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# **Comparative Cultural Studies**

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## Introduction

“In the beginning was the Word”. As is well-known these are the first words of the Bible. They are very true, especially for a linguist.

In the beginning – or rather – at the beginning of any academic course or text there must be definitions of all the key-words, especially those of the title. The Key-Word of this course of, invariably, the word Culture. It is a well-known fact that the word culture (kultura – in Russian) comes/originates from the Latin word *cultura* which was an agricultural term meaning just *agriculture, cultivating/tilling land*. Cicero, the very famous Roman orator, was the first one to use the word in a new transferred meaning: upbringing, education, cultivating human mind. Now this word is polysemantic, i.e. has a number of meanings.

The meaning associated with the term *culture* is *referring to arts or to spiritual life*.

However, nowadays, that is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the word is in the centre of scholarly and public attention with its anthropological meaning, i.e. as a **term of cultural anthropology**. It may be summed up as a set of beliefs, customs, traditions, systems of values, ways of life, etc. of certain groups of people in a certain place at a certain time.

A very detailed definition is given by Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

**a.:** the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity of learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations.

**b.:** the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; also: the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time <popular *culture*>, <Southern *culture*>.

**c.:** the set of shared attitude, values, goals and practices that characterizes an institution or organization <a corporate *culture*>

**d.:** the set of values with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic <studying the effect of computers on print *culture*>.

Learner’s Dictionary ([www.learnersdictionary.com](http://www.learnersdictionary.com)) :

Culture – the beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time.

The reasons for this keen and broad interest are clear: **the processes of globalization** caused by **geopolitical cataclysms** with nations and peoples moving and **mixing** in a great, unprecedented scale, on the one hand, and the **technological breakthrough** which has given fantastic opportunities for free mass communication through the internet, on the other hand.

The mass mixing of people of different languages and cultures has been leading to **cultural conflicts which hamper communication** and make international communication and cooperation **difficult and problematic**.

That is why studies of the global culture and of the national ones are in the centre of scholarly and public attention now. **Consequently, the academic discipline studying culture** is developing very quickly. The most popular up-to-date **method** for investigating culture and cultures is the **comparative one**. Such trends as **typologies of cultures, the contrastive analysis of various regional and social cultures** (East and West, Europe and Asia, mass and elite ones), etc.

The **comparative method** was developing and domineering in philosophy from **the times of antiquity**.

As for **cultural studies**, they began as late as the **19<sup>th</sup> century**, and were initiated by Russian scholars. Alexey Stepanovich Khomyakov (1804–1860) studied the history of culture (among other things) and used the comparative method for different stages of its progress.

A little later, **Nikolay Yakovlevich Danilevsky**, a biologist, the founder of **Nikitsky Botanical Garden** in Crimea, published a book “Russia and Europe” in 1869 where he developed the bright idea of world civilizations, or cultural-historical types. The book is very interesting and topical even now. Being a biologist, he described the birth, flowering and death of cultural-historical types at different stages of the world history.

Thus, the Russian scholars started this new academic trend but it was further developed by British historians among whom **Arnold Joseph Toynbee** (1889–1975) was the most eminent, versatile and prolific scholar. Indeed, he was a historian, philosopher of history, historian and philosopher of culture, a sociologist. His twelve-volume analysis of different types of civilizations in “A Study of History” (1934–1941) played an important part in the progress of cultural studies.

Later – and American researcher Leslie Alvin White – “The Science of Culture” in 1949 where he presents culture as a system using both comparative and systematic approach. 21<sup>st</sup> century introduced a new parameter: global–local.

Going back to Russian scholars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century I would like to dwell in the arguments between slavophiles and westerners.

(a centaur – a creature with a human upper body and the lower body and legs of a horse).

### **Terms**

Russian: **сравнительная культурология**

English: culturology in English **implies comparative studies** while *культурология* implies a branch of cultural anthropology which studies the cultural development of humans unlike physical anthropology.

Thus, **comparative cultural studies**.

**The object** (объект) of **comparative cultural studies** is culture as a real, **actual phenomenon** and as a **concept**.

**The subject** (предмет) is contrastive studies of various/different cultures which help to better see the concept of culture (the object).

**The purpose** is to see most clearly the **world cultural picture** – historical and current.

**The comparative method** consists in comparing different cultures looking for similar and different features plus classifications and typologies of cultures.

Culturology is a young science but very versatile. It is a science concerned with culture and society. It covers philosophy, sociology, linguistics – **all humanities**.

## Lecture 1. Linguistic Aspects of Intercultural Communication

The problems of communication in general and intercultural communion in particular have become especially urgent nowadays for very obvious social, political, economic and other reasons.

It has become crystal-clear that the future of mankind depends on the so-called “human factor”, i.e. on whether people of different nations, ethnic groups representing different cultures will manage to find a common language, figuratively speaking.

Speaking literally, however, language **is** the main means of communications. Again, I am afraid, this is something well-known and obvious, and there is no need to mention it in order to state obvious things.

Another well-known truth is that obvious things are most easily ignored and forgotten, they are lying on the surface and therefore remain unseen and unnoticed – this is one of many paradoxes of human perception.

Therefore I dare draw your attention to such an obvious thing as linguistic aspects of intercultural communication.

Now the term “intercultural communication” is extremely popular, as I have already said.

However, strangely enough, 30 years ago in Russia it was almost unknown. The fact is that “the human factor” that has just been mentioned implies two barriers on the way of human communication: language and cultural ones.

Language barrier is known from the time of the Tower of Babel. Cultural barrier is unseen until a clash between your own indigenous culture and an alien one takes place. At best these clashes are surprising, but usually they are off-putting or shocking (hence, the term *culture shock*).

Thus, the cultural barrier is far more dangerous than the language barrier. It is made, as it were, of absolutely transparent glass and is imperceptible until one ends up with a black eye, having bumped into it. It is dangerous too because cultural mistakes are usually taken much more to heart than language mistakes are and this despite the fact that the former are far more excusable: there are no general rules – no grammars of culture nor dictionaries of culture – to help one avoid cultural mistakes as there are in the case of languages. We all know from our own experience that native speakers are usually very good-natured about the mistakes we make when speaking their language. But cultural mistakes, as a rule, are not forgiven so easily and make a very negative impression.

This leads to a conclusion: **all the intricacies and depth of the problems inherent in inter-linguistic and cross-cultural communication are shown up particularly clearly, and sometimes even acknowledged, in juxtaposition of foreign languages with one's own mother tongue, and of foreign cultures with one's own culture.**

Indeed, only knowledge of at least two languages and two cultures reveals certain concealed characteristics – as distant horizons are revealed from mountain tops – and, accordingly, concealed difficulties not visible from the level of one language. From this an important practical conclusion may be drawn: **native speakers who teach their mother tongue as a foreign language and who do not know the mother tongue of their students see neither the concealed characteristics nor the concealed difficulties.** And this accounts for the great advantage – surprise, surprise! – enjoyed by non-native teachers of foreign languages over native speakers of these languages.

What are the main linguistic difficulties hampering international and intercultural communication?

First of all, as the subject of my talk is “Linguistic aspects of intercultural communication”, it is necessary to state the interrelation between language and culture. They are inseparable. Language is part of culture and culture is part of language.

The interrelation of language and culture is traditionally expressed through widely-used metaphors: **language is a mirror of culture**, it reflects the world around us and the world inside us. Moreover, it also reflects a people's collective-self-consciousness, its mentality, national character, way of life, customs and traditions, moral standards and values, and world outlook.

**Language is a treasure-house, repository of culture.** Cultural values are stored in all its forms – lexis, grammar, idioms, proverbs, sayings, in folklore, fiction and non-fiction, oral and written discourse.

**Language is a transmitter, a carrier of culture;** it passes on the treasures of national culture that are preserved in it, from generation to generation. In mastering their native language, children also assimilate the generalized cultural experience of preceding generations.

**Language is an instrument of culture.** It forms the identity of a native speaker by forcing upon him or her the world-view, mentality, attitude to people, a system of values etc., inherent in it – in other words, the culture of a people who use this language to communicate with one another.

**As a mirror language reflects not just culture but the whole world surrounding us.** It creates, as we all know very well, a language picture of the world. This picture is nation-specific and it is imposed on native speakers of the language.

Developing this metaphor with a picture, what language reflects can be presented as a **mosaic** which is made of little pieces – words and other language units functionally equivalent of words.

Thus, learning a language in general and a foreign language in particular begins with learning a word – first the sound (oral form) or the look of it (written form) – and then the meaning. The forms of words of different languages are obviously different (the Tower of Babel!) but their meanings must be the same to make international communication possible.

In other words, you are learning a foreign language in order to be able to communicate, but communication is possible only on the basis of *a shared code*. To share a code you must know the meanings of foreign word and the meanings must be *the same* in both languages for if they are different the code is not shared.

However, words of different languages denoting the same things may be different in many ways.

1. The volume of semantics (the sizes of corresponding pieces of the two mosaics). The Russian *dom* has a broader meaning than the English *house*: it includes *home, building, block of flats, condominium, mansion*.

2. Stylistic connotations: *bagrovyy* and *crimson* coincide semantically but *bagrovyy* has negative connotations while *crimson* has positive connotations. (Pieces of the two mosaics differ in colour (or shades of colour).

3. Use in speech (*dom* – in a Russian address: Dostoevsky Street *dom*, 10; in English it is: 10 Downing street).

4. The more concealed are collocational, or lexical-phraseological constraints governing the use of language. This means that any word in any language has its own, characteristic only of the language in question, set or reserve of words with which it is compatible. That is to say, it is ‘friends’ and harmonizes (combines) with certain words and is not ‘friends’, and therefore never harmonizes (combines) with others. Why does the English verb *to pay* (give somebody money for goods, services, etc..) collocate with such incompatible – from the Russian point of view – nouns as *attention, visit, compliments*? Why are the Russian word combinations *высокая трава* (lit., *high grass*), *крепкий чай* (lit., *firm tea*), *сильный дождь* (lit., *strong, powerful rain*) translated into English as *long grass, strong tea* and *heavy rain*?

There is only one answer to this: each word has its own mode of collocation or valency. And it is nation-specific (not universal) in the sense that it is characteristic only of a given word in a given language. The specific character of collocation becomes evident only in juxtaposition with other languages much as one becomes aware of one’s own culture through coming into contact (clashing) with an alien culture. Thus native speakers of a language do not see the

problem, it never occurs to them that in a certain language *tea* can be *strong* and *compliments* – *told*.

Lexical collocation undermines the foundations of translation and interpretation. Bilingual dictionaries are a case in point. The translation of words with the help of a dictionary that gives “equivalents” of their meanings in another language can lead students astray and encourage them to use foreign words in contexts typical of their own language.

Let us take, for example, a very simple (in terms of its commonness) word *книга* and its English equivalent *book*. English-Russian dictionaries give this word in its most frequently occurring collocations:

*A book on/about birds* – книга о жизни птиц

*A reference book* – справочник

*A cheque book* – чековая книжка

*A ration book* – карточки

*To do the books* – вести счета

*Our order books are full* – мы больше не принимаем заказов

*To be in smb’s good/bad books* – быть на хорошем, плохом счету

*I can read her like a book* – я вижу ее насквозь

*We must stick to/go by the book* – надо действовать по правилам

*He was brought to book for that* – за это его привлекли к ответу

Only one of these is translated into Russian as *книга*.

Sometimes these differences in collocations may be quite striking. For instance, one can shock an audience by stating that native speakers of English, as is indicated by the language, do not wash their heads. And, indeed, in the direct sense – with soap and water – they do not. They *wash their hair*, the equivalent to the Russian word combination *мыть голову* (lit., to wash one’s head). It is surprising, with political correctness being such an issue today, that nobody has become concerned about hurting the feelings of the bald. Do they also have to say *to wash one’s hair* in English although it would come more naturally to them to say, as in Russian, *to wash one’s head*? We all have heads, but as for hair... The English expression, *to wash one’s head*, is used figuratively and here its meaning is close to the Russian – also figurative – expression *намылить кому-нибудь голову/шею* (lit., to soap sb’s head, neck, fig., to reproach sb severely)

Another example. Within the same syntactic pattern “Adjective + Noun” the word *dead* may realize the lexical meaning “no longer living” with names of plants, animals, persons, but, with nouns denoting periods of time (hours, days, weeks, seasons, etc.) it means “without movement or activity”: *in the dead hour of the night* implies “when everything is quiet”. “A *dead*

*hour*” is also the time of daytime sleep after lunch in children’s institutions. The same word combined with colour terms means *lacking brilliance*, with nouns denoting sound – *dull, heavy*.

Thus, the “equivalence” of words of different languages seems to be more and more unrealistic, or, rather, less and less probable. But even in those rare cases when all these purely linguistic moments actually correspond in different languages and words seem to be fully equivalent, one should not forget about extra-linguistic differences, i.e. the fact that both the things and the concepts underlying the things can differ.

