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Dialogue of Cultures - Culture of Dialogue: from Conflicting to Understanding

IMAGE OF THE WORLD AS THE BASIS OF ETHNIC DIALOGUE

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Abstract

The article presents an interdisciplinary analysis of the concepts existing in modern psychology and psycholinguistics on the problem of defining the concept of "image of the world", based on a cross-cultural approach. The image of the world should be considered as a nuclear formation of constantly changing cultural and linguistic consciousness, reflecting the different perceptions of the world by ethnic groups. The development of the national language and the corresponding changes in the image of the world among the speakers of a certain ethnic culture make it necessary to consider the factors that influence the formation of the image of the world and the establishment of an effective dialogue between representatives of different cultures. Language, as a sign system that characterizes people's belonging to the culture of an ethnic group, determines the structure of the image of the world. The structure of the image of the world includes components that are common for an ethnic group, including common features in the perception and understanding of the world by people of one ethnic group. These components are systems of meanings, and their quantity and quality depend on cultural, ethnic, and psycholinguistic differences. As a result of a comparative analysis, the components of the "image of the world" are necessary to organize a successful dialogue between people from different ethnic groups. The promising goal of further research is to optimize ethnic dialogue, as well as a more detailed understanding of the specifics of different cultures.

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1. Introduction

The modern stage of scientific development is characterized using concepts that allow us to better understand the complex processes that characterize the interaction of ethnic groups in the period of globalization, contributing to the transition of inter-ethnic relations to a new level. The inclusion of new concepts for this area is determined by the need to create conditions for the study and prevention of interethnic conflicts. It is necessary to consider the problems of ethnic dialogue in the context of the cultures of the communities to which they belong, and the features of their real existence in society. In relation to the analysis of conditions conducive to effective ethnic dialogue, such a concept is the "image of the world". This concept can be used to explain the differences between peoples in the perception of reality.

2. Problem Statement

In psychology, the concept of "image of the world" has been actively used relatively recently, although the prerequisites were laid down in the works of Jung (2006), who considered it a dynamic, constantly changing education. Even though the fact that this concept has a long history, its content still causes discussion. Some scientists consider it as a kind of metaphor, others reduce it to a picture of the world, some emphasize its subjective, emotional character, others analyze the impact on the functioning of intelligence (Ufimtseva, 2015).

3. Research Questions

The discussion in the definition of the "image of the world" involves clarifying the term in this study from the perspective of the activity approach of A.N. Leont'ev, the presentation of the structural components of the concept in the form of factors influencing the formation of the image of the world for different ethnic groups.

4. Purpose of the Study

To conduct an interdisciplinary analysis of the concept of "image of the world", including psychological, psycholinguistic and ethno-psychological aspects, based on which to identify factors that determine the effectiveness of ethnic intercultural dialogue.

5. Research Methods

The study carried out an interdisciplinary analysis of the literature on the problem of defining the concept of "world image", based on a cross-cultural approach. As a result of a comparative analysis, the components of the "world image" are presented, which are necessary for organizing a successful dialogue between people belonging to different ethnic groups.

6. Findings

A specific description of the concept is given in the works of Leontiev (2005) and his followers. Image of the world reflects substantial world in human mentality by means of denotations and cognitive schemes. To a certain extent image of the world does not depend on an individual cognitive act, considerably defining and directing its development. Cognitive sphere develops as an integral unit particularly due to image of the world that is formed in every individual's ontogenesis. It is important to avoid the idea of the image of the world as a picture or a copy of reality, reflected in a sensory modality. "The Image of the world is actually "amodal" to the effect that it embraces extrasensory components such as meaning, sense" (Smirnov, 2016). The systematic organization of the image of the world leads to the fact that it includes those properties of objects and phenomena of the surrounding world that are important from the point of view of the historical development of this national community. They are not only products of long-term development, but also determined by the peculiarities of the organization of living space, including nature, the language system, and traditions. It is because of its integrity that the image of the world not only regulates and directs human activity, but also orders all the knowledge and ideas about the world around it. Each structural component of the image of the world performs a certain function in obtaining new knowledge or solving a life task (Martsinkovskaya et al., 2017).

In the process of interaction, a person belonging to the same ethnic group makes something to the image of the interlocutor's world, complement it. Thanks to the unifying function of language, the structure of the image of the world includes components that are common for an ethnic group, including common features in the perception and understanding of the world by people of one ethnic group. These components are value systems, and their number depends on the cultural, ethnic, psycholinguistic differences.

To ensure understanding, it is advisable to identify several groups of factors that determine the qualitative characteristics of the image of the world of persons belonging to different ethnic groups (Bogdanova, 2017).

The first group - factors determined by national culture, i.e. primarily stereotypical acts of communication characteristic of a given ethnicity, role and symbolic features of communication, objective conditions a child lives in, the current situation in the society at the period of childhood, general orientation to knowledge and education inherent in this ethnic group. The way of life determines the necessity in its corresponding orienting, managing, and mediating image in the substantial world (Leontiev, 2005).

