

Educational Activity of Cultural Centres as Means for Intercultural Communication

Svetlana Kalouskova^{1,*} Natalia A. Bondarenko^{2,a}

¹Hradčanská galerie Josefa Kalouska, Prague, Czech Republic

²Department of Regional and International Relations, Tolstoy Institute of Languages and Cultures, Moscow, Russian Federation

^aEmail: b_natalia@mail.ru

^{*}Corresponding author. Email: Svetlana_kalouskova@email.cz

ABSTRACT

This article tackles the questions related to the development of intercultural communications in modern society and provides analysis of the notion "intercultural communication" in works of such scientists as E.T. Hall, S.G. Ter-Minasova, and I. I. Haleeva. The article also explores the educational activities as means for intercultural communication of two cultural centres: Hradčanská galerie Josefa Kalouska in Prague, Czech Republic and the Čapek Brothers Society from St. Petersburg.

Keywords: social transformation, types of perception of alien cultures, opposition "own/alien", dialogue, cultural centres, educational activity

I. INTRODUCTION

The XXI century brought social transformation to most of the spheres of the humanity: advent of integrated information and economic environment, interaction between cultures, shift in moral values and norms, educational and professional standards. The process of globalization that was formed on the basis of industrial and digital revolutions, formation of the common labour market, migration and galloping international contacts is pointing towards the creation of new stage of development of social links.

It is common knowledge that successful socialization in the globalized world is impossible without profound insight into and understanding of the intercultural interaction laws. Disregard for such laws might result in misunderstanding, social and cultural conflicts. Therefore, intercultural communication has fundamental role in modern times.

II. PECULIARITIES OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION: DIALOGUE AS THE SUSTAINABLE FACTOR FOR CULTURAL OF CULTURAL INTERACTION

The advent of intercultural communication as the subject of scientific research had historical and social premise. Foreign Service Institute was founded in 1924 in the United States (at the end of World War I) with the key priority to train specialists for communication with other cultures. The Institute was chaired by E.T. Hall, who in the article "Culture as Communication"

(co-authored with D. Trigger) defined the notion of "intercultural communication" for the first time. 1959 saw publication of Hall's monograph "The Silent Language" which expounded on close relation between communication and culture. "Communication is culture and culture is communication" [1]. The publication of the above book led to creation of the new discipline currently referred to as "intercultural communication".

Thus, credit can be given to the US scientists for pointing out that peculiarities of verbal communication depend on the aspects of the cultures, represented by the communicants, with intercultural communication being the focal point between cultures and human interaction [2].

Works of M.M. Bakhtin, Yu.M. Lotman, E.I. Passova et al., had profound analysis of the intercultural communication issues with the latter being considered as the most sustainable factor for cultural communication [3].

It should be emphasized that the opposition "own/alien" serves as the foundation in the archetypical universal picture of the world. It reveals itself in time when a person starts comprehending the universum (macrocosm) and separates a part of it into the microcosm that is equal to a person's own personality. Its consolidation generally occurs when one person separates oneself from other persons that in the language system translates into the pronoun I – You. You = alien, might even be included into the microcosm as friend and identified as "own". You

might also be identified as an enemy, or alien to the microcosm.

Therefore the 'own/alien' opposition which was originally linked to the category of belonging (or possessiveness at the level of language), gets valorified into the judgmental field of positive / negative. The nature of the opposition 'own/alien' is not absolute, but mobile. It is the language that is the universal entity in the system of differentiative features and ensures rapport both literary and figuratively. "Table I" shows the application of the term "language" in literary and figurative sense by communicants.

TABLE I. APPLICATION OF THE NOUN "LANGUAGE" IN LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE SENSE BY COMMUNICANTS

Comparison	
- to speak one language	- we have common language
- to speak different languages	- we cannot find common language

Viewing one's own language as intrinsic makes it rank high in the hierarchy of values in any tradition and worldview. Foreign language can be viewed as more prestigious or hostile.

