The Relationship between Language, Culture, and Development of Society

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Abstract

The paper analyses specific characteristics of language that influence the development of culture and societies. The problem of the connection between language and culture has occupied the minds of many famous scientists: some believe that language is a part of the culture as a whole; others think that language is only a form of cultural expression. Undoubtedly, language constitutes a vital component of the cultural background underlying social development. Language is an essential means of communication and interaction. However, language is at the same time sovereign about culture as a whole and can be separate from culture or compared to culture as an equal element (i.e., that language is neither a form nor a component of culture).

Keywords: language, culture, expression, development, communication, interaction, component, social, connection, background

Introduction

Communication is an essential element of any society, and language is a key aspect of that. Different cultural communities put together collective understandings through sounds as language began to develop. Eventually, these sounds and their implicit meanings became ordinary and language was formed. A symbolic process whereby social reality is constructed, maintained, repaired, and transformed is called intercultural communication. The language barrier is one of the most difficult moments in the interaction of people with different cultural backgrounds. Ethnicity, gender, geographic location, religion, language, and so much more are those factors on which cultural identity is heavily dependent. Culture is determined as an originally transmitted structure of symbols, meanings, and norms (Geertz, 1993). An important part of cultural exchange is the connection – in the case when knowing a language automatically enables someone to identify with others who speak the same language. Learning a language can be daunting, but it is an important way to communicate with people from different cultures.

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This article addresses the problems of the interaction between language, culture, and societal development and offers certain conclusions concerning specific language characteristics connected with such an interaction. **The purpose** of the article is to determine the specificities of the interaction between culture and language and their influence on the development of society. The purpose involves solving the following tasks:

- consider the features of language that relate to cultural and social aspects;
- determine the ways culture and language interact;
- identify the ways language and culture influence the development of societies.

Literature review

The indisputable and obvious connection between language and culture as a serious scientific problem was posed at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the works of W. von Humboldt (Humboldt, 1999). This connection was studied within the framework of such disciplines as ethnolinguistics, anthropology, linguistic pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. V.V. Vorobyov considered the relationship between culture and language within the science of linguoculturology. He explained that the main object of linguoculturology becomes "interrelation and interaction of culture and language in the process of its functioning and study of interpretation this interaction in a single system integrity" (Vorobyov, 1997, p. 36-37). The hypothesis of E. Sapir - B. L. Whorf (Sapir, 1961; Whorf, 1956) became a prerequisite for the emergence of linguoculturology. They put forward a deep hypothesis of linguistic relativity, according to which language is assigned a priority role in the process of cognition. Thanks to this hypothesis, a new direction of linguistics has been formed – ethnolinguistics with linguoculturology arising it, which studies the relationship of people, ethnic groups, and language in the field of culture. Professor Z.K.Tarlanov defines the inextricable link between the language and the ethnos. Thus, language is a form of culture that embodies the historically developing national type of life in all its diversity and dialectical inconsistency (Tarlanov, 1993). The issue of language and cultural interaction has always been controversial and occupied the minds of other famous scientists and researchers (J. L. Austin, Erasov B. S., L. Bollinger, E. Sapir, P. Trudgill, and so on) (Austin, 1975; Erasov, 2003; Bollinger, 1993; Sapir, 1961; Trudgill, 1995).

Methodology

The material of this article is the development and analysis of the literature of well-known researchers. Also, the article is built on the basis of our research and this synthesis has become a great foundation in this matter. Thus, the results and conclusions of the research scientists have become the basis for this article.

Results

For centuries, the issue of the relationship between language and culture has occupied the minds of many famous scientists, but to this day the problem remains disputable: some believe that language is a part of the culture as a whole, while others think that language is only a form of cultural expression.

Communication can be realized in three different ways: via spoken words, written words, or drawings and paintings. However, an individual can also use other ways to create and convey symbols. For example, a person symbolizes with the help of personal gestures like hugs, handshakes, winks, or nods. Bells, beacons, carrier pigeons, tattoos, and tantalizing perfumes are also used by humans to convey meanings. In short, man's modes of communication include all the procedures by which one member of the communication act may influence another. However, such ways of communication are uniquely associated with human beings, and the ability to learn and use the language is the most significant distinction between human and animal societies.

Society and culture affect the words that we use for a speech act, and the words for this act of communication, in their turn, influence society and culture. Such a cyclical interdependence might seem complicated, but many examples from our lives support and demonstrate this connection. One of the best ways to learn about these three components: society, culture, and language, is to seek out new possibilities to investigate this issue. Language not only reflects and reveals highlights and observations; it also has an impact on attitudes and behaviour.