5. Sociocultural connotations.

At this point the equivalence of meanings turns into a real problem. The problem is that the so-called “meaning” of the word (i.e. a reference of a certain complex of sounds or letters to a thing or phenomenon of the real world) is actually a thread connecting the world of speech with the world of reality. Or, rather, it is a path leading from the world of speech to the real world. Then every word of every speech community leads to the world where the language-users live.

And here comes the most difficult and controversial point of dialectics of communication, which will be dealt with in the next lecture.

## Lecture 2. Dialectics of Communication.

“A thought spoken is a lie”

Fyodor Tyutchev,

a Russian poet

As is well-known, the concept of dialectics dates back to the philosophy of Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 535 – c. 475 BC) who put forward the idea that everything is in constant change as a result of inner strife and oppositions. The opposing forces are contradictions. Consequently, the development of human knowledge and society is a dialectical process based on the clash of contradictions.

There is no doubt that a most important factor in the life and progress of mankind is a very well developed system of human communication. And that is where Language comes into play because the natural human language, both oral and written, is the main means of communication.

The contradictions of communication through language may be presented and discussed first as the permanent **basic contradiction** and then as some new contemporary contradictions resulting from modern ways and possibilities of communication presented by new technologies.

The basic, permanent contradiction, i.e. contradiction #1, appears to be implicit in the definition of language given by most dictionaries: **a system of sounds, symbols, etc. for communicating thought**. This widely known definition emphasizes the most important function of language: realizing thoughts by means of language units, expressing thoughts, exchanging them, putting them into practice through words and their equivalents. The key role of the thought expressed by a language unit and thus realized (put into action), is well illustrated by an English set-phrase: *in thought, word and deed* (from the Book of Prayers).

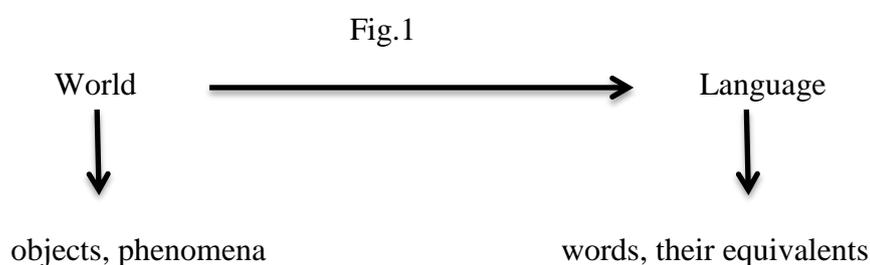
But where does the basic contradiction between thought and word come from? It becomes especially clear and vivid in the case of international, interlinguistic communication.

For example, why is a simple English sentence: *That morning she had a headache and stayed upstairs* untranslatable into Russian, or, to put it more mildly, very difficult to translate into Russian?

The short answer to this is: the problem arises because a word is not just a label attached to an object or a phenomenon of reality. However, this categorical statement requires an explanation, which will involve, among other things, repeating some well-known truths.

Every natural human language is supposed to reflect the world, or rather both the outer and inner world of human beings, This is illustrated by a popular metaphor: *Language is the*

*mirror of the world/culture*. Communication, first and foremost, implies the giving and/or exchanging of information. For human beings the best way to do this is via words. Thus, a word may be defined as a set of sounds (for oral communication) or that of graphic symbols (for the written form) attached to an object or a phenomenon of the human world. It sounds simple and logical but it is here that problems and difficulties arise. The relation between the human language and the world it reflects seems to be close and direct: The human language reflects the world (or – rather – the worlds, both the outer and the inner ones) by means of its units: words and their equivalents. Thus, there seems to be two levels: the level of the World with objects and phenomena that live and function there and the level of Language where linguistic units (words and their equivalents) live and function, expressing the objects and phenomena of the world. The relation may be illustrated by fig. 1 representing the two levels participating in human communication.



If it were so straightforward and simple, communication would be also easy and simple, which would make language teachers, and especially translators and interpreters the happiest professionals in the world.

However, it is not so.

The last two words in the given example – *stayed upstairs* – do refer to seemingly clear objects of the real world but they cannot be adequately understood and translated into another – Russian – language (and, possibly, many other languages as well) because the English concept of a house with specific functions of *upstairs* in contrast with *downstairs* is different (and therefore, meaningless) to Russian culture (and to many others). Therefore, it cannot be translated, i.e. expressed by linguistic means of those other languages that reflect culturally different worlds. Russian houses may have two or more floors and there will be *upstairs* and *downstairs* in them, but the problem with understanding the simple sentence arises from the difference in the cultural **concepts** of a dwelling expressed by the words *house* in English and *dom* in Russian.

The cultural and social structure of *dom* in the Russian-speaking world is not so strict and rigid as in the English *house* where *upstairs* implies only bedrooms and bathrooms, while *downstairs* is where the family's active life goes on: cooking (kitchen), eating (dining room), rest and entertainment (sitting room), etc. In a Russian house bedrooms may be on both (or all) floors including *downstairs*, i.e. the ground floor which is usually preferred by the older

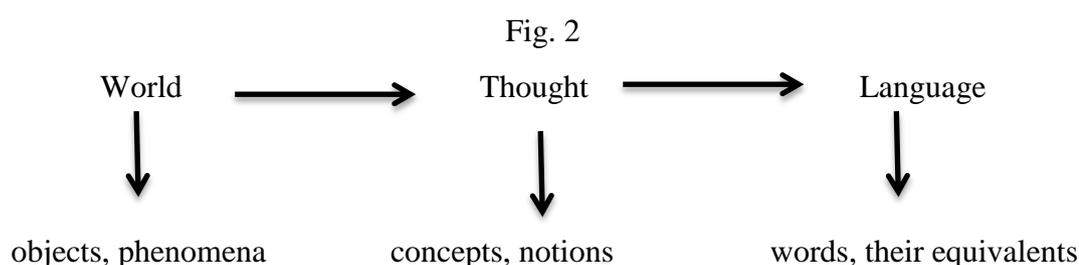
generation of the family. More than that. In the North of Russia (Arkhangelsk region, for example) “upstairs” (which is the s e c o n d floor in Russia) is where the livestock remains all through the winter. Geography and climate have determined the “strange” but actually very clever idea which saves both the health and money of the owners of the livestock. Heating a cattleshed during a long and cold Russian winter is not only expensive but it also requires a lot of hard and tiresome labour. In mid-autumn, with the first hints of cold weather, the livestock is herded “upstairs” along a ramp made of logs and stays there till spring. The people “downstairs” stoke the stove, the warm air rises and keeps animals warm. This is an example of the concept of a dwelling in a particular region of the country. It is obvious that even within one nation a word of the national language may imply a different concept of the object of the world.

Thus, it becomes clear that communication is not confined to the two levels given above. There exists one more level which is crucially important and dangerous because international communicators do not see this level and are unconscious of its existence.

This is **the level of thought or thinking** where **concepts and notions** of the human world objects and phenomena live and function. They are different in different languages as they reflect different anthropological cultures which makes international communication especially difficult.

Indeed, the problem is that words and their equivalents do reflect the human world but they give a “distorted” picture of it, the distortion caused by the level of thought where culturally determined concepts, notions, visions, images of the reflected world are presented.

This level is between the other two above-mentioned ones as illustrated in fig. 2 below.



However, there is no straight line between the word and the reflected object of the world, it is rather a zigzag (**World ↗ Thought ↘ Language**) and it turns a language into a **distorted mirror** hampering international and intercultural communication.

Interestingly, some writers and poets expressed all this in one line.

Fedor Tyutchev, an outstanding 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian poet, wrote: “*A thought spoken is a lie*” having squeezed the relation between language and thought into four Russian words: “Мысль изреченная есть ложь” (the same number of words in English plus the two articles which do not exist as a grammatical category in the Russian language).

One hundred years later an American writer W.S. Mervin wrote almost the same thing: “*Everywhere instead of a name there is a lie!*” (quoted by D. Crystal)

The contradiction between what we think and what we say, between *t h o u g h t* and *l a n g u a g e* is permanent and basic, as has been stated above.

Indeed, at the level of thinking in different languages the concepts denoted by “the same” words may differ greatly because they are determined by different cultures (different, histories, geographies, climates, etc.) of different nations.

In other words, another pitfall, even more concealed, than the mysteries and unpredictability of lexical collocation, **is the conflict between the cultural ideas held by different nations about those things and phenomena in the external world which are designated by “equivalent” words in these languages.** These cultural ideas are usually responsible for words in different languages developing varying sociocultural connotations.

For example, the lexical designation of even a universal notion expressed by the colour-term *green* arouses great doubts at the level of its absolute lexical equivalence and undoubtedly varies from language to language in view of the word’s differing metaphoric and stylistic connotations. The combination *зеленые глаза* (*green eyes*) has a poetic, romantic overtone in Russian and suggests an image of bewitching, magical or mermaid’s eyes. In English, however, the collocation *green eyes* is a metaphor for envy and contains explicit negative connotations. These negative associations were “introduced” by Shakespeare who, in “Othello”, referred to jealousy as a *green-eyed monster*.

And another example: the Russian word combination, *черная кошка*, just like its English equivalent, *black cat*, denotes a pet, a cat of black colour. But in Russian culture, traditionally, a black cat brings bad luck and therefore the word combination has negative connotations, while in English it is a symbol of good luck.

Thus, the “equivalence” of words of different languages seems to be more and more unrealistic, or, rather, less and less probable.

The socio-cultural factor, i.e. those socio-cultural structures underlying language structures, totally undermine the idea of “equivalency” of words in different languages having the same meaning, i.e. relating to the same things and phenomena in the external world.

All this becomes especially clear in case of people who are bilingual but monocultural. Of exceptional value in this regard is the information contained in Andrei Makine’s book, «Le Testament français» (The French Testament).

Andrei Makine, a Russian, was born in 1957 in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, studied at Moscow State University, and emigrated to France in 1987 where he began writing novels. His fourth book, «Le Testament français», published in 1995, was the first novel in the history of

French literature to win two prizes simultaneously: the most prestigious French literary award, the Goncourt prize and the Medici prize. All Makine's novels are written in French. Since childhood he has been bilingual in two languages: Russian and French that he learnt from his French grandmother.

The conflict between the reality of life in the Russian world and the French language becomes evident from the following excerpts from this outstanding work.

Speaking about her birthplace, Neuilly-sur-Seine, Makine's grandmother, Charlotte, refers to it as a "village".

*She had said it in French but we only knew Russian villages. And a village in Russia is inevitably a ring of izbas, indeed the very word in Russian, derevnya, comes from derevo – a tree, wood. The confusion persisted, despite the clarifications which Charlotte's stories would later bring. At the name of "Neuilly" we had immediate visions of the village with its wooden houses, its herd and its cockerel. And when, the following summer, Charlotte spoke to us for the first time about a certain Marcel Proust: "By the way, we used to see him playing tennis at Neuilly, on the Boulevard Bineau", we pictured the dandy with big languorous eyes (she had shown us his photo) – there among the izbas!*

*Beneath the fragile patina of our French words Russian reality often showed through. The President of the Republic was bound to have something Stalinesque about him in the portrait sketched by our imagination. Neuilly was peopled with kolkhozniks.*

With the passage of time, this double vision of the world, the ensuing personality split and the on-going conflict of two languages within a single culture, cause more and more inconvenience for the main character. Thus the use of two words: the Russian word *царь* and the French loan word *tsar*- results in a clash of two images in the boy's mind. Language-wise, the words are full equivalents, but the Russian word *царь* stands for the bloodthirsty tyrant Nicholas II of Soviet history book frame, whereas the French word *tsar* evokes associations of the elegant young tsar Nicholas II and his beautiful wife who had come to Paris to attend the ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone of the Alexander III Bridge and of the festive atmosphere of balls and banquets given in honour of the royal couple, i.e. it ties in with the image created in the stories told by the boy's French grandmother.

Thus, language is a mirror of both the external and cultural-conceptual world (the world of culturally dependent concepts), it reflects both of them. This mirror may be said to be distorting because, rather than an objective, impartial view of the world, it provides a subjective, nation-specific view filtered through the prism of a nation's spirit and mind. It would be more correct, therefore, to speak of language as a creative, even magic, rather than a distorting, mirror. Thus, the negative connotations of the word "distorting" can be avoided and the creative,

formative role of language in reference to man – emphasized. After all, language does more than passively reflect everything that people obtain through their sensual, creative and cultural experience. It (language) simultaneously moulds (in continuous interaction with mind and culture) the native speaker as a member of the given socio-cultural community by instilling and developing in him/her a system of values, morals, attitudes and behavioral patterns.

Using the widely-spread metaphor about language (or culture) picture of the world, one can say that each nation has its own cultural vision of the world as do art movements. One and the same hay stack would be seen quite differently by a realist, impressionist, cubist, or abstract artist and therefore look quite different in their reproduction of it. Language can be compared to an artist who paints from life and creates a model of it, the real-life objects having been transformed by his or her creative imagination.