It is important to point out that the Russian worldview is characterized by the peculiar approach towards the sheer fact of existence of foreign languages and their role in communication [4].

As pointed out by T.V. Tsivyan, this can be accounted for by the communicative history of the Russian language which is perceived by the informants as an isolated language, surrounded by 'alien' languages. This view was imprinted in the Russian worldview in the following way: all 'alien' cultures and languages can be understood through the Russian language.

There is why the studies in the field of intercultural communication in Russia was conducted under the general programme of Russian-as-foreign language and ethnolinguistics. E.M. Vereshyagin and B.G. Kostomarov defined intercultural communication in their paper "Language and culture" as adequate mutual understanding of two communicants both of which belong to different national cultures [5].

S.G. Ter-Minasova highlighted the factors which hinder the intercultural communication as well as impact that language exerts on the formation of a personality, balance between language and culture, the role of language in the development of national character [6].

We are of opinion that it is I.I. Khaleeva who proposed the most cohesive definition of intercultural communication, i.e. that it represents assembly of specific processes of cooperation between people that represent different cultures. It occurs between various

communicants that understand both their different cultural background and their mutual 'alienness' [7].

It is evident that the process of intercultural communication promotes acquisition of new experiences, formation of new personal traits and removal of "own/alien" opposition.

III. TYPES OF PERCEPTION OF 'ALIEN' CULTURES

Mastering of a foreign culture generally occurs on the basis of personal cultural environment. E.A. Tarasov proposed that the 'alien' culture is perceived as 'deviating from the norm' with the concept of norms being based on the images of one's own culture [8].

L. Hermes defined the following schemes for perception of 'alien' cultures:

- alien as the foundation of own (that can lead to ambivalent feelings)
- alien as denial of own (might lead to conflicts)
- alien as a chance to broaden and develop own
- own and alien as joint actors [9].

It is obvious that the above position can be realized in the form of accommodation and assimilation, the latter being defined as an attempt to integrate the unknown 'alien' into one's own world, i.e. for the purpose of interpretation of the custom schemes.

Accommodation can be defined as shift in one's custom schemes on the basis of new understanding. One changes viewpoint and thus shift certain aspects of the existing customary scheme through new factors. This particular case might be treated as 'culturological adaptation' (Safonova) of the communicant to new culture that stipulates development of social and cultural sensibility, enculturation, which is not accompanied by the dismissal of one's own culture [10].

Mastering of enculturation strategies is one of the key factors for formation of intercultural communication as it takes into account the models of real-life interactions acceptable within the culture of a given country. The reflexive consciousness of one's own cultural context arises within the intercultural communication as:

- Amalgamation of the cognitive aspects of culture
- New knowledge of one's own culture gained through perception of an 'alien' culture.

IV. INTRODUCTION TO NATIONAL CULTURE THROUGH ACTIVITIES OF CULTURAL CENTRES

Respectful attitude towards foreign cultures, languages and informants is one of the key components of successful intercultural communication in the globalized world.

At the turn of the XXI century, the problem of language communication and investigation of the communicative influence became exacerbated on a new scale. There was a change in the language character of the age: the conservative and limited language of the past was rashly replaced by the new language of mass information, communication. The role of the linguistic persona also increased.

This led to culture stepping forward as universal context which is the source of diversity in the groups of people as well as communication as the most important and one of the fundamental types of interaction between communicants.

Being the bearer of the panhuman universals and cultural peculiarities, a person stands in the centre of the intercultural communication and acts with other people on the basis of these universals and traits within a multitude of communication contexts [11], [12].

Once a person finds himself in a different cultural and language environment, he/she immediately become frustrated due to lack of knowledge, national values and laws of communication of other informants.

That is why it is crucial to have the diversified values of world cultures preserved alongside conscious understanding of the fragile nature and high risk of disintegration of a vast majority of traditional cultures and languages. This promoted fast development of the respective field of scientific knowledge that has a new phenomenon in the history of mankind – mutual interest of different nations to each other – as its key pillar.