Every social organization requires some means (Internet, live communication, discussions, debates, verbal and non-verbal acts, as well as other ways of connection) through which communicators can interchange their ideas, share information, convey a set of meanings, and achieve some degree of mutual understanding. They also allow people to come to a consensus. It is only when this consensus exists that people can interconnect, i.e., in this case, they can make fairly exact predictions about each other's behaviour. In other words, such a social interaction among human groups may be impossible without significant means of communication. This interaction is largely carried out through the use of signs in both human and animal societies.

Natural and Conventional. Whereas sub-humans use widely natural signs, human groups on the other hand communicate with each other through conventional signs or symbols. Sub-humans are therefore said to apply both language and symbols since they cannot abstract a concept from a particular concrete context. That is why language is restricted to human beings.

Bollinger characterized language as a system of vocal-auditory communication using conventional signs constructed of arbitrary patterned sound units and assembled according to set when interacting with the experiences of its members (Bollinger, 1993). George Mead (Mead, 1934) considered that language is possible wherever a stimulus can affect the other. It is explained in this way: when essential symbols arouse in an individual the same reactions as they explicitly cause or are supposed to call in other individuals to whom they are addressed. Language is said to come into being when two or more humans have learnt to fasten the same values or experiences to the same sound combinations. Technically, language is

not restricted to purely verb expressions but involves any standardized and conventionalized system of symbols. Therefore, language is not only a system of words or symbols. Most likely, it is a form of behaviour involving the use and interpretation of symbols.

With respect to the definitions above, a logical question arises: what functions does language have for society? R. Jakobson (Jakobson, 1956) identifies the following functions:

- The referential function: refers to the part of the context and describes a situation, mental state or object. The descriptive components of the referential function can include both explicit descriptions and deictic words. Similarly, the referential function is connected with an element whose true meaning is under questioning especially when the true meaning is identical in both the real and assumptive universe.
- The poetic function: concentrates on "the message for its own sake" (how the code is employed) and is the efficient function in poetry as well as slogans.
- The emotive function: refers to the sender and is best illustrated by interjections and other sound changes that do not change the denotative meaning of a statement but do add information about the speaker's internal state. Whether a person has feelings of happiness, sadness, grief or otherwise, this function is used to express different emotions.
- The conative function: engages the receiver directly and is best described by vocatives and imperatives.
- The phatic function: is a language for the sake of interplay and is therefore connected with the contact/channel factor. The phatic function can be observed in greetings and casual discussions, especially with strangers. It also provides the means to open, maintain, verify or close the communication channel.
- The metalingual/reflexive function: is the use of language (what is called code) to discuss or describe itself.

The connection between culture and language can be traced in such functions of the language as referential, emotive, and metalingual. The former is related to the fact that it describes the situation, behavior, and mental state when a person uses language. Thus, language and culture influence the formation of thinking, perception of the world, and behavior. The emotive function focuses on the speaker, their emotions and attitudes. Consequently, it is connected with expressing all that is specific for the culture, behavioral patterns, mentality, etc., of an ethnic group. The last function directly concerns the way we use the language. That is, a person uses different spheres of vocabulary, and language tools, depending on the situation, culture here plays the role of an auxiliary element for the language and its use.

In this way, human culture and language are deeply tied. Without becoming familiar with a language, anthropologists would have some difficulties understanding a culture. Consequently, language cannot exist without culture and vice versa.

Communication between humans is meaningful and this is its specific feature. The language applies arbitrary signs to explain some ideas and facts to transfer meaning. People communicate over and over again with each other: in spoken, written forms, or via gestures. As a result, language's main value and meaning go beyond its signs or symbols. With the

help of language, humans can share beliefs, worries, perceptions, expectations, experiences, and knowledge. These are so-called building blocks of spoken culture.

According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (linguistic relativity (Sapir, 1961; Whorf, 1956)), it is suggested that a language and its overarching components or structures used for classifying the world directly shape man's perceptions. Therefore, speakers of distinct languages are likely to perceive the world differently. Another important finding was that cultural relativity is the key to understanding the impact of culture on human interactions. If a head wants to create and manage global teams that can interact together successfully, he/she needs to understand not just how people from his/her cultural experience people from different international cultures, but also how those international cultures perceive one another.

It is possible to hypothesize that these conditions are likely to occur in the importance of sociolinguistics. In general, sociolinguistics is the study of language that relates to social structure and additional components (gender, age, religion, geography, social class and status, education, occupation, ethnicity, nationality, and identity) (Trudgill, 1995). This definition allows to suggest that language is constantly changing. Accordingly, social norms and practices influence the ways that people speak with each other. Thus, we can deduce certain conclusions about relationships and relative status in society of human groups by looking at how people speak to each other.