The reflection of the world in language is the collective artistic effort of the nation speaking that language. Along with their mother tongue, each new generation is presented with a complete cultural set of national character traits, systems of values, world-view (mind the inner form of this word: world-view – vision of the world) and so on.

Thus, linguistic difficulties – both open and hidden – are the problems that teachers of modern languages have to solve.

To avoid the hidden trap of lexical-phraseological collocability, the student of a foreign language should learn not individual words and their meanings but the common and more or less fixed collocations in which these words occur in the language under study.

In order to let students understand sociocultural connotations a new subject has been introduced which we call “The world of the language under study”. This subject, ideally, must be given by two parallel courses – one by a native speaker and the other one by a representative of the student’s indigenous culture.

To find a common language is a difficult task, but it can be solved if we are fully aware of pitfalls and traps on the road to peace and cooperation. Linguists and teachers studying and teaching world languages must unite their efforts in order to shatter barriers – linguistic and cultural – separating people.

And now, some **new, contemporary** (and, hopefully, temporary?) **contradictions**.

The recent great scientific breakthrough in the sphere of communication has determined an equally great increase in its potential which invariably has generated new contradictions.

These new kinds of contradictions caused by globalization processes may be presented as follows.

## 1. A contradiction between technical and human factors

Indeed, “the human factor” presents a number of problems hampering the idea of international communication.

A happy global life in the global village is impossible without a global language. Choosing one language as global or international implies giving up, rejection, and even the death of national languages. And this is a sacrifice that no nation seems to be ready to make, yet.

Undoubtedly, nowadays it is the English language which has become a means of international communication. Its position has come into being due to a number of objective social and historical factors. These factors are so obvious that they require very little explanation.

For a few centuries it was the language of the world superpower, namely, the British Empire where “the sun never set”. This superpower was superseded by that of the USA where the language of communication is again English. The time before the World War II and the opposition of the USA and the USSR for about 30 years after this war somewhat delayed the progress of the USA and the English language in the world, but the final collapse of the Soviet Union in early 1990’s ensured the rapid progress of the USA as the only world superpower and English as its language. The fall of the USSR was immediately accompanied by the consequent fall of the Russian language and culture on the world scene. Since that moment the position of the English language, – the language of Great Britain and the USA, the two subsequent world superpowers for more than four centuries, plus the third superpower of the Internet born in the USA, – as the global language of the globalizing world has become firm and unrivalled. Nowadays, the sun never sets in the empire of the English language...

David Crystal has formulated this in crystal clear words, as usual. The twentieth century’s promotion and expansion of English was determined by “the economic (I would add – and, consequently, political – S. T.-M.) supremacy of the new American super power. And the language behind the US dollar was English” (D. Crystal, 1997:8).

However, the reaction of the rest of the world to globalization has been contradictory. Instead of being overjoyed by the opportunities of international communication presented by new technology and a happy global life as its consequence most nations are reluctant, putting it mildly, to accept the idea of replacing their national languages with English. More than that. Even those nations that have virtually stopped using their own language (like the Irish, for example), and have been using English as a means of communication are now reviving their indigenous languages or, rather, languages **and cultures**, the latter being reflected and at the same time moulded by language. This is the human factor in action.

Thus, the most formidable obstacles on the way to successful international and intercultural communication as well as to a happy life in “the global village” are national language and culture barriers.

The Advent of His Majesty the Internet has provided new, unique, fantastic ways and means of communication and the ever-increasing spread of the Internet has the most powerful impact on the development of international communication. However, it is very contradictory both in its essence and its results.

Indeed, on the one hand, the Internet leads to a “global village”, a cosmopolitan society, a world wide web (www), an international Internet family where peculiarities of national mentality, ideology, culture, etc. are mixed, diluted, dissolved and may cease to exist.

On the Internet the International reigns supreme over the National. On the other hand, as has been mentioned above, no nation agrees to give up its national identity.

A different feature of the Internet lies in its interactivity, its openness and popularity, its democracy. Increasingly, individual members of human society have a real opportunity to express their personal opinions of – attitude to – what is going on, what is being discussed, a chance to actively participate, exchange ideas, find supporters, co-thinkers, co-workers, co-livers, and last but not least, to stop feeling lonely. Unlike the mass media which flood their recipients/clients with all kinds of message/impact-oriented information, the Internet involves all its users in communication, enables them to share their opinions and ideas and to discover like-minded people all over the world.

Thus, the individual person is **the object** of mass media activities and both **the subject and the object** of Internet communication.

## **2. A contradiction between the global (or international) language and national languages.**

Indeed, one single language may become the lingua franca of international communication. It has already happened, or, to be more politically correct, it has been happening.

There is no need to dwell upon obvious facts: never before in human history has there been such a migration and mixing of people representing different nations and, consequently, never before has there been such a great demand for international communication as well as for a global language serving as a means of international communication.

The demand is ever-growing.

Alongside the International bodies (UNESCO, the United Nations, etc.) responsible for international security and communication there are the ever-growing regiments (armies?) of the giant international industries, business and trading companies –products of the globalization of

economics. As their interests also demand a lingua franca, these companies, concerns, trusts, etc. while getting more and more powerful become less and less sentimental about national languages and cultures.

The introduction of a global language (English or any other – depending on socio-historical factors, on political and economic supremacy) is an attractive idea that would seem to solve many problems: make international communication easy, save a lot of money for International bodies, companies, etc, ease the life of armies of language teachers, translators and interpreters, leaving them only creative forms of human activities (translating fiction, for example), promote the progress of science and technology and so on and so forth.

At the same time it might lead to “the greatest intellectual disaster that the planet has ever known” (Crystal, 1997; p. 140), and, actually, not just intellectual...

Since the diversity of languages represents the diversity of cultures, and the diversity of cultures implies a great variety of ideas, beliefs, traditions, ways of life and visions of the world, using one “international” language for international communication would lead to the levelling and neglect of all other-language-speaking nations, robbing them of their national identity, of all the various results of national cultural development, and, finally, to a sharp decrease in the amount of cultural information in cyberspace.

### **To sum up**

The great scientific breakthrough of modern times is being hampered by the human factor. The idea of uniting the whole human world into “a global village” seems to realize the eternal dream of mankind living in peace and friendship with all nations. However, as the global village needs one global language, this implies giving up all the other languages, cultures, national identities which would lead to a clash among nations. In the conflict between technical pros and human cons the latter prevailing which results in an ever growing number of international, intercultural, interethnic conflicts.

According to the theory of dialectics, resolving present day contradictions brings to life new ones which ensures the progress of mankind. This is a somewhat discouraging and at the same time encouraging contradictory conclusion.

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### **Lecture 3. Foreign Language Learning and Teaching (FLLT) as the Most Widely-spread and Productive Way of Shattering Barriers to International and Intercultural Communication. A View from Russia. Part 1.**

It is common knowledge that there are a number of devices ensuring international communication which have been used from time immemorial: first and foremost, translation and interpreting. However, all of them are based on learning, and, consequently, teaching foreign languages.

I am going to discuss this subject using the source I know best of all: Foreign Language Learning and Teaching (FLLT) in Russia. I happen to be a product of this system of language education and have lived long enough to compare the two very different systems in the two very different countries: the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation.

The result and consequences of the history of FLLT in the old Russia are important to be mentioned as they underlie the state of the art in the new Russia.

The challenges and confusions of the present are rooted in traditions and certainties inherited from the past.

These traditions are historically, socially, culturally determined and, naturally, have both advantages and disadvantages or, rather, positive and negative aspects.

Let's begin with a short survey of the history of FLLT in Russia.

A deep love of foreign languages - and, consequently, a deep interest in cultures and modes of life of other nations and peoples – has always been so typical and characteristic of Russian social life that it might be considered an inherent feature of the Russian, national character. Being isolated by its geographic situation (both Europe and Asia or neither Europe nor Asia – as you like it) Russia, unlike other geographically and culturally isolated countries, has always tried to overcome this uniqueness and isolation which has resulted in a deep interest in foreigners and everything foreign mingled with curiosity and even admiration. This makes Russia unique because, unlike “normal” insular nations, for example, the Japanese and the British, that have developed a distrust for everything foreign and foreigners which is reflected and confirmed by their languages and cultures, Russians maintain a keen and lively interest in everything foreign.

However, here an important reservation must be made. The foreign world and its inhabitants that seem to have been so attractive to Russians, actually, for a number of centuries has meant, mostly, the Western world. It can be explained by some historical facts. Indeed,

Russia came to existence in Europe, its both capitals – Moscow and Saint-Petersburg – have been in Europe. Asia was associated with Tatars and Mongols who had conquered Russia in its early history and “the Tatar yoke” had lasted for about two hundred years. The Russian language has reflected and confirmed this difference in attitude to East and West: “He is a real European” sounds as a compliment (*civilized, decent, cultured*) while “He is a real Asian” implies somewhat opposite features.

At the same time, being Europe-oriented, Russians, like Brits, feel and keep aloof from Europe when both of them say: *We are going to Europe* which is more understandable with Brits living in the isles and separated from the continent by the sea to put it this way than with Russians living in the continent.

At different stages in Russian history different European languages have been the focus of public attention. In the 18-th century German was very popular, partly because most spouses of Russian Tsars, including Catherine the Great, came from Germany. Contemporary Russian historian calculated that the last Russian tsar Nicholas II had only 1/64<sup>th</sup> of Russian blood in him. Just one more little illustration: in 1755 when Moscow University was founded by tsarina Elizabeth, Peter the Great’s daughter, all professors were Germans. The only exception was Mikhail Lomonosov, the founder of the University, who got his education (and wife!) in Germany. In the 19-th century French became a means of communication for Russian nobility (which in those days meant the educated layer of society) to such an extent that it virtually ousted Russian (Only one example: Ekaterina Dashkova (1743-1810), Head of St Petersburg Academy of Sciences and Russian Academy knew four foreign languages but could hardly speak Russian). Since the 20-th century, especially after World War Two, it has been English, English, English ousting other European languages and flooding Russian.

During the Soviet period, the situation with Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) as part of educational system went through a series of dramatic ups and downs. In the early years of Soviet power, the attitude to foreign languages was negative: they were treated as luxuries of “people’s enemies” - the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. The most unfortunate one was French as it was most closely associated with the Russian elite society.

However, in the late 1920-ies, after heated debates, foreign languages were returned to secondary school curricula. As usual, a pendulum swung forth, one fashion substituted for another one; the new campaign with the slogan: “Foreign languages - to the masses” introduced foreign languages into educational institutions including Universities with the same enthusiasm as the previous campaign had banished them. Since that time foreign languages have always been part of the curriculum in the Soviet system of education, but the official attitude to them was far from being positive. In the 1930-ies and 1940-ies foreign languages were “out of

fashion” as a suspicious subject that led straight into the arms of “potential enemies”, which actually meant the rest of the world. People who studied foreign languages were also suspicious as they were potential spies, potential emigrants and/or potential cosmopolitans. They lacked loyalty and patriotism because they did not seem to be satisfied with their own language, culture, country, world. This attitude, slowly growing milder with years, remained dominant to the end of the Soviet period.

When I chose English linguistics as a profession it was a difficult and dangerous step. My father was very worried about me when as far back as 1956 I decided to enter the English Department of the Philological faculty at Moscow State University because he knew that to study foreign languages in general and English in particular was suspicious as it was “the language of a potential enemy”.

However, in Russia we have been learning and teaching English, as well as other modern languages, under all possible and impossible circumstances – for better, for worse, for richer and for poorer. Mostly – for worse and for poorer. Even when we were completely cut off from the English-speaking world, we kept studying English - risking our reputation, career, sometimes freedom and even life. For years and years it was not a promising career as it is now. It has always been “love for love’s sake”, a keen and deep interest in the culture and way of life of other nations.

For decades, under such circumstances, generations of teachers, who never set their eyes - or ears! - on a native speaker of a foreign language, taught generations of students without any proper equipment, without authentic Foreign Language Learning and Teaching (FLLT) materials, developing chalkboard theories and poor-but-honest, necessity-is-the-mother-of-invention techniques, and they did it brilliantly.

As a consequence, FLLT in Russia has accumulated valuable experience in doing its job under all kinds of possible and impossible conditions, including political and social emergencies. This experience is deep-rooted and stems from various social, historical and cultural reasons. One important social reason is that the USSR was a multi-lingual state with Russian as lingua-franca. Soviet linguists were committed to the cultivation of a standard Russian language, to prodigious lexicographic activity including publishing learner’s dictionaries of Russian, to the teaching of Russian as a foreign language on a very large scale. As a result Soviet scholars developed original linguistic and pedagogical theories concerning Foreign Language Learning and Teaching.

