

## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE

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### Introduction

Humans are not the only carriers of culture—biologists and psychologists assert that some animals (particularly great apes) are capable of developing and transmitting culture. Thus, different animal populations can be considered as carriers of distinct cultures, and the interaction between these groups may also be referred to as intercultural communication. However, the theory of intercultural communication (ICC) does not study or analyze communication among animals. It is important to understand, though, that ICC is a very ancient phenomenon that emerged simultaneously with the formation of what we now call different cultures.

**Key words:** ICC theory, cultural observation, historical analysis, ancient authors, medieval chronicles, hagiography, cultural differences

### Введение

Межкультурная коммуникация — это взаимодействие носителей разных культур. Человек — не единственный носитель культуры, биологи и психологи утверждают, что некоторые животные (в частности, человекообразные обезьяны) способны развивать и передавать культуру. Таким образом, разные популяции животных являются носителями разных культур, и взаимодействие этих групп также можно назвать межкультурной коммуникацией. Теория межкультурной коммуникации (МКК), конечно, не занимается изучением

анализа коммуникации животных. Важно, однако, понимать, что МКК — это очень древнее явление, она появилась одновременно с формированием того, что мы называем разными культурами. Человек наблюдал за непохожими на него людьми и фиксировал свои наблюдения. Попытки анализа «непохожестей» можно найти у античных авторов, в средневековых летописях, жизнеописаниях святых, в художественной литературе и пр.

**Ключевых слова:** культура животных, теория МКК, наблюдение за культурой, исторический анализ, античные авторы, средневековые летописи

Interest in studying the processes of intercultural communication, in their theoretical understanding arose primarily under the influence of globalization. Transnational corporations are being created, the tourism sector is developing, migration processes are intensifying, more and more people are entering into interethnic marriages, and the adoption of children from other countries is becoming increasingly popular.

First, we need to understand the components of this term. First, we need to define what culture is. There are many definitions of culture. It is studied in various humanities: anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, psychology, etc., as well as in many related disciplines, including the theory of intercultural communication. None of these sciences have a well-established understanding of culture. In a broad sense, culture is defined as everything that has been created and is being created as a result of human activity. These are not only material, physical objects (tools, household items, art objects), but also something immaterial - values, habits, customs, traditions, norms of behavior, etc. But culture is not just the sum of individual objects and phenomena. Culture is a system of views, values, norms (primarily behavioral), beliefs, customs, traditions and knowledge inherent in a certain society. Moreover, this society is not necessarily an ethnic group, it can be a larger group of people, and then we are talking about interethnic values and norms; To some extent, these include, for example, various religious cultures, the bearers of which are representatives of several ethnic

groups. The bearers of culture can be social groups that are “smaller” than an ethnic group — social classes, individual generations of people of a certain society. That is, you and your parents are, in a sense, bearers of different cultures.

There are also some difficulties with the definition of communication, since it, like culture, is an object of study for a wide variety of sciences. In this topic, we will limit ourselves to the simplest definition: communication is the process of exchanging information. Thus, intercultural communication is an exchange of information carried out by bearers of different cultures, and the fact that the communicants are bearers of different cultures significantly influences their communication and to some extent determines its course. The theory of ICC is a discipline that studies such interaction.

#### Main features of ICC as a scientific direction

Practical orientation: FSI was little interested in abstract anthropological and cultural theories, it needed practical instructions, specific comparative characteristics of cultures by various parameters. This feature is preserved in the theory of ICC to this day. At an early stage, cross-cultural trainings were developed to familiarize people with the peculiarities of cultural norms of other ethnic groups and to facilitate communication with representatives of these groups (in particular, in the sphere of business communication). At the same time, social (gender, age, etc.) differences between communicants were often ignored at an early stage of the development of the ICC theory.

Particular attention was paid to the study of the non-verbal aspect of communication. The founders of the ICC theory created three new directions of scientific research:

1. Proxemics, which studies the spatial behavior of humans and animals. It was studied by Edward Hall. He identified four distant zones (intimate, personal, social, and public), emphasizing that the boundaries of the

zones vary in different cultures and that the violation of these boundaries is critical for the communication process.

2. Another direction was kinesics - it studies communication through gestures, facial expressions and postures ("body language"). Ray Birdwhistell, the founder of the direction, believed that every movement of the body has a meaning, and the system of "body language" has a grammar similar to the grammar of natural language. The minimal unit of such a language is the "kinesema". Kinesics has become part of linguistic and anthropological theory.

3. Linguist George L. Trager created paralinguistics, a field that studies how prosodic components influence the final meaning of an utterance.

4. Thus, the core of the ICC consisted of "descriptive" theories, on the basis of which it was possible to compile practical instructions for people in a foreign cultural environment.

#### Further development of the theory of ICC

The theory of ICC is an interdisciplinary field of research. It is associated with the following sciences:

1) communication theory: at the junction of these sciences, the features of human interaction in an intercultural context are considered;

2) linguistics: the connection between language and reality, the role of language in the communication process;

3) anthropology: the role of culture in communication, non-verbal aspects of communication;

4) psychology: the influence of stereotypes on the thinking and (self) perception of communicants, personal characteristics of communicants;

5) sociology: the influence of the social status of communicants on their communication.



Later, the theory of the ICC was enriched by many theories.

Here are some of them (the names of the scientists who authored the corresponding theories are given in brackets):

- the theory of communicative adaptation (Howard Giles);
- the theory of acculturation;
- the theory of intercultural adaptation;
- the theory of identity management (William Cupach, Tadasu Todd Imauri);
- the theory of "face" (Stell Ting-Toomey), etc.

#### Applied Significance of the Theory of IMC

It is said that the main reason for the increased interest in studying IMC interactions is the globalization processes. However, technical progress is far ahead of our acquisition of IMC interaction skills. We can get to Germany in a few hours without knowing anything about it. Studying the peculiarities of communication with the carriers of German culture takes much more time. Despite the integration and globalization processes, the diversity of cultures in the world is far from unification, and many ethnic groups are trying to actively counteract these processes. This is why nationalistic sentiments are growing in many countries around the world – people are beginning to value their culture and are trying to protect it from the unifying impact of globalization. And it is precisely for these two reasons - on the one hand, the intensification of globalization processes, on the other - the desire to preserve unique cultural values and norms - that the study of the principles and strategies of the ICC is currently necessary for every member of human society.

If we understand culture in the broadest possible terms, we can say that any person whose work is somehow connected with people communicates with representatives of

other cultures, and therefore knowledge of the strategies for conducting ICC is necessary for almost every member of society.

For everyday communication, the skills of conducting ICC are also important, since in the modern world, on the territory of each individual state, there live many ethnic, religious, social groups that interact with each other on a daily basis; these skills are even more important in the context of migration (including internal migration, i.e. within one's own country), as well as during travel and business trips.

Finally, knowledge of the principles of the ICC, understanding its mechanisms and features is necessary for personal development: understanding the differences between cultures, their nature and external manifestations enriches the individual and expands his ideas about himself as a representative of a certain culture (cultures), the essence of this culture and the world as a whole.

The importance of studying the theory of ICC for a person engaged in linguistics is difficult to overestimate, since it:

- expands the understanding of communication by emphasizing the non-verbal aspect in the transmission of information;
- deepens the understanding of the interdisciplinary connections of linguistics and its applied significance;
- expands the understanding of the possibilities of professional self-realization
- teaches the mechanisms of “decoding” cultural (in different senses) information contained in speech, thereby developing analytical skills, expanding ideas about the possibilities of language as a repository of information.

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