In some cases, due to gender or age people are restricted from speaking in certain situations. These findings prove that sociolinguists pay attention to this controversial nature of language, including how more than one exclusive variant of a language can exist among its users.

These results are likely to be related to diglossia. This term is used to show the situation in which two languages (or two varieties of the same language) are used under different conditions within a community, often by the same speakers. This phenomenon refers to the existence of two different ways of speaking (or "registers") within a single language, typically with a "high" or formal variety and a "low" or informal, everyday variety. In this way, speakers consciously select which register to use based on accepted social conditions. For instance, one might speak differently when chatting with friends versus when addressing a college professor.

In addition, there is also such a concept as code-switching. In this sense, bilingual, multilingual, and plurilingual people may likewise switch from one language to another in the course of a conversation with one or more participants. The motivations for switching codes in mid-conversation can range from a polite attempt to include nearby speakers of other languages, to a deliberate political act of defiance. This combination of findings allows us to validate the fact that language is one of the most essential parts of any culture. It is the way with the help of which people communicate with one another, build strong relationships, and create a sense of collectivity.

According to Erasov B.S, (Erasov, 2003, p. 23-26) "culture can be defined as what this society does and thinks, and language is what it thinks". The relationship between culture and language can be described as the relationship between the whole and its part. Language can be interpreted as an essential component of culture or an instrument of culture. However, language is at the same time sovereign concerning culture as a whole and can be

separate from culture or compared to culture as an equal element (i.e., that language is neither a form nor a component of culture).

Culture can be a sensitive topic. Speaking about a person's culture often provokes the same type of reaction as speaking about his/her mother. Most people have a deep protective instinct in relation to culture they consider their own, and, though they may even criticize it bitterly themselves, they may become easily get angry if someone from outside the culture dares to do so.

When you are in and of culture (comparison can be as fish are in and of water) it is often difficult or even impossible to see that culture. Often people who have spent their lives living in one culture observe only regional and individual differences and therefore assume, "My national culture does not have a clear character".

The understanding of culture is associated with a developing attitude towards language. By the beginning of the 21st century, linguistics has gone through a full cycle of some kind of evolution: from completely disregarding extra-linguistic effects to realizing the need for a detailed analysis of socio-cultural, communicative, psychological, situational, and contextual conditions of language communication act. It should be mentioned that if the 1970s of the 20th century were the "boom of semantics", the 1980s were the bloom of the communicative approach to language, the end of the 20th century. The changes in modern language have come to the fore, they (changes) were caused by the "transformation of socio-cultural paradigms", socio-political movements in different countries, and other external, extra-linguistic factors that often become determinants of language modifications. In this way, new linguistic contexts are forming new cultures in society.

Obviously, every nation has its own history, its culture has been created over centuries, and the main unique feature of every nation is its language. Only language reflects all the specific traits and subtleties of this or that nation. Moreover, language mirrors human thinking. It is logical that every nation has its national language. The notion "culture" most often determines the level of human development and in this case this term is synonymous with the concept "civilization". Also, the word "culture" can mean a degree of human spiritual evolution and the level of education. If it comes to the culture of the people, we can indicate folk customs and traditions, specificities of everyday life, etc. The interconnection between language and culture is a complex and multidimensional issue.

The question of the correlation between language and culture has always been of great interest to researchers in various fields: philosophers, sociologists, linguists, psychologists, linguoculturalists, and others. It is no wonder, that each culture has its own language system, through which its speakers have the possibility to communicate with each other. Thus, the value of language in the culture of any nation can hardly be overestimated.

Language reflects the culture, it represents not only the real world surrounding a human, not only the actual conditions of his/her life but also the public mind of the people, their mentality, national character, traditions, customs, moral norms, the system of values, worldview, vision of the world. It is impossible to consider the language of a nation without taking into account its culture and national characteristics; language and culture cannot be separated. In this way, the language of a nation's culture is formed simultaneously. Eventually, the language changes as well as the culture of the society. New values appear in the

culture, new expressions take place in the language; new technologies occur in the society – new words develop in the language.

Culture as a subject of study of cultural anthropology is a set of results of human social activity in all spheres of life and all factors (ideas, beliefs, customs, traditions) that constitute and govern the way of life of a nation, class, group of people in a certain period of time. Cultural anthropology studies the progress of culture in all its components: the way of life, vision of the world, mentality, national character, and results of spiritual, social, and working activities of a person. Cultural anthropology explores the unique human capacity to develop culture through communication, including speech and considers the great diversity of human cultures, their interaction, and conflicts. The interaction of language and culture plays a special role nowadays.