Every person is unique, but he or she comes to the world that has been already existed. A child belongs to his or her ethnicity, society, epoch and culture. A person during of his or her development must live in accordance with the implicit and explicit models and standards of behavior specific for a given culture to date. For example, the Turkic peoples who share a common cultural space - history and language - are characterized by such features as time orientation, materiality, a certain rationalism, collectivity of being, and life in the community (Berry et al., 2002).

While learning a language a child gets some ready for use methods of understanding and classification of substantial and social reality specific to the culture and determined furthermore by the language system. Therefore, the languages of the Northern peoples have dozens of words for different types of snow, and the languages of the mountain inhabitants have many words that reflect the details of the

terrain. Mismatch of ideas about reality contributes to the difficulties of mutual understanding between ethnic groups.

People belonging to diverse ethnicities may have different conceptions of ideal personality. All nations appreciate intelligence, health, diligence, honesty, etc. The most precious human qualities for the Uzbeks and Kazakhs are good intention, good word and good deed; the Chuvash esteem seven virtues – diligence, health, intelligence, friendship, kindness, chastity, honesty. But the idea of male qualities may differ: a real warrior among the Tatars, Bashkirs, etc. differs from the Russian «good fellow».

Ethnic differences between language personalities are also revealed in associations. For example, for most of the people blue color is associated with sky. There are differences in the white color: white is associated with snow for the Russians, cotton for the Uzbeks, milk for the Kazakhs. Yellow is associated with an autumn leaf for the Russians, millet for the Uzbeks (Zalevskaya, 2015). These examples show the nature of the reflection of cultural realia, way of life, features of practical activity in a vocabulary of a language personality.

National and culturally specific features of communication are manifested in allowed and forbidden types and varieties of communication in the community (communication taboo), stereotyped acts of communication included in the national culture fund of the given ethnicity, and in etiquette characteristics of universal acts of communication.

Adequate use and understanding of nonverbal signals – natural gestures, vocalizations that may have different meanings in different ethnic groups-is of great importance for conflict prevention. This helps the person to focus the intentions of a dialogue partner and understanding non-verbal signals can lead to the establishment of consent. For example, laughter in many cultures is a sign of fun, and in some African tribes it is an expression of surprise or bewilderment. People can easily recognize emotions by facial expressions and expressive movements within their own national group, but they can't understand them in other cultures (Kidd, 2016).

The second group – *the factors* associated with implementation of speech activity. The importance of these factors consists in assessment of the relation between linguistic and psycholinguistic units. Linguists consider a language as a complex multilevel structure low level unit whereof represent constituent elements of higher-level units. Language units relate to the language or to the language standard, i.e. to the language system or language norm objectively existing in the “memory” of a social group. An individual faces the language in its substantial existence: the language appears for this individual as a certain exterior form (Sharifian, 2017). Thus, the Vietnamese use a linear principle of creating an utterance due to the peculiarities of the Vietnamese language system. In recognizing color shades, the Russians and the Vietnamese use different strategies. The Vietnamese correlate a color shade with an object, e.g. “the color of rice sprouts”, while the Russians use the word strategy, i.e. “light-light-green”. Spatial relations and allocating of an object in space are expressed in a peculiar way in the Vietnamese cultural and linguistic community (if compared to Russian).

The psychological structure of a word is rather complex. The main function of a word is substituting an object. Word is a language element always directed outwards and indicating either an object, or an action, or an object's quality. The world reflection in an individual being able to speak a language becomes more complex (Hymes, 1998). By means of a language an individual can interact with objects that do not

constitute his or her own experience; he or she is able to mentally operate with objects not existing at this moment. A most important function of a word is the function of generalization, i.e. the ability to analyze, abstract, and generalize the characteristics of objects; the ability not only to substitute an object, but to introduce it to the system of categorical relations. All this is reflected in the image of the world of a person belonging to an ethnic group.

Learning the meaning of words, a child learns the elements of the social experience codified in these words, i.e. objectively significant properties of objects. “For a child a language is a transmitter of the social knowledge of mankind about the world” (Leontiev, 2005, p. 89). The method of using the language for cognition and communication purposes changes in the ontogenesis.

The third is the factors determined by the peculiarities of the organization of a language as an original system of signs. There are certain principles, typical for each cultural and linguistic community, that form the basis for creating utterances, using methods of expression of spatial relations, and allocating objects in space.

Cultural and national stereotypes in verbal behavior of different nations correlate with norms of etiquette. Among these are ways to establish contacts with others, greeting forms and forms of address, manners, nonverbal communication peculiarities (e.g. the distance between the participants of a conversation), etc.

In our viewpoint, the two most significant theoretical aspects affecting the effectiveness of the dialogue of studying the role of speech in forming of an individual’s image of the world may be distinguished.

The first aspect lies in analyzing the distinctness of a language as a social phenomenon, as a condition for material and spiritual being in all the domains of the social space. A language is a social and historical product wherein the culture, social relations system, and history of a nation are expressed. The system of meanings, the mode of operation of grammatical forms embody the specific social and historical conditions for social being of a linguistic community.