Before "perestroika", before the sudden, drastic and dramatic changes in Russian social life, the English language was taught as a dead language. I can see at least two explanations for this strange but habitual state of affairs. One is, as I understand, shared with us by most

European countries and that is the tradition of classical and philological education - both secondary and higher - being based on studies of classical languages - first and foremost - Latin.

The British educational system, for instance, was dominated by classical studies up to the 70-ies of the XX century.

Interestingly, in Russia the “revolution” that changed the same situation started more than a hundred years earlier: in 1849 a teacher of French in Kazan Universtiy began a campaign for promoting and improving the situation with the teaching of modern languages. His suggestions were formulated as follows:

- 1) to regard teaching new (modern) foreign languages as a main discipline;
- 2) to have the Russian teachers who have a good command of modern foreign languages;
- 3) to start foreign language teacher-training from secondary school (“grammar school”, gymnasium);
- 4) an obligatory trip to the country of the language under study (“as the one who has never been to the country of the language is like the blind who knows colours and paints only by description”);
- 5) a teacher who is the native speaker of the language under study must know the students’ mother-tongue.

The last requirement is of special interest and importance.

In the Soviet Union under the circumstances of complete isolation behind the Iron Curtain the goals and techniques of dead language studies were applied to living ones. The goal was to read classical authors, the methods were concentrated on grammar studies.

The second reason was political, ideological and, therefore, uniquely Russian.

The history of the former Soviet Union has provided English Language Learning and Teaching with an extremely interesting experiment. Indeed, ELLT in the USSR was an experiment – enormous in scale and with amazing consequences - in how to teach a foreign language if learners (and teachers, of course) are completely isolated from the world where this foreign language is naturally used. "Completely" in this context means just that, with no leakage in the form of radio, television, native speakers, books, newspapers, language teaching materials, no hint of what is called the culture of the nation in the broad, anthropological sense of the word, where "culture" does not mean "arts" but means "the way people live", how they see the world, what they believe in, how they work, how they rest, what and how they eat, what kind of homes they have, etc. The experiment was very "pure": for most people the fear of being accused of cosmopolitanism and lack of patriotism was too great to allow them to use the scanty opportunities for contact with foreigners which might occasionally arise. It was safer to sit quietly behind the Iron Curtain and learn the language of Shakespeare and Dickens through their works, which

were ideologically proper and approved of by the authorities (the so-called "contemporary English" was represented by John Galsworthy's "The Forsyte Saga").

This historical experiment has shown quite vividly and convincingly what happens to a language under such circumstances: it dies. And you teach and learn it as a dead language, like Latin or Ancient Greek. Thus, for decades, the English language, like all "the languages of capitalist countries", was dead in the Soviet Union because the world of its users did not exist.

### **Traditions and Characteristic Features**

The traditions of FLLT in Russia and its most characteristic features are - as everywhere else - both good and bad, efficient and inefficient, brilliant and absurd. And all of them are, naturally, determined by various social, cultural and historical factors.

The FLLT traditional features can be summed up as follows:

#### ***1. Depth, thoroughness, perfectionism***

The motto of Soviet times was: "Soviet means excellent." Soviet FLT set the same goal: to give a perfect knowledge of the language under study. As the teaching was confined to reading (1) classical authors for philologists and foreign language teachers and (2) professional texts for everybody else (i.e., for students of other subjects), the idea of perfectionism resulted in **a wide, deep, and thorough study of grammar and vocabulary regardless of the practical needs of students or the actual tasks of the language course.** These tasks were never set, they were taken for granted: Soviet means perfect knowledge of everything. Some special attention was paid to phonetics which was superfluous because there was nobody to speak to except the Russian-speaking teacher. It was an artificial situation with consequent results.

It is **grammar** that was in the centre of teachers' attention. We became world champions in the knowledge of grammar that was studied very deeply and thoroughly with special attention – surprise, surprise – to those aspects that were exceptions from the rules, or outdated, used only in classical literature and, therefore, archaic by definition.

Thus, FLLT was deliberately anti-pragmatic, it went very well with the ideological basis of Soviet times: to be pragmatic was "a capitalist feature," it meant to be individualistic, and it was bad. To try and learn everything in full splendour, to be perfect in all respects – that was good. The idea was, actually, quite good but impossible to be implemented.

This nation-wide practice of trying to teach everything resulted most frequently (at secondary schools and all the innumerable specialized higher education institutions) in learning next to nothing. I cannot help quoting a distinguished professor, dean of the department of

geology at Moscow State University, who once reproached me bitterly: “I have been studying tenses of the English verb all my life but I cannot put two words together.”

It worked – more or less – only with students majoring in foreign languages.

Now, in a new era, under new circumstances in a different world this, formally, theoretically (or idealistically) speaking, good tradition is hampering both FL learning and especially teaching progress. Indeed, from force of this – outdated! – tradition teachers of foreign languages continue to emphasize grammatical – and phonetic – accuracy! It is a delicate point which needs more explanation. We can strive for perfection, and the more we know about English grammar and phonetics the better. However, the **perfect** knowledge of these aspects is unreachable and even unnecessary. A foreign accent and some inaccuracy in grammar – as long as it does not stop or mislead communication – are quite normal, acceptable and expectable. “There is nothing more suspicious than a foreigner who speaks your language the way you do”, as Dr. O’Connor said in his course of phonetics for foreign students in University College London in 1973 – 1974. **For decades the perfectionists’ emphasis on formal grammar and phonetics interfered with English learners’ fluency and communication skills (which, actually, were not needed behind the Iron Curtain).**

However, nowadays – in the era of mass open international communication – overdoing this tradition of perfectionism hampers developing communicative competence of students at all levels.

## ***2. Mass production and teacher orientation***

For obvious reasons, ELT was teacher-oriented in the Soviet Union. The most obvious of these reasons was mass production, a large-scale enterprise.

Since the time of the Soviet Union modern languages have been a must on the curriculum of both secondary and higher education. The number of students of foreign languages in Russia is more than 20 million people.

It is no longer the piece-work of foreign language teaching to the elite off-spring of the Russian aristocracy. It is **mass production**. It requires special mass-production techniques and mass-production-oriented teaching materials.

The standardized, centrally governed foreign language teaching used standard textbooks and was meant for standard, uniform students with standard motivation or rather the lack of it. A result of this tendency was that FLLT was teacher-oriented, and the needs or problems of an individual student were neglected. Again it went very well both with the collectivist culture of Russians and with the neglect of the individual which was a pivot of Soviet ideology. To be individually minded was a great sin, people were taught to subordinate their individual needs or desires to the goals of the collective.

### *3. Teacher-student relations*

This resulted in a rigid, severe and distant kind of teacher-student relations which is quite dangerous because learning a foreign language, like no other subject, requires a special psychological approach, the atmosphere of relaxation, trust, even love and faith. However, the mass-production situation of teaching an obligatory subject is not exactly favourable for establishing the atmosphere of love and friendship or any special attention to the problems of the individual.

It has to be emphasized that in Russia the problem (sorry, challenge) with this tradition was deeply rooted long before the Soviet time, because the relations between Teacher and Student have always been based on the principle: Teacher is all-knowing God, Tsar and Ruler. Student is a humble believer, a slave, a subordinate. In the modern world it looks “slightly” outdated. Again at present the situation in this country is even more complicated because the era of intercultural communication revealed a purely present-day Russian problem: **a conflict of cultures between teachers and students.**

This kind of a clash of cultures is very dangerous because it **is invisible, almost incomprehensible.**

A conflict of cultures here is worse than that between different nations. It is more dangerous than the latter because it is well-hidden: the conflicting communities use the same language and belong to the same nation. However, they were born and educated in different countries with different – even opposite – ideologies, value systems, etc.

We must learn to respect our students. One of my half-jocular mottoes is “Be nice towards your students, treat them decently, in 10 years’ time they may be your bosses”.

This last but not the least, more than that, **the most pivotal problem** of FLLT concerns its psychological aspects or rather – **the psychological barrier.** This kind of barrier is strong and difficult to be broken because it is invisible, hidden deep in the mentality and **based on the feeling of fear.** Indeed, a foreign language is the most complicated and frightening object of studies – an immense, unbounded world including both the outer and inner worlds of human beings reflected by their languages. These worlds are foreign, strange, alien and scary. It is like entering the jungle full of dangers. In this situation **both the teacher and the student feel strained,** tense, uncertain (if the teacher is non-native. Native speaking teachers have different weak points).

The position of a foreign language teacher is more difficult than that of a student because of the above mentioned traditional relations between a teacher as the boss who knows everything and a student who knows next to nothing. Students expect their teacher to be a know-all which makes the teacher even more diffident.

This psychological barrier of a failure, a fear of making mistakes is a formidable obstacle to both the teacher and the student of a foreign language.

Consequently, our very urgent task nowadays is to **bridge the gap between the teacher and the student**. To do this teachers must learn to be patient and caring for students, they must see students as personalities in their own right.

I got this eye-opening experience on my first visit to Britain having got a British Council scholarship for studies on University College London more than 40 years ago. It was there that I realized that there were only two “marks” or comments given to students for their papers/home tasks: “good” and “to think about it”. It became a symbol of a new – unheard of before! – kind of teacher-student relations, and its principle was: give support, do not frighten away!

Using our well-known metaphor, teaching can be confined to either “light up the torch” or “fill in the vessel”. My appeal to all teachers is: “Do not put out the torch”, because then no one will be able to “fill in the vessel”.

Let us be humane to our students! (humane meaning: *showing kindness, care and sympathy*).

This is the best way to shatter the psychological barrier.

#### ***4. The Solid Theoretical Basis***

Another typical feature of FLLT in Russia is that it has always been well grounded theoretically.

There has always been a firm belief that a really efficient solution to the problems of language teaching must be sought for with the help of linguistics, that the practice of FLLT must be based on theoretical studies of language, that theory and practice must go hand in hand as it will do a lot of good for both of them.

In other words, English language learning and teaching must be rooted in the studies of English.

We feel especially strong in such fields as vocabulary teaching, socio-linguistic and cultural studies, lexicography, phraseology, collocation, word-combination - i.e. in all those spheres of knowledge which are centred on the study of the word's meaning.

This is how it was explained by U. Weinreich, an outstanding American linguist: “Soviet linguistics was never infected with the paralysis of semantic interest which caused most scholars during the Bloomfieldian period of linguistics in the U.S. to abdicate all semantic investigation to other ineffectual sciences...(Weinreich, 1963 p.60).

The word infected shows, in my opinion, the silver lining of the Iron Curtain which was not only a barrier isolating Russia but also a shield protecting it from “infections”.

However, the reason for this “strange” situation was quite realistic. As has been mentioned above, Soviet linguists and language teachers worked out efficient methods and had great experience in teaching Russian as a foreign language on a very large scale, as well as in prodigious lexicographic activities.

We know from our experience of teaching Russian as a foreign language that those who teach their mother tongue as a foreign language have their **weak** points which are – surprisingly! – strong points of foreign teachers of the foreign language. And it is not just a psychological aspect coming from the fact that native speakers who teach their mother-tongue to foreign students very often do not know any foreign language and therefore never went through all the difficulties, bears, sufferings and humiliations of foreign language learners. The problem is much deeper, it is a serious linguistic problem which has required a thorough investigation that has been made by linguists of the philological faculty at Moscow State University.

There are quite a few hidden linguistic pitfalls which hamper FLLT but I will discuss only one of them: collocability.

The theoretical studies of language in general and English in particular turned out to be especially important and valuable for the practice of learning and teaching those language skills which were underdeveloped for obvious reasons, namely, the skills of speech production. The obvious reasons coming from the absence of direct communication were mentioned above.

I believe it is necessary to give a brief account of the principles and of English studies in the field of speech production pursued by Soviet linguists.

As is well-known, language-study in the XX century is characterised by a shift in emphasis from one fundamental question of linguistics: describing the various facts of language possessed by a speaker, to another – no less fundamental issue: how these facts are put into operation for communication. What is the mechanism of speech formation? How are language-units combined in speech?

It has always been assumed that the most important unit of speech is the Word. Consequently, the process of speech production is viewed by many schools of linguistics as bringing words together according to some rules typical of the language in question. Correspondingly, one of the basic tenets of linguistics in general is that language contains nothing but a certain “ensemble” or stock of words (lexicology, lexicography and morphology as branches of linguistics look after words and their forms) and certain rules according to which these words are brought together or combined (syntax as a branch of linguistics dealing with organization, or construction of speech studies these rules). It follows therefore that using language, i.e. producing speech means knowing the words and knowing how to bring them together, how to arrange them in the process of speaking or writing.