It becomes evident that intercultural communication is a social phenomenon that is represented by structural cooperation between representatives of different cultures (both national and ethnic). Transcultural ideals and values (respect for other cultures, equality of traditions, ethics and policy of responsibility etc.) can be formulated through adhering to the foundations of the intercultural communication.

Cultural centres, friendship societies and performances within "Cultural days" play a crucial role in the formation of intercultural communication as it provides grounds for getting insight into the peculiarities of other nation's culture as well as motivation tool for learning of foreign languages.

For instance, the Byelorussian International arts festival "Slavianski Bazaar" in Vitebsk is well-known far beyond the national borders; Muscovites are well-

acquainted with the annual Czech culture festival held at Russian State Library jointly with the Embassy of the Czech Republic and Czech Centre in Moscow; in 2019 residents of Nizhny Novgorod Region got acquainted with the Croatian and Slovak culture at the Days of Croatia and Slovakia etc.

The "Russian-Polish Centre for Dialogue and Friendship" undertakes significant efforts in the field of establishment of the constructive communication between scientific, educational and other entities of Russia and Poland. All of this is a representative of the practical steps for intercultural communication development and confirms the words of the first Commissioner for Multilingualism in the EU (L. Orban) who stated that the European integration requires vast diversity of languages [13].

It is evident that communicants learn to comprehend social norms of the 'alien' cultures by participating in the above-mentioned events. The latter also lay the groundwork for the successful socialization and acculturation of the communicants and promote development of an open multicultural personality (that is prepared for cooperation with other cultures and creative activities).

V. HRADČANSKÁ GALERIE JOSEFA KALOUSKA IN PRAGUE AND THE ČAPEK BROTHERS SOCIETY FROM ST. PETERSBURG AS CENTRES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS

It is evident that need of nations for cultural comprehension and intention to understand spiritual world of each other leads to intensification of communication processes which develop into systemic nature. It is only through consensus that humanity would be able to solve the global problems and prevent self-destruction. This requires cooperation between cultures.

Cultural interaction is a special type of direct relationships and connections, which arise between two or more cultures as well as mutual changes that occur as a result of these relationships. Change in conditions, qualities, spheres of activities, values of this or that culture, creation of new forms of cultural activities, spiritual references and patterns for life of people under the influence of external impulses play a decisive role in the process of cultural interaction.

Expositions and exhibitions in art galleries are one of the examples of cultural interaction.

Let's turn to one of the Slavic cultural centres that is located in Prague. Alongside Art Gallery of Prague Castle (which exhibits classic art), Stragov Art Gallery on the territory of Stragov Monastery there are many other smaller private art galleries which allow the

views to get acquainted with modern art from neighboring countries.

For instance, the Hradčanská galerie Josefa Kalouska that was founded in 1992 not far from the Prague Castle has been exhibiting contemporary painters since 1994, sculptures from Russia, Slovakia, Italy, Kiev and others. It also holds various master-classes on ceramics, textile and glass.

The visitors get the chance to both learn names of modern artists and compare the recent trends to the national tradition.

The gallery successfully exhibited works of art from Ukraine, Russia, Slovakia, Croatia, England, Germany, Poland, Canada and Italy with strong support from national embassies. The exhibitions are visited not only by the representatives of the diplomatic corps, but also tourists, students and scientists.

Having existed for many centuries, the Czech-Russian connections play a special role in the works of the gallery. For instance, the Association of specialists in Russian philology and Society for Czech-Russian Relationships promoted the exhibition of Nora Musatova (daughter of the established painter Grigory Musatov) and of Gennady Alexandrov – a brilliant painter from the city of Omsk. The gallery also conducted the exhibition dedicated to the works of poet of the 1960s A. Voznesensky, with his first translation into foreign language having been made in Prague.

In addition to the artistic activities the management of the gallery conducts educational activities overseas. There have been many exhibitions of Czech painters in Bratislava, Zagreb, London. Lecture "On art of A.Muha" by S.Kalousskova took place in the Czech Cultural Centre in Moscow with great success.