There is a close relationship between the development of the individual and the assimilation of social components of communication, including verbal and expressive-mimic means (Phillipson & Wegerif, 2017). The system of social components must necessarily include those that establish relations with social or ethnic groups as higher-level systems. In the social character of language, two features can be distinguished: the social nature of language ability and the social conditionality of speech activity. In the social character of a language two features may be distinguished – the social nature of language capacity and the social dependence of speech activity.

The social nature of language ability is manifested in the fact that signs and ways of operating with them already existed in interpersonal communication and were determined by the historical experience of people belonging to a particular ethnic group, recorded in the phenomena of material and spiritual culture. The language capacity forms in a child in the process of communication. A child may become familiar with culture only with the help of adults, only by means of communicating with them. The development of an individual at all stages of socialization is socially determined – by the system of meanings and the rules of operating with words; by the structure of activities that include speech act; by ethical rules.

When a child learns the system of meanings of words in their native language, it is possible to consider the social determination of their speech activity as complete by learning the social experience recorded in the meanings.

The second aspect is important—the analysis of speech functions and the process of their formation in ontogenesis. The realization of social functions of speech relates to the process of socialization in the broad sense of the word, including the awareness of oneself as a representative of an ethnic group. Speech is a means of communication, assimilation of social experience, but also a means of entering a language community, assimilation of individual traditions and values of this ethnic group. The communicative function plays an important role in planning your own behavior. The realization of intellectual functions is manifested in the fact that speech helps the individual to relate to the objective reality through its signification and allows for generalizations (Vygotsky, 2019). Personal functions help a person in self-awareness, reflection, self-expression, and self-regulation. Speech functions develop in the ontogenesis gradually, which affects the formation of image of the world of a child and in the future, it will affect his ability to enter a dialogue with representatives of other ethnic groups (Bogdanova, 2017).

The fourth group can include factors that characterize the ethnicity of parents, their social status, the social and cultural level of the family, affecting the success of the child's development of social roles and awareness of their belonging to an ethnic group, positions in different systems of interpersonal relationships..

It is of an importance for the formation of image of the world at early stages of the ontogenesis, since parents and children use the same means of communication – a common language.

Since the very beginning of a child's life the social environment is presented to him or to her as a family interaction system. In the beginning, the parents are the only bearers of social relations and the only link to the surrounding world for their child. Psychologists distinguish three components in the structure of parents' relations: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral (Robbins, 2018). Inappropriate impression of a child may be diverse. The child may be treated as infirm, may be underestimated; the child may be imposed a role of “a little boy” or “a little girl”, and be convinced of being helpless, dependent, and unable to live without his or her parents; one may impute lack of social success to the child, feel anxious about his or her future, disbelieve in his or her well-being, lower his or her status among the peers, treat him or her as a socially dangerous and ill-disposed person.

The child's relationship with siblings is important. Thanks to these relationships, the child learns the stereotypes of behavior with conditionally equal partners, learns to cooperate and resist. Birth order and a corresponding role position in the family are of a prime importance in the child's successive life (Alfred, 2015). Thus, an individual tends to hold the position in his own family according to the position he or she held among the siblings when a child. The most stable marriages are those providing comfortable age and role position correlation for both spouses (e.g. a marriage between the younger sister of brothers and the elder brother of sisters).

Each role position (the elder, younger or only child, the elder brother of brothers, etc.) has its own distinctive features: thus, the elder child in the family strives for achievement, possesses leadership qualities. The only child in the family inherits characteristics of his or her parent of the same sex, etc. The first-born child is the first who finds unique modes of behavior in the family that help him or her to feel

significant, to get the necessary attention from the parents. The second child after babyhood (a period of the unconditional love of a mother) gets in a situation where he or she must find means of achieving love and attention from the parents. Unlike the elder sibling for whom all the doors were open, the little one is in a trickier situation. Depending on birth order a child chooses vacant role positions within the family that allow him or her to get enough parental attention (Alfred, 2015). As a result of playing a particular role in the family system, certain personal qualities form in a child, whereby the child's subsystem is heavily affected by the parents' system, since it is the parents who affix various positions in their children (whether consciously or unconsciously).

The fifth group includes educational factors, such as features of training and education, methods of rewards and punishments adopted in this national community. Thus, the peculiarities of perception of the world and building judgments in traditional culture are related to the method of training used. It is carried out not by explaining, but by showing a set of movement stereotypes. Children develop a unique ability to act instantly in the most difficult conditions, quickly master new movement patterns.

It is education that contributes to the development of a child's personality and cognitive capabilities, and its influence is determined by the level of economic, scientific and cultural development that exists in a national community.

7. Conclusion

The image of the world as an integral system of ideas or a set of human knowledge about the world, oneself, and other people, through which any external influences are refracted, serves as the basis for organizing a dialogue between people belonging to different ethnic groups. The child gradually learns the culture and traditions of an ethnic group, the norms of communication and rules of behavior, including the culture of dialogue. It is necessary to create conditions for the formation of such an image of the world that will contribute to the formation and consolidation of tolerant attitudes towards representatives of other ethnic groups, understanding and respect for their traditions and values.

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