However, in actual utterances words do not appear as independent items, they do not form speech events like beads strung upon a thread – they always come up in combination with one another. Thus, in the flow of speech, side by side with “monolexemic” global units – words, there exist units which, although complex in structure and consisting of formally separable elements, are functionally equivalent to separate words. These units are called collocations (in Russian – slovosochetaniye, a word-combination). It is important to clearly distinguish a word-combination (collocation) from all kinds of combination of words. This was expressed by A.M. Peshkovsky in the following way: “... this term (word-combination) is not at all equal to a mere combination of words. There are such combinations of words in speech which are not word-combinations... Any two words following each other in speech do not form a word-combination but only those which are combined in thought. In order to make a word-combination, two words must be united both in speech and in thought. Like a word, a word-combination is a unity which is inner and outer, physical and psychic at the same time. (Peshkovsky, 1956 p.34).

The collocational aspect is very important because it is one of the main concealed linguistic difficulties hampering international communication.

Actually, collocational, or lexical-phraseological constraints govern the use of language. This means that any word in any language has its own, characteristic only of the language in question, set or reserve of words with which it is compatible. That is to say, it is ‘friends’ and harmonizes (combines) with certain words and is not ‘friends’, and therefore never harmonizes (combines) with others. In other words, the problem of collocability is that of the word’s life in speech: what words it goes with, likes, attracts and what words it does not go with, dislikes, repulses.

And, for this reason, the student of a foreign language should learn not individual words and their meanings but the common and more or less fixed, **recurrent** collocations in which these words occur in a given language.

A sad experience in my academic field confirms this. The subject of my doctorate research was concerning the use of collocations in different functional styles. When in the early 70’s of the last century, I at the first meeting with Prof. Randolph Quirk, my academic supervisor and head of the seminar I attended at the department of linguistics, University College London, I was trying to explain my academic interests I was a complete failure. It was my first ever visit to “the capitalist country”, and I was the first ever student from the scary and mysterious country – the Soviet Union on whom Prof. Quirk had never set his eyes – or ears.

The first reason for the failure was the difference in terminology. We did not use the term *collocation*, so I was using our term *word-combinations* which was taken by my distinguished supervisor for *compound words*. He asked me strange questions, I gave him very

strange answers because we were talking about completely different things. Only at the very end of this fruitless and disappointing conversation it occurred to me that Prof. Quirk took my “word-combinations” for compounds. When I explained the terminological misunderstanding to him, he exclaimed: “I see, you mean collocations”. And then the famous man, the dean of the faculty of linguistics in UCL, later – the head of the University of London, Sir Randolph Quirk, announced his verdict for me and for my research: “I seem you are trying to measure the ocean with a coffee spoon”. My first thought, surprisingly, was: “not even a tea spoon. A coffee spoon” – for measuring the ocean of collocations.

When I told the story to Robert – Bob – Ilson, my friend and colleague, a member of the same seminar, he got very interested in the idea and in 1986 the first dictionary of word-combinations (our term) / collocations (their term) was published by John Benjamins Publishing Company (Amsterdam – Philadelphia) under the title: “The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English”. The BBI stands for the initials of the authors: Benson, Benson and... Ilson. Interestingly, the Foreword of the Dictionary began with the following words: The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English gives essential grammatical and lexical recurrent word-combinations, often called collocations...

In the third edition of the Dictionary published in 2009 its volume is 25% larger. Robert Ilson presented me with the first edition having written on the first page: “To Svetlana Terminosova, the mistress of all word-combinations and an inspirer of this book”. I am still very proud of it.

Thus, lexical collocation undermines the foundations of translation and interpretation. Bilingual dictionaries are a case in point. The translation of words with the help of a dictionary that gives “equivalents” of their meanings in another language can lead students astray and encourage them to use foreign words in contexts typical of their own language.

Metaphorically speaking, lexical collocability of words is a barbed wire drawn over the language barrier in order to make it even more inaccessible.

The linguistic research has shown the pivotal role of collocation in speech formation.

Thus, speech production is based on the opposition – the dialectical unity – of two contradictory factors which determine, the realization of the main functions of language message which is informative, i.e. its aim is just to give some information, in the one hand, and, on the other hand, the function of impact which aims at evoking expressive-emotional reactions –they are expressed by the opposite kinds of linguistic units. The two opposite tendencies of speech production in the process of communication can be presented at different levels of their realization in the following way.

## Communication

The Function of Message	The Function of Impact
Non-productive	Productive
Institutionalized	Creative
Fixed, Closely-bound	Free
Prefabricated	Made for this particular speech event
Usual	Occasional
Recurrent	Unique
Common	Individual
Knowledge	Art

**This theoretical conclusion is of utmost significance for the practice of English language learning and teaching.** It is obvious from the results of the linguistic research that the optimal English language teaching material for acquiring production – communicative – skills is presented by the language units of the left-side column type, that is, by collocations: recurrent, standard and commonly accepted. This is the knowledge students of a foreign language must gain while art must be left for artists.

## **Lecture 4. Foreign Language Learning and Teaching (FLLT) as the Most Widely-spread and Productive Way of Shattering Barriers to International and Intercultural Communication. A View from Russia. Part 2.**

What is the situation with foreign language learning and teaching in Russia nowadays? An answer to this question is supposed to reveal the culmination of FLLT evolution at present. The present is now habitually called “the era of globalization” and its characteristic feature is supposed to be, among other things, swift, exciting changes and development in almost every sphere of human life and activity. Indeed, nowadays the words *global*, *globalization* are absolute champions both in popularity and, consequently, in the frequency and variety of usage. Both words, as is well-known, mean something international, relating to the whole world, which is now seen – and called – *the global village* defined as “all countries of the world when thought of as being closely connected by modern communications ...”<sup>1</sup>. But the global village can not survive without a global language. However, the global village peoples still stubbornly speak their national languages. The word stubbornly is supposed to draw attention to the fact that **teaching the native language** which is undergoing great changes under the pressure of the global language and culture is not less needed or important than teaching foreign languages which now, actually, implies, mostly and invariably, English. This is not clearly seen by either the peoples of the global language, or even by the speakers of national “non-global” languages. Russia – alas – illustrates the underestimation of the problem quite powerfully.

All this makes the profession of both foreign and native language teacher extremely necessary and important – like never before. Consequently, the evolution and development of modern language learning and teaching has been accelerating – like never before, either. What is the modern language teacher nowadays? An expert in a great “bunch” of spheres of knowledge and life: the language she/he teaches, pedagogy, psychology, anthropology, social studies, cultural studies, arts, politics, technology, etc.? The modern language student nowadays, consequently, is a recipient of all this knowledge.

I will try and discuss the state of the art in this very creative and artistic profession which is both a most necessary and a most difficult one nowadays.

First of all, some preliminary remarks.

This tradition of profound love and intense interest in foreign cultures and languages mentioned above is a kind of backdrop on the stage where FLLT lives, works, suffers and flourishes. It is on this stage, with this backdrop that FLLT and FL teachers live and work.

Before I come to the actual traditional ways of teaching the basic language issues it is necessary to make a few brief historical comments about our heritage from the closest immediate past: the Soviet time.

1. In those days – or rather years (decades) – we got the following experience: how to learn and teach our beloved foreign (mainly European) languages when it is not prestigious or rewarding in any way, but suspicious and even dangerous because they were the languages of hostile nations and potential enemies. (The same situation was with Russian in “the capitalist countries” (especially the world leaders – Great Britain and the USA, both English-speaking, which made doing English most suspicious). So, one had to be a hero – rather – heroine! (or a fool) to do it.
2. Thus, the history of the Soviet Union has provided Foreign Language Learning and Teaching with an extremely interesting experiment. Indeed, FLLT in the USSR was an experiment – enormous in scale and with amazing consequences – in how to learn and teach a foreign language if learners and teachers are completely isolated from the world where this foreign language is naturally used. "Completely" in this context means just that, with no leakage in the form of radio, television, native speakers, books, newspapers, language teaching materials, no hint of what is called the culture of the nation in the broad, anthropological sense of the word, where "culture" does not mean "arts" but means "the way people live" (how they see the world, what they believe in, how they work, how they rest, what and how they eat, what kind of homes they have, etc.)

Under these circumstances Soviet teachers of English, this most unpopular language – in the eyes of the Soviet government – were teaching only one of the four main language skills: reading. Indeed there was nobody to speak to, nobody to listen to and nobody to write to. This last item – writing – was especially dangerous and, consequently, practically non-existent because a paper of any sort written to a native speaker of a suspicious foreign language was a document confirming “communication with foreigners”.

The main traditions of FLT in Soviet Russia were summed up in the preceding lecture.

Now the two most important **new discoveries**, trends, tendencies, **innovations** born after Perestroika and developing in this country at present.

The revolution of the early nineties last century in Russia, the collapse of the Soviet Union concerned the area of FLT very greatly because it meant the advance of the era of free international communication at a mass scale after many years spent behind the Iron Curtain.

The language barrier immediately has become an irritating obstacle preventing people from enjoying “the luxury of communication” which includes all the privileges, advantages and opportunities that open, mass international communication has offered.

However, as has been repeated before, in the past we never learnt or taught any foreign language as a means of communication. The communicative approach was known only theoretically, because the practice of communication did not exist when the new era of mass communication came.

No wonder that teachers of foreign languages (mostly English) felt helpless and nervous to have found themselves in the focus of public attention.

It was then that “**a discovery**” of **another serious obstacle** on the way of international communication took place: **the cultural barrier**. That is, when a real boom in area and cultural studies began.

Thus, an ever-increasing interest in cross-cultural studies is a natural result of the previous history of the country when it was bottled up for so many years. The triumph of the communicative approach, the urgent need for speech production skills inevitably has led to the idea that **the use of language largely depends on the background knowledge of the world** where this language is actually used as a means of communication.

The problem of “what to teach” seems to be more important and more difficult than “how to teach”. As you understand, it is an eternal question of form-and-content relationship: both are equal in importance but, quoting George Orwell, one is more equal than the other.

Our practice of FLT has shown that learning rules of grammar (and we always did it in full splendour, i.e. with all the minutest exceptions to the rules) as well as **learning vocabulary** (which usually implies learning the so-called “meanings of words”) **is not enough to enable learners to use the language, to communicate, to develop active skills, the skills of speech production**. That is where the issue of **cultural awareness** comes to the forefront.

One of the main reasons for this is that **the concept of meaning invariably leads to extra-linguistic reality**, to the native speakers’ world reflected by the language.

Indeed, the meaning of the word is usually defined as referring a complex of sounds (oral speech) or that of graphic signs (written speech) to a certain object or phenomenon of the real world. Thus, metaphorically speaking, the meaning of the word is a thread or a path connecting the world of language/speech with the real world. Consequently, the meaning of a foreign word leads to the foreign world where this word lives and functions.

A burst of interest in cultural studies is caused by “a discovery” that actual communication is impossible without profound background knowledge of the world of the target language. Indeed, our broad experience of teaching English as a foreign language at a very large

scale has shown very clearly that this sociocultural component of ELT is extremely important because the actual communication, the process of speech production (speaking, writing) is impossible without the background knowledge of the English-speaking world, i.e. of the culture, mode of living, traditions, history and moral codes of the language users.

Thus, if a **lack of cultural background knowledge kills a foreign language, turns it into a dead one**, then **cultural studies are the magic wand that revives it**, returns it to life. That is why, in present-day Russia, where real, live communicative skills are in such an incredible and unimaginable demand, cultural studies are becoming more and more popular as an indispensable part of Foreign Language Teaching.

That is why at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Area Studies, Moscow State University, some important innovations have been introduced:

1) a new discipline in the curriculum **“The World of the Language under Study”** which has been given one third of the time allocated to the studies of foreign languages (the world of English/French/German, etc.) This includes the world of Russian, the state language of this country and the mother tongue of the majority of population.

2) a new idea of adding **“area studies”** (in Russian регионоведение) as another choice for students of foreign languages which results in their acquiring two qualifications 1) an expert in a particular area/region (the North America – USA, Canada, Western Europe – the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Russia), 2) an interpreter/translator of **at least two foreign languages: the language of the region** and another one **by the choice of students**. That is why the former name of “The Faculty of Foreign Languages was changed for “The Faculty of Foreign Languages and Area Studies”.

3) a new – “revolutionary”! – idea that FLT must be accompanied by profound studies of the **students’ native world, language, culture, history**, in our case – Russian. From the very start of educational activities at our School of International Studies an annual course “The Russian World” was introduced for all first-year students from all programmes. Another course “The Russian World in the Context of World Civilizations” has been read to all second-year students. These courses are considered to be indispensable for training experts in international communication because the partners of our graduates will be interested mainly in getting information about their native, that is, Russian world.

We have been doing this since 1992 when the newly-born Faculty of Foreign Languages recruited its first students. About 15 years later this idea was supported at the State level by the latest Federal State Education Standard which was introduced by the Ministry of Education. It proclaimed that “basic national values are the essential element of the fundamental core of education content”.

Here are a few pieces of evidence that the idea has been supported both in Russia and abroad.

“I am very glad that the programme of our local Olympiad in Perm includes questions and tasks concerning Russian history and culture. Here, in Perm we have been pondering how to cultivate patriotism in our students of English” (Perm Association of Teachers of English).