The concept that language forms human thinking, made it possible to put the study of thought on a precise effective (linguistic) basis. The dynamics of linguistic facts and the evolution of grammatical categories is accepted as a form of thought movement.

It is worth paying special attention to the relationship and interaction between language and reality, language and culture. These problems are fundamental both for the development of the forms and efficiency of communication and for teaching foreign languages; their disregard explains many failures in international contacts and teaching practices. The most accepted metaphor in the discussion of this topic: language reflects the world, it represents reality and forms its picture of the world, special and unique for each language and, therefore, for each people, ethnic group, and speech community using the language as a means of communication. The closest interconnection and interdependence between the language and its speakers is evident and beyond any doubt. Everyone knows that language is a means of communication between people, and it is inseparably linked to the life and development of the speech group that employs it as an instrument of communication.

Thus, a human takes place between language and the real world. It is the person who experiences and perceives the world through the senses and on this foundation creates a system of ideas and beliefs about the world. Having passed them through his or her mind, having realized the results of this interpretation, he or she transmits them to other members of his or her speech group with the help of language. In other words, between reality and language thinking appears.

The word does not demonstrate the subject of reality itself, but its vision. It (the word) is imposed on the native speaker by the concept of the subject in his/her mind. The concept is formed at the level of generalization of some basic attributes that compose this concept, and therefore represents an abstraction, distraction from specific characteristics. The transformation from the real world to the concept and further to verbal expression is diverse for different peoples. This is caused by distinctions in history, geography, traits of life of these ethnic groups and, accordingly, by differences in the evolution of their social consciousness. Since our mind is determined both collectively (way of life, customs, traditions, etc., i.e., everything that was defined by the notion "culture" in its broad, ethnographic meaning) and individually (specific interpretation of the world appropriate to this particular individual), the language mirrors a reality not directly but in two paradigms: from the real world to thinking and from thought to language. The metaphor with the mirror is no longer as

exact as it seemed at first because the mirror turns out to be crooked: its distortion is due to the culture of the speaking group, its mentality, worldview or vision of the world.

Conclusions

Language, thought, and culture are so closely interconnected that they in fact constitute a single whole, containing these three components, neither of which can function and exist without the other two. Altogether, they relate to the real world, oppose it, depend on it, represent and at the same time shape it.

Language and culture interact closely in different ways. In some situations, they complement each other, as in the case of the language functions described above. These two important elements greatly influence the development of society. Thus, people use registers depending on the situation of communication, and select different layers of vocabulary that are suitable in a particular language environment. Culture affects person's values, traditions, and methods of interplay while language facilitates those interactions. Language allows people to interact, and culture suggests them how to do so correctly. In reality, language is used to convey cultural ideas and beliefs. Moreover, both culture and language permit us to look backward in history.

Societal norms were created to structure the ways people communicate with each other. They concern not only with non-verbal communication but also with the language people use to communicate in different situations. Language shapes our cultural identities and the ways we interact in society. The norms and rules acceptable in our own culture facilitate the interaction but that can lead to misunderstanding when used in other cultural contexts. Consequently, in order to suit different surroundings, we need to adapt to other cultural contexts by learning the language, changing our behavior according to societal requirements, and respecting customs and traditions.

Language, as a way of expressing thought and transmitting it from person to person, is closely connected with thinking. The correlation between language and thought is an eternal complex issue and linguistics and philosophy. Further research should be undertaken to investigate the relationship between culture and language and its strong influence on the development of society more deeply. Despite these promising results, questions remain. As we can see, language and culture are interconnected, and it is obvious that they influence society and its members.

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Authors' bio

Kateryna Lut was born in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, November 13, 1980, attended Zaporizhzhia National University (Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine), majored in Philology and in 2003 got Master's degree (with honors). In 2014 completed candidate's (pre-doctorate) thesis. Doctor of Philosophy (2014), specialization field – Germanic languages. Thesis title – Means of Expressiveness in English Economic Discourse: Cognitive and Pragmatic Aspects. After graduating from university, she started her work at Zaporizhzhia National Technical University, first as a Lecturer of the Department of Foreign Languages (2003 – 2010), then as a Lecturer of the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation (2010 – 2014). From 2014 to present, she is an Associate Professor of the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation in National University "Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic" (Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine). She teaches Practice of Translation from English, Practical Course of French, Contrastive Stylistics, and Methodology for teaching foreign languages and translation.

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She is currently getting a Master's degree at the NU "Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic". She participated in student conferences, competitions and other activities of the university. One of the topics was "*O. Wilde's world perception and his view on the concept of "aesthetism""*. She also participated in an online conference with the topic "*Actualization of the "WORK" concept in English and French languages*".