The visitors of the gallery were able to enjoy works of music and literature, with popular romances, Ukrainian dumas and songs, verses of the modern poet Ludmila Svirskaya.

Czech connoisseurs of music met the art-group Umělecká beseda slovenska, (Artistic club of Slovakia) with great success, as the performance was dedicated to the Equal to the Apostles Cyril and Methodius Day. Artwork of Slovakia which is based on the national motives was represented by works of S. Harangozo, E.Semanko, M.Tvrdon, T.Jitnyava and others.

The gallery actively cooperates with cultural centres of other countries based in the Czech Republic.

The Čapek Brothers Society from St. Petersburg in 1997 can be viewed as a bright example of the growing interest to the Czech culture. Over the years, residents of St. Petersburg were able to get acquainted with vast Czech theatrical tradition during the "Prague theatre festival" at the V.F. Komissarzhevskaya Theatre. The

public was able to witness performances of the Prague Chamber Theatre and the Independent Alternative Muppet Theatre for Adults and Children called "Buns and Dolls". The "Kantilena" Choir from the city of Brno (directed by Jakub Kleker) delivered a joint performance with Choir of the St. Petersburg television (directed by Stanislav Gribkov) at the Smolny Convent.

Educational activities of cultural centres provides for understanding of importance of cultural and historic factors and broadens intercultural communication.

VI. CONCLUSION

Effective meeting of intercultural challenges should be based on the constructive cooperation with partners from other cultures which would be based on the recognition of values and models of consciousness of other people as it is own cultural experience that plays a vital role in the original perception of foreign culture.

Intercultural communication is feasible only on the basis of respect of national and foreign cultures.

One of the conditions for the formation of intercultural communication is the creation of language environment that is generally present in the cultural centres of countries. Diverse activities of galleries, art shows, friendship societies would facilitate the acquisition of new experience and creation of new personal traits of the communicants.

References

- [1] Hall.E. *The Silent Language* /E/Hall.- NY. Doubleday Company, 1959.p 116
- [2] Ter-Minasova S.G. *Language and intercultural communication*, M.: Slovo, 2000 – p.234
- [3] Bakhtin M.M. *Dialogue*/M.M.Bakhtin/ 7-book set., 1996, - V.5. - p.318-330
- [4] Tsvivan T.V. *Contemporary language situation projected on the model of the world // Language and ethno-linguistic system of the Slavs in contact with non-Slavic environment /publishing editor T.N. Nikolaeva/ M. Languages of Slavic cultures. 2002, p. 467*
- [5] Vereshyagin E.M. *Language and culture: linguistic and cultural studies of the Russian language as a foreign language /E.M. Vereshyagin, V.G. Kostomarov. M.: Russian language, 1990. P.26*
- [6] Ter-Minasova S.G. *Language and intercultural communication*, M.: Slovo, 2000 – p.10
- [7] Haleeva I.I. *On gender approaches and theory of teaching of foreign languages and cultures / I.I. Haleeva / Journal of the Russian academy of education. – 2000. №1 p.11-12.*
- [8] Tarasov E.A. *Intercultural communication – new ontology of analysis of linguistic consciousness// Ethnocultural peculiarities of the linguistic consciousness. – M.: Institute of Linguistic Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 1996, p.17.*
- [9] Hermes L. *Fremderfahrun durch Literatur. Ein Beitrag zum interkulturellen Lernen Fremdsprachenunterricht 2 1998. S.129.*

- [10] Safonova V.V. Social and cultural issues of education and linguistics//Culturological aspects of linguistic education. Collection of research papers. Evroshkola, M.: 1998, p.33.
- [11] Pocheptsov G.G. Theory of communication. – M.: Smartbook, 2008. – p.656.
- [12] Rot Yu. Intercultural communication. Theory and training. – M.: UNITY-DANA, 2006. – p.223.
- [13] Quoted from: Rekosh K.Kh. Language policy in Europe – Babylon of the XXI century// Journal of the Moscow State University of Foreign Affairs – Un-ta. – M., 2014. - № 3. – p.227