“The good mission – to be the bearer of Russian basic cultural values – has become a duty of the foreign language teacher” (Tatiana Gorbunova, Kungur, Perm Region).

“It’s an admirable idea to teach your students about their own country. I was struck when I was at last able to talk freely to Russians in 1988 about how ignorant many people were of their own history. Of course, history had been distorted and suppressed in the Soviet times. In Britain people are also ignorant of their own history, let alone anyone else’s; and without any excuse”, Sir Roderick Braithwaite, British ambassador in Russia (1988 – 1992), wrote in January, 2016.

“For many years in China in the process of FLT greatest attention was paid to giving students a lot of background knowledge about the world of the languages under study while their ability to inform speakers of these languages, about China and Chinese culture was neglected. It exerted negative influence on the cultural orientation of the students, on the efficiency of foreign language studies”, Dr. Yang Ke, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China. Concerning the Question of Including Information about Chinese Culture in the Syllabus of Teaching Russian in Chinese Universities (Филологические науки. Вопросы теории и практики. 2014, №11. Тамбов, 2014).

Consequently, **Russia has been included in our programme of Area Studies as a most important region.** The goodwill mission of this programme’s graduates is to let the world know about a view on Russia through the eyes of Russians in the languages of the world.

This idea is supported by the well-known quotation from the great Goethe saying that one must also study foreign languages so as to get a better grip on one’s own.

4) The new ideas of language teaching approach were implemented in a series of multimedia courses under the general title “Countries and peoples”, namely: “England and the English”, “Italy and Italians”, “Russia and Russians”. The courses comprise a book on the anthropological culture of the nation, films in two languages (Russian for beginners and the foreign language under study for the advanced) illustrating the chapters of the book, and a manual, a “Video Activity Book” containing the full text of each film, commentaries, additional materials on the subject, and exercises presented under three headings: “Before you watch”, “Video on”, “After you watch”.

The courses have worked very well and we mean to go on with them though they are time-and-money-consuming but they ideally present the idea of “teaching languages through cultures and cultures through languages”. However, the times have changed again in the country, in MSU, at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Area Studies, so for the moment we have stopped creating these courses. However, we do hope for the better, being prepared for the worst.

Each of us is a lonely hero or heroine, a fearless knight fighting dragon-like obstacles, barriers, bureaucracy and our language lessons are invariably one-hero-battle, one-actor-performance. However, the greatest discovery in this country that will overcome our loneliness is – surprise, surprise: professional associations! Now our motto is “Professionals of the world, unite!” This is the only way to solve our problems, to respond to challenges, to clear up our confusions – with the help of professional associations. That is the best way to overcome our loneliness, to withstand some unacceptable ideas from numerous bureaucrats who try to “improve” our work having neither knowledge, nor experience in this kind of activity.

Our job is extremely difficult, confusing and scary because we are leading our students into an alien, strange world full of hidden changes. And the world is alien and hostile to both – the teacher and the student. In this case nothing helps more than a well-educated, thoughtful teacher who loves both – what and whom he teaches and is supported by professional associations.

## **References**

1. CIDE, p.600.

## Lecture 5. National Languages and Cultures in the Globalizing World: The English Language and Culture in Russian

The history of Russia in the 20th century, which started and ended with revolutions, that is to say, two total and diametrically opposed turning points, upheavals in the social, political, and cultural structure of society, way of life, ideology, outlook and so on, represents unique material for linguists, historians, anthropologists and culturologists studying the dynamic or development of processes in language, culture and society. And certainly such radical changes over a very short time span in such a huge country – such one-off experiments would make any scholar happy so long, that is, as the scholar himself did not belong to the society in question, did not speak its language, was not a product of its culture and so long as his own outlook had not been subjected to the same degree of destruction and aggression.

The opening up of Russia to the world has been marked in the first instance by a massive avalanche of foreign, almost exclusively English, words, which have infiltrated our language and society along with the realia of Western life they denote (sometimes in the wake of these realia, sometimes before): business, computers, the internet, films, television serials, songs, videos and so on and so forth. *Dictionaries of New Words*, *Dictionaries of the Perestroika*, dictionaries of loan-words are being published all the time and the flow of aggrieved and outraged entreaties that the Russian language be preserved from this flood of borrowings is ever increasing.

This paper focuses on the contemporary changes in the Russian mentality and culture caused by the sudden massive “intrusion” of English into the Russian language, culture, and life. The impact of English-American culture via the English language in its various forms (mass media, advertisement, the avalanche borrowing etc.) on Russian culture can be seen in different spheres. The most striking and evident changes have been taking place in the sphere of business.

There is nothing new to us about this phenomenon. Such things happened in the past. In 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia, for example, German was very popular with Russian aristocrats (which, in those days, meant the educated circles of society). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the same circles the French language ousted not only German as a foreign language, but even, to some extent, Russian. The influence of a language implies the influence of the culture with which the language is loaded. Consequently, as language and culture are intertwined, the promotion and dominance of a foreign language (nowadays, undoubtedly, English) inevitably results in promotion of a foreign culture and ideology. Thus, English as a global language imposes English-American (increasingly, American only) traditions, value systems, mentality, way of life, etc. Not infrequently the cultural-ideological loading of the language contradicts the local

national culture. The impact of the secret forces of culture is gradual, almost unnoticeable and, therefore, much more efficient than any means of open pressure.

The process of changes in Russian culture taking place under the influence of the English language has been going on for more than twenty years, and some striking results can be shown.

In business Russian the very Russian traditional form of address by first name and **patronymic** is disappearing from speech and business cards due to imitation of the western pattern. Indeed, from time immemorial, a patronymic as a middle name “derived from the name of a father or ancestor” (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary) has been used as an official respectful form of addressing older people (*Grigory Inanovich, Svetlana Grigorievna*).

Nowadays a patronymic is hardly ever utilized in business Russian, business cards giving only the first names and family names. A Russian businessman asked directly: “What is your patronymic?” usually answers “I don’t need it any longer”. A colleague from a provincial town signed her letter, offering cooperation between our universities, with her first name and surname. In my reply I apologized for having addressed her only by her first name and asked for her patronymic. My colleagues and I were surprised and even shocked at her reply: “I prefer to have no patronymic. I spent a few months as a probationer in an English university and fell out of the habit of using a patronymic”. A few months of life in a different culture were enough to make her give up her own culture. The plan of cooperation between our universities never worked out...

Another cultural borrowing concerning names is the new fashion of giving the initial of a father’s name instead of patronymic (Anna A. Zaliznyak) and of using two or more first names (Anna-Natalia Malakhovskaya; Oleg Roman David Kuznetsov).

The choice between *gospodin* (Mr) and *tovarishch* (comrade) has become more or less irrelevant today: no patronymic or ‘westernizer’ (or rather an old, “pre-revolutionary” form of address), that is *Mister*, while *tovarishch* is virtually out of use. Many Russians try and avoid both forms. Another example comes from the difference in the spelling of pronouns in English and Russian. Russian learners of the English language are usually surprised or even shocked by the first person singular pronoun with capital letter – *I* – in any context and any position in a sentence. This spelling tradition or rule seems strange to Russians because to their ears it smacks of self-praise, individualism, conceit. In the Russian language the only personal pronoun which is always written with a capital letter is *Vy* (You), second person, plural form, addressed to a single person in order to emphasize special respect and politeness. Thus, while the Russian language provides its users with a spelling rule to show extra respect and politeness to **other** people, the English language uses the same means to indicate

**self**-esteem which seems to illustrate collectivism of Russian culture and individualism of English culture. Nothing has changed yet in this respect but, surprisingly, even shockingly to older generations, young Russians have begun appealing to the public on the Internet that this practice should be changed after the English model. In 2011 on Rutube (I was about to write “as far back as 2011”, because the social life in present-day Russia is changing so swiftly that two months are already a long period of time to say nothing of two years) a new cartoon appeared entitled *I as a Capital letter*. The speaking name *Mr. Freeman* was written in English.

The cartoon is a stirring appeal to young people to start spelling Я (I) in Russian with a capital letter. Here are some extracts illustrating the passionate way it is presented.

*Children, young people, free yourselves from the tyranny of parents, from the prohibitions of adults. The social system of the past enslaved everybody, therefore all people in Russia were the same, that is, law-abiding. We should not be identical, we must be different!*

*The first step is to write Я (I) as a capital letter. We must proudly bear our Я like a banner of our individuality and freedom.*

This change in spelling appears likely, when the new generation of Russians grows up and comes to power.

Changes in the Russian language and culture occurring due to the influence of English, are quicker and more evident in the field of business than in any other sphere.

In the Russian tradition of letter-writing it was obligatory that the opening greeting of the addressee be followed by an exclamation mark !. I remember very well how shocked I was many years ago in the Soviet Union when I got my first letter from “a capitalist country” where my first ever American friend wrote to me “Dear Svetlana,” with a comma. I was hurt: “Why? What had I done to be humiliated with a common comma instead of being greeted with a proud exclamation mark?! I was even more surprised when in her second letter she asked me why I had put an exclamation mark after her name.

Nowadays, a comma after the name of an addressee is regular practice in Russian business letters. In ordinary letters young people use more and more often the internet smiley sign :) instead of our dear old exclamation mark. Thus, the Russian language is becoming less emotional than it used to be, and more business-like and reserved which may lead to a change in the Russian national character in the not so distant future.

The Russian inclination to be openly emotional and affectionate, expressed and reflected by the Russian language through a great stock of diminutive affectionate suffixes, may be illustrated by the Russian word *смайлик* (*smilik*) for the above-mentioned Internet icon. In the Russian version a popular and frequently used word *smile* is decorated with a Russian affectionate suffix *ik* which seems quite appropriate because smiling is a very nice thing (and,

not so usual in Russia, to put it mildly). Another Russian word *беджик* comes from the English word *badge* + *ik* as a most commonly used diminutive affectionate suffix. More than that, even a collocation *free love* has been turned into a word: *freelovechik*.

One more present-day Russian language and culture novelty which is becoming increasingly widespread under the influence of English is the flood of various kinds of abbreviations which are meant to facilitate communication, but often prevent it.

Just a few examples: A Russian company exporting timber called by the acronym *Экспортлес* (*Exportles*, *лес* [*les*] meaning timber and/or wood) used as the English variant of its name *Exportless* which sounds like *no export* or *so bad it can't be exported*.

Another example of an unfortunate abbreviation borrowed from English comes from scientific texts. The abbreviation which had always been used to introduce illustrations, schemes, drawings, etc.: *ris.* come from the Russian word *risunok* (picture, drawing). Now under the influence of English Russian scientists use the abbreviation *fig.* from *figure – a picture or drawing often numbered, in a book or other document* (CIDE, 1995, p. 517). Unfortunately, spelt in Russian, it looks vulgar and ludicrous – *фиг. 1, фиг. 2* – because the Russian meaning of the word is *fig. – (coll.) gesture of derision or contempt, generally accompanying refusal to comply a request* (The Oxford Russian – English Dictionary, OUP, 1985, p. 311).

One more striking example is the abbreviation of the All-Russia Olympiad for high school graduates – «*Всероссийская олимпиада школьников*» – *ВОИШ*, which sounds like a *louse* in Russian.

The number of English abbreviations and Russian abbreviations translated into English (like the one above), as well as just Russian abbreviations is growing so fast that various Dictionaries of abbreviations are being published in this country. For example, the very useful and widely used *English-Russian Dictionary of Abbreviations of Educational Terms* by Galina Lovtsevich (Г.Н. Ловцевич. *Англо-русский словарь аббревиатур терминов лингводидактики*. Владивосток, 2009.).

Another example of changes in the Russian language and culture comes from the field of translation. The flood of English written and spoken books, films, magazines, newspapers, TV and radio broadcasts demands immediate translation – the sooner the better, the more profitable, especially in the case of books and films. The combination of greedy publishers and film distributors with incompetent and equally greedy translators, who are controlled and edited by no one, results in a lot of harm for both languages, but more so for Russian.

This problem is best illustrated by the translations of proper names in literature, bilingual English-Russian dictionaries and encyclopedias. Proper nouns have been chosen as an example of dangerous changes in the Russian language and culture because, more than other

words, they are loaded with a cultural component. Indeed, proper nouns – mostly anthroponyms (names of people) and toponyms (geographical names) – compose a significant part of language’s socio-cultural context and the language picture of the world, not least because they are p r o p e r, that is, they signify “individual objects without reference to their features” (Olga S. Akhmanova, *Dictionary of Linguistic Terms*, Moscow, 1996, 2004, p. 175).

Accordingly, the translation of proper nouns in bilingual dictionaries requires, strange as it may seem, a great deal of caution, effort, and knowledge of the cultural background in general. Proper nouns are a very important **national component** of both the language and culture pictures of the world, and for this reason they are a powerful defense weapon for **national identity**.

