Thus, the effectiveness of intercultural communication largely depends on the ability to take into account the cultural concepts of another community.

Cultural concepts are reflected in language, which makes them accessible for analysis. They are verbalized through lexical units, phraseologisms, metaphors and paremias [1]. This is especially clearly evident in the comparison of Ukrainian and English-language concepts: For example, the Ukrainian concept “will” has a broader meaning than its English equivalents “freedom” and “liberty”. It combines the ideas of independence, inner freedom and historical struggle, which is associated with the Cossack tradition. In contrast, “freedom” is a more general concept, and “liberty” has a predominantly legal meaning.

Another example is the concept “soul”, which in Ukrainian culture reflects emotionality, sincerity and spiritual depth. In English, the equivalent “soul” is used less often in everyday speech and has a more abstract or religious meaning.

The concept “family” also has differences: in Ukrainian culture it covers a wider circle of relatives and emphasizes close emotional ties, while the English “family” more often means a nuclear family.

The aforementioned examples demonstrate that even in the presence of formal counterparts, cultural concepts can differ significantly in content.

The linguistic view of the world is formed under the influence of cultural concepts and reflects the specifics of the perception of reality [3]. It determines how representatives of a certain culture interpret the world around them. For instance, the concept “hospitality” in Ukrainian culture implies generosity, openness and obligatory treatment of guests. In contrast, the English concept “hospitality” has a more formalized nature and is often associated with compliance with social norms, rather than with emotional involvement.

Another illustrative example is the concept “time”. In English-speaking culture, “time” is perceived as a valuable resource (“time is money”), which

requires punctuality and clear planning. In Ukrainian culture, the concept of time is more flexible, allowing for certain deviations from the schedule.

These differences affect people's behavior and can cause difficulties in intercultural communication.

Interpretation of cultural concepts is accompanied by a number of difficulties: non-equivalence of individual concepts; ambiguity of concepts; influence of cultural stereotypes; dependence on the context. [7; 8]. For example, a misunderstanding of the concepts "time" or "hospitality" can lead to an erroneous assessment of the interlocutor's behavior.

For effective communication, it is necessary to develop intercultural competence, which includes knowledge of cultural concepts, the ability to interpret them, and a tolerant attitude towards other cultures[2].

Therefore, cultural concepts are key elements of intercultural communication, since they determine the way of thinking, behavior, and interpretation of information. Examples of Ukrainian and English-language concepts demonstrate that even similar concepts can have different meanings. This emphasizes the need for a deep understanding of the cultural context to achieve effective communication.

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