The ‘military’ metaphor comes from the title of my recent book *War and Peace of Languages and Cultures* discussing the idea that language is not just a barrier separating peoples but also – and more importantly – a shield defending the national identity of ‘its people’, that is, the people using it as a means of communication.

The role of proper names in the language and – especially – culture picture of the world cannot be overestimated. One little example illustrating how a proper name reveals both the culture picture and the changes it has undergone. The sociocultural position of women in Old Rus becomes clear from the fact that in those days a woman seems to have been nameless as she was addressed by her patronymic and not by first name... In the famous Russian epic *The Song of Igor’s Campaign* (immortalized by Borodin’s opera *Prince Igor*) Igor’s wife is called Yaroslavna which is her patronymic, that is, a derivate from Yaroslav, her father’s name. We do not know her first name. Thus, the prince was known as Igor, and his wife as Yaroslav’s daughter.

The careless handling of proper nouns — both anthroponyms and toponyms — can inflict significant damage on meaning, historical truth, pictures of the world, and communication in general. In other words, the non-recognition or inaccurate rendering of proper nouns can cause setbacks in communication and instead of bringing people closer together, will divide them.

Such examples as *Джон Баптист (John the Baptist)* instead of *Иоанн Креститель (Joann Baptiser)* and *Мэри дочь короля Генри (Mary, daughter of King Henry)* instead of *Мария Кровавая/Мария I, дочь Генриха VIII (Mariya Krovavaya – Blood Mariya or Mariya I, daughter of Henrykh VIII)* in addition to testifying to the ignorance of the translators and authors of dictionaries and encyclopedias, also deform and distort the Russian cultural and linguistic pictures of the world, which is much more serious and dangerous.

The presentation of proper names in bilingual dictionaries implies their translation into some other language. Academician Oleg Nikolaevich Trubachov, the eminent Russian linguist,

brilliantly revealed this twofold problem of proper nouns – translational and lexicographical – in his criticism of the Russian edition of *Hutchinson’s Pocket Encyclopedia* (Helicon, Oxford, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995). The Russian version of the above-named Encyclopedia, striking in its incompetence, ignorance, and lack of culture, provides such a large quantity of mistakes, errors, inexactitudes, and absurdities in translation that it can serve as excellent material for academic research on translation under the heading *How not to translate or what bad translation leads to*.

In the opinion of Academician Trubachov, the translation of this ‘pocket encyclopedia’: “is a glaring example of inadequate knowledge of everything that it is necessary to know the English language, history, and culture, and European languages, history, and culture, to say nothing of the total ignorance of that which is perhaps most important for Russians, namely the Russian language picture of the world.”<sup>1</sup> Here are some examples (to cite all of them is impossible) of the innumerable mistakes in the reproduction of proper nouns – the names of people and the geographical place names that left their mark on culture and history, and were participants or witnesses of historical events, that is, those belonging to the highest cultural stratum and granted the honour of being included in an encyclopedia.

The main problem is a deviation from and distortion of the traditional way of presenting proper names in another language and, consequently, culture (in this case – Russian) at the level where they are generally unrecognizable. The inaccuracies and mistakes can be roughly classified as follows:

<u>The way proper names borrowed from other languages are traditionally presented in Russian.</u>	<u>Their translation in the Russian Edition of “Hutchinson’s Pocket Encyclopedia”.</u>
1. By pronunciation <i>Жорж Сера (Georges Seurat)</i>	<i>Джордж Сейрат</i> (transliteration; the first name-anglicized)
<i>Энгр (Ingres)</i>	<i>Ингрес</i> (transliteration)
<i>Юджин О’Нил (Eugene O’Neill)</i>	<i>Евгения О’Нил</i> (The 1 <sup>st</sup> name is rusified by adding the ending <i>я – ja</i> which turns Eugene O’Neill into a woman)

<sup>1</sup>Trubachov, O. N. “The Russian Encyclopedia and its Antipodes: Hutchinson’s Pocket Dictionary.” *Russian Philology*. № 3, 1997.

<i>Нидерланды (the Netherlands)</i>	<i>Лоукантриз</i> (transliteration of pronunciation of <i>low countries</i> ), <i>нижние страны</i> (translation)
2. by transliteration	
<i>Шварцвальд (Schwarzwald)</i>	<i>Черныйлес</i> (translation)
<i>Брауншвейг (Braunschweig)</i>	<i>Брюнсвик</i> (unrecognizably distorted pronunciation)
3. by translation (of words or parts of a word)	
<i>оз. Верхнее (Lake Superior)</i> <i>Lake the Upper</i>	<i>Озеро Сьюпериор</i> (pronunciation and transliteration)
<i>Карл Великий (Charlemagne)</i> <i>Karl the Great</i>	<i>Карлеман</i> (corrupted pronunciation of <i>Charlemagne</i> )
<i>Иоанн Безземельный (John Lackland)</i> <i>Joann the Landless</i>	<i>Джон Лекленд</i> (pronunciation)
4. by historical tradition	
<i>Царица Савская(The Queen of Sheba)</i> <i>Zarina of Sava</i>	<i>Королева Шеба</i> (translation and transliteration)
<i>Лотарингия(Lorraine)</i> <i>Lotaringiya</i>	<i>Лоррен</i> (pronunciation)

This list can be continued for a long time, but the examples cited are enough to understand that such mistakes in proper nouns relating to world history and culture are more than chance occurrences or comical absurdities. Most of the above examples would be totally unrecognizable by Russian readers and give a new non-Russian language and culture picture of the world. They deal a serious blow to the general level of culture in our country.

Encyclopedias of this sort do nothing to raise the cultural level of the readers at whom they are aimed, but rather have an opposite harmful effect. In order to emphasize how serious and important this situation is, it is worth repeating: the avarice and profit-seeking of non-professional, unqualified publishers and equally non-professional, unqualified “translators,” who

are controlled or edited by no one, cause the poor, deceived readers, for whom everything is written, translated, and published, to sink into ignorance.

After all, bilingual dictionaries, encyclopedias, and reference books are a highly authoritative and “holy” source of knowledge, which has the last word, and the magic of this word is incomparable to that of any other publication. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the early 90’s, this pocket encyclopedia, “translated into the Russian language,” was republished every year: Russia, which had long sat in isolation behind the Iron Curtain, “opened to the world”, “entered the world community” (the Western community) and Russia’s inhabitants rushed to the lexicographical Source of Knowledge in order to fill their lacunae of ignorance. Everything was attractive: an “encyclopedia” (brief, succinct, giving the most basic things), “Oxford” in the publisher’s address (what could be more prestigious than that?).

To conclude, proper nouns present a difficult lexicographical problem, particularly because they seem, by comparison with common nouns, deceptively easy to translate: monosemantic, denoting individual objects “without reference to their features.” Hence, due to the careless treatment of proper nouns, the general cultural standard decreases, a blow is dealt to the national language, the language and culture pictures of the world deteriorate, and, accordingly, the prestige of the country and its people suffers.

It is vital to recognize, clarify, and follow the traditional denomination and pronunciation of historical figures, geographical names, biblical characters, and so on — that is, the entire culturally significant field of background knowledge covered by proper nouns.

So far in my brief survey of the recent changes, problems and challenges caused by the ever-increasing penetration and influence of English, I have concentrated mostly on the “losses” to the Russian language and culture. However, to be fair, I must do justice to **the positive side of this influence**. I can see it, mainly in the very important field of communication style which is becoming more polite and civilized.

The habitual orders of the Soviet years telling people (“the broad masses of the people” in the old terminology) what to do, how to behave, how to live were expressed invariably in very direct (and, actually, rude, as we understand now) imperative forms, i.e., verbal infinitives which are used to give orders to dogs and soldiers: *стоять!* (*to stand!*), *бежать!* (*to run!*), etc. Soviet public rules and regulations were linguistically expressed in the same way: *не курить* (*don’t smoke – not to smoke*), *не сорить* (*don’t litter – not to litter*), etc.

The new, much more decent and polite manner of administrative talking to people has come to a New Russia as a pleasant surprise. Nowadays, our “good old” order *не курить* (*don’t smoke!*) is replaced by a variety of polite appeals: *у нас не курят* (*we do not smoke here*),

*спасибо, что вы не курите (thank you for not smoking here). Don't litter is now often expressed in a moralizing way: Clean is not where you sweep, clean is where you do not litter.*

Another polite novelty in the field of addressing the public is the appearance of apologies for “temporary inconvenience” at building sites etc.

This tendency to be direct and outspoken (or rather just plain rude) in all spheres of life, including especially, for obvious reasons commerce and business, is humorously presented by the internet “Russian-English Dictionary of Business Communication” (no authors given). This humour – alas! – is pretty true to life. However, laughing at our negative sides is a good and promising thing.

Русско-английский словарь по деловому общению:

Russian	English Translation
1. Господи, это опять вы.... <i>God damn it, you again!...</i>	1. Thank you very much for your email.
2. Если до завтра не предоставите документы, пеняйте на себя. Тут вам не детский сад. <i>If you don't present your documents by tomorrow, you will have only yourself to blame. This is not a kindergarten, you know.</i>	2. We will do our best to proceed with your request however for the best result the documents should reach us not later than tomorrow.
3. Вы читать умеете? <i>Can't you read?</i>	3. You can find this information below.
4. Сколько можно напоминать! <i>How many times must you be reminded!</i>	4. Kind reminder.
5. Неужели так сложно подписать документ там, где нужно. <i>Surely it is not that complicated to sign the documents in the right place?</i>	5. Please sign in the place marked with yellow sticker.
6. Что у тебя в школе было по математике? <i>What sort of mark did you get for maths at school?</i>	6. Let's reconfirm the figures.
7. Мы лучше сделаем это сами. <i>We'd rather do it ourselves.</i>	7. Thank you for your kind assistance.

8. Я уже сто раз вам это присылал.  
*I have already sent it to you at least a hundred times.*

9. Ага, сейчас все брошу и побегу разбираться.  
*So I am supposed to drop everything and sort it all out for you. Is that it?*

10. Да поймите же вы наконец.  
*It is high time you understood!*

11. Надеюсь, что теперь вы перестанете надоедать своими вопросами.  
*I hope that now you will stop pestering me with your questions.*

12. Какой же вы зануда...  
*You are a real pain in the neck...*

13. Даже и не надейтесь, что мы откроем вам счет.  
*There not the slightest hope that we'll open an account for you.*

14. У нас не те масштабы, чтобы возиться с вашей мелочью.  
*In view of the scale of our operations, the peanuts you have to offer are of no interest to us.*

15. Вот когда подрастете, тогда и приходите.  
*First, grow up and then come to see us.*

16. Ой-ой, напугал!  
*Wow, am I scared!*

17. Ну и пожалуйста. Не очень-то и хотелось.  
*That's perfectly OK. We were never really interested in doing business with you.*

8. Kindly find attached.

9. I'll look into it and revert soonest.

10. Please kindly review the matter again.

11. I hope this helps, otherwise please do not hesitate to contact me anytime.

12. Thank you for your patience.

13. We will let you know in due course.

14. We would be happy to offer you the most favourable conditions on a case-to-case basis.

15. So if you have eventually some needs from your clientele, it can have a real added-value.

16. We regret to know that you are not satisfied with our services.

17. We look forward to hearing from you.

<p>18. Хотя бы в пятницу отстаньте уже. <i>Leave off it is Friday after all.</i></p> <p>19. Услуги будут оплачены. Может быть. <i>It's possible your services will be paid.</i></p> <p>20. Да идите вы знаете куда... <i>Get the hell out!</i></p> <p>21. Ха-ха (три раза) <i>(Ha-ha (3 times))</i></p>	<p>18. Good to hear from you and have a nice weekend.</p> <p>19. Thanks a lot in advance.</p> <p>20. We consider the matter settled and have closed our files.</p> <p>21. Very best regards.</p>
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Another sphere of communication where the influence of English can be seen very vividly is that of advertising. This whole field has been quite an eye-opener in Post-Soviet Russia because in the years of shortages and deficits there was obviously no place for advertising: it would only irritate people by reminding them of things they could not get.

There were two advertisements which all my Soviet life I could see from my window. One was “*Fly Aeroflot*” – an imperative ordering me to use the one and only airline that existed in the country. The other ad., gave me a different order “*Buy oranges from Morocco!*”. Oranges were a very rare thing even in Moscow to say nothing of the great country outside the capital. Whenever occasionally they appeared on sale, usually before the New Year, the people standing in long queues couldn’t have cared less where the oranges came from.

The New Russia era began with a flood of advertisements distorting the Russian language and culture with poor translations, and the Russian mentality – with alien values of alien cultures. It was a kind of cultural AIDS as we had not been immunized against this new phenomenon in our social life.

The business and art of advertising have been developing at such a fast pace that it will take a separate lecture, or preferably a book, to describe the process and its results. Here, on the positive side of the impact of English on the Russian language and culture the appearance of “social ads” must be mentioned. Social, unlike commercial, advertisements, appeal to feelings of sympathy, love, friendship, to the values of education and upbringing, etc.

The tune of business and commercial ads is also – occasionally! – changing for the better. For example, the advertisement for Slavjansky Bank consists of a photograph of a little girl and an extract from a poem by Osip Mandelshtam about the innocence of childhood. Plus the address and telephone numbers of the bank. In the Underground (the Moscow metro) there appear occasionally poems by Russian and international authors.

One more – last but not least – example of the positive influence of English on Russian is the change in the style of academic writing. Before the Perestroika in the early 1990’s,

academic papers were written in a very rigorous, deliberately impersonal style. This was achieved by many stylistic devices: an abundant use of Passive Voice, a strict prohibition of the use of *I* which corresponded to the Russian collectivist culture. The so-called “modest *we*” (русское “мы скромности”) was substituted for *I* even when the paper was done by a single author. Now, under the influence of English the situation is changing, and academic papers, especially those meant for educational purposes, are written in a more free and attractive, easy-to-understand way. *I* appears more and more frequently, and this paper is evidence of this new trend.

I feel very positive about this change because, first, *I* establishing closer contact between the author and the reader or listener, ensures greater efficiency of communication, and, second, the modest *we* is a good way to hide one’s personal responsibility for what has been said or written while using *I* makes one fully responsible for the content of the paper.

This is a brief account of the ever-growing present-day influence of English on the Russian language and culture, every example of which requires a lecture of its own. It has been written by a Russian academic, “advanced in years”. The young in Russia, probably see the process and its results in a somewhat different way.

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## Lecture 6. The Global Language and Culture – a Global Problem?

*English belongs to the world  
But the world does not belong to English.*

Now, we have come to that which is most significant: I am referring to the FUTURE OF MANKIND.

Just that. Neither more, nor less.

Our future—as well as our present and past—is directly connected with the human ability to COMMUNICATE. The natural ability to communicate given to us, from the very beginning, by nature and by God. “In the beginning was the Word...”

**Communication rules the world and people’s lives, and determines our future.** And the main means of communication between people is still language.

The modern era, its direction and evolution, is determined by rapidly accelerating and multiplying technological progress: unexpected, unprecedented achievements that couldn’t have been imagined even by writers of science fiction. All these great discoveries of human genius aim towards a single target – facilitating, improving, optimizing human communication.

Television, mobile telephones, and the Internet make it possible for people to communicate, conquering time and space.

And again, on the horizon, looms the Tower of Babel – the possibility for the hole planet, together, to build, grow, buy, sell, educate, and so on.

And new billboards flash: Global Village, the United States of the Earth, Globalization...

These technical feats that have united people have brought changes in societal organization. The break-up of the USSR and the socialist block seemed to have led to the end of confrontation between political and economic regimes of “The Capitalist and the Socialist Camps” (in Soviet terminology) resulting in the defeat and destruction of one of them – ours. At least, that is how it looked at the beginning of the process.

Just think, about thirty years ago we lived in “a country of developed socialism” and couldn’t imagine mobile phones, the Internet, teleconferences, intensive contacts with foreigners – at home and abroad.

Our idea of the “Glorious Future of Communism” was succeeded by the idea of the “Global Village”.

This idea itself is as food as other dreams of the mankind – from the Promised Land to the American Dream.

In a Global Village the population of the planet lives together in peace and friendship. With the invention of ultra-high-speed transport and new ways of communication dramatically reducing the size of the Earth, we have realized that there is no longer any undiscovered territory. All we have is one little planet, and we have to take care of it.

We live together, work together, unify our achievements, talents, knowledge.

Together we struggle for the life and safety of the planet itself and, the people inhabiting it.

Gigantic multinational organizations, factories, and business concerns service all mankind, and do so fast, capably, and profitably.

Thus, globalization is cooperation and interdependence among all peoples and all countries. Here goes an old Soviet slogan: Peace and Friendship among peoples. Who could argue with that? Where do anti-globalists come from?

Alas! Globalization is full of contradictions. In other words, it is dialectical. Dialectics is the struggle and unity of contradictions, which is a condition for progress.

It's a pity of course that progress and humand evolution are impossible without conflicts, without struggle: it's a pity that the cost of this progress is the blood, misery and deaths of millions of people.

Many people equate Globalization with Americanization. In 1912, Bernard Shaw wrote: "what has been happening in my lifetime was the Americanization of the world"<sup>1</sup>.

And here is what the Russian sociologist , a professor at Moscow University, N. E. Pokrovsky thinks: "Americanization in itself is concretizing Globalization by including elements of American national culture. Moreover, the features of Americanization in the sphere of culture consist of the irrationalization of a rational matrix (bringing rational elements of culture to the point of absurdity), the priority of quantitative characteristics (commercialization), preparedness for application (efficiency), fully guaranteed quality of a certain level, packages in bright symbolic forms, the virtualization of cultural images (the creation of a virtual reality where a cultural phenomenon develops)"<sup>2</sup>.

Briefly, "for" and "against" Globalization.

"For"— the main idea of globalization is peace, friendship, cooperation, and the united efforts of all peoples. Worldwide industry, trade, science, agriculture, education, healthcare, environmental protection, the combatting of crime, international tourism, sports, etc.

Much of this is already taking place.

“Against” – The human factor, element, component: languages, cultures, civilizations. National identity, national language, national culture are all under the threat of being absorbed or equalized, or just disappearing.

“Against”, of course, if some arguments “for” are distorted, they will work as arguments “against”.

Evil is always more active and organized than Good. New technologies have allowed terrorists, criminal groups, and drug dealers all over the world to unite.

Their united efforts are much more efficient than the united efforts of police, Interpol, anti-terrorist and anti-drug groups. Economic growth, caused by globalization, has broadened the gap between a handful of planet’s richest people and billions (yes, yes!) of the poorest.

And again – much of this is already taking place.

The world is being inundated with giant international companies: the whole world drinks the same drinks (Coca Cola, Pepsi, vodka); eats the same food—sometimes *fast food* (pizza, hamburgers), sometimes not-so-fast one; wears “mass-consumption clothes”. All children play with toys made in China.

Global organizations play an important role in our lives: the UN, UNESCO, WHO, WTO, the World Bank, Greenpeace.

The ideas of worldwide citizenship (and the international risk connected with it) and global rights are under consideration. Even the idea of a World University is being discussed.

A good definition of globalization in the educational sphere was given by my colleague I.P. Bochkov, who was in Germany for an international three-month seminar where the subject was touched upon: “Globalization in education is when in Germany a lecturer from Finland who got his education in Britain, lectures the English language to students from 27 countries, and gets his salary from the USA”.

But let’s go back to our general theme: the linguistic and cultural evolution of mankind, in the era of globalization.

This evolution, as a matter of fact, makes obstacles in the integration between peoples. Without a global language or global culture (and language is inseparable from culture), there is no global community and there is no chance to build a new Tower of Babel, that is a Global World Community.

Lack of a global language puts impedes the integration of mankind for solving global problems.

Implementing a single global language (English, as is the case now, or another language in the future) is attractive because it offers the opportunity to solve many problems: facilitating international communication; reducing the huge expenses international companies pay to

translators and interpreters; assisting in information exchange and consequently accelerating and improving technological progress, trade, and business.

However, the situation is not so pleasant as it may seem, and again dialectics is a case in point. The problem is that nations, their languages and cultures strive for the basic inherent contradiction of equality versus diversity (individuality). People are created equal, they want to enjoy equal rights but they also want to keep their individuality which implies diversity. The same refers to nations, languages and cultures.

The Soviet Union can serve as an example. Indeed, the USSR was a great historical experiment - an attempt to equality. It was successful in many ways: the gap between the rich and the poor was radically diminished; equal rights to education, health service and other important social spheres were provided. However, all these achievements in equality led to an obvious lack of diversity: levelling people, ignoring their individuality, their individual needs, problems, likes and dislikes. "We" almost entirely ousted "I".

It becomes more and more evident that the idea of a global language is so contradictory that it causes "savage polemicism" (Jeremy Harmer. *Slaying Dragons: Language Fascism and the Art of the Book Review*. IATEFL Issues. December 2000 - January 2001 p.3)

The growth of English and English itself as a global language are being described by various authors and schools of thought through a great variety of evaluative words ranging from "unique", "easy-to-learn", most "influential" to "catastrophic", "eurocentric", "triumphalist", "a language imperialism" and even "a language fascism".

Since the diversity of languages represents the diversity of cultures, and the diversity of cultures implies a great variety of ideas, beliefs, traditions, ways of life and visions of the world, using one "international" language for international communication would lead to levelling and neglecting all other-language-speaking nations, robbing them of their national identity, of all the various results of national cultural development, and, finally, to a sharp decrease in the amount of cultural information in cyberspace.

More than that. Promoting a global language invariably promotes the ideology and culture of the language.

Both foreign students and teachers of English all over the world are growing more and more concerned about this aspect of the problem.

The situation of non-native English language teachers is especially delicate and vulnerable.

Indeed, in connection with all the "negative consequences" of the global status of English, the role and mission of its faithful and devoted servants, i.e. teachers of English, looks contradictory.

The traditional view of foreign language teachers and translators: these are people who bring nations together, allow them to find a common language (in the direct and figurative sense), missionaries and peacemakers who selflessly and fearlessly go out into the jungle of an alien language and culture in order to lay the roads of peace and friendship in them. This is all true, and my whole life I have lived with a feeling of pride in my profession, in my choice, in my colleagues.

But now the problems of globalization have arrived and the language that I have been serving along with millions of my colleagues turns out to be at the center of attention, or rather at the center of the fight for and against that attention. For all the millions of non-native English teachers suddenly a very important question arose: who are we? Whose side are we on? Whom do we serve? All of us have our own native, beloved language and culture. And then it turns out that the language we study and teach, to which we have dedicated our talents and life, threatens our own, language and culture. And after all, while teaching English, we realize that we are simultaneously promoting the ideology, views, lifestyle, and value system of the English-speaking world, which is not always friendly to us, sometimes foreign spiritually, always foreign literally, sometimes hostile.

Who are we then—courageous and selfless fighters for peace and friendship among nations, or the so-called fifth column (that is, traitors) in our own country, conductors of foreign ideas and values?

Peter Medjesh, a well-known expert in ELT from Hungary, has been investigating this question: “As professional teachers of English, should we rejoice or apologize for the role we play in spreading English often at the expense of other foreign languages?”

Here are some of responses he got:

- 1) “We’re performing a useful service to help people function in the world today”.
- 2) “If students come to a class to improve their English competence, then that’s what the teacher should focus on”.
- 3) “Rejoice, yes, because there’s more work for teachers of English”.
- 4) “Leaving hypocrisy aside, we should rejoice that social demand will keep us safe for some time”.
- 5) “We should apologise. It’s sad the ‘weed’ that is English might ruin out other languages in the ‘Language Garden’”.
- 6) “I see the rise of Chinese with huge relief. Maybe we’ll be saved from the further extension and penetration of Imperium Americanum by the oldest continuous culture on Earth”.
- 7) “Can we apologise for something which is beyond our control?”

- 8) “I have my personal ‘remorses’, but we just followed the trend; we didn’t create it”.
- 9) “Rejoice as long as what we’re ‘spreading’ is a pluralistic view of Englishes, apologise for the linguistic imperialism”.
- 10) “We should develop a more critical attitude to the spread of English and pass it on to our students”.
- 11) “Let’s make the most of the English language to enrich our own culture and language”.

In China a local teacher of English said to the British Council teacher: Teach your language but not your culture, we want to keep ours.

The statement is patriotically touching but somewhat naïve because language and culture are inseparable.

Equally naïve is another declaration made by a participant of the debate “Global English” at a conference in Brighton: “English is never culturally neutral”. No natural language is culturally neutral, only artificial languages are because there is no anthropological culture behind them.

Many papers have been and are being written on how dangerous English as lingua franca is for other languages and cultures.

However, now I would like to discuss a different, much less popular issue, namely: how dangerous it is for English speaking people, or rather: how much they pay for having English as a global language.

Their advantages are obvious: they do not have to sweat over English as a foreign language, the position of English as a global language is time, money and effort saving, it adds to the self-estimation, self-confidence of the English-speaking people, it is financially and economically profitable, etc.

But what are **dis**advantages?

Here is what I managed to find as possible answers to this question after many years of studying English, teaching it to Moscow University students, and interacting with colleagues from different countries—interacting both directly, and indirectly, by reading books.

**First of all**, what everyone knows and what representatives of English-speaking nations talk about with sadness: **the unwillingness to study other languages**.

Indeed, the study of foreign languages in the English-speaking world is not very popular for understandable reasons: “the entire world studies our language, all even slightly educated people study English, so we don’t need to worry.” As a familiar example, English hinders the business of English-speaking nations: their companies and enterprises abroad lose much because their representatives do not know (and do not study) local languages and cultures. They study—

on a scale incomparable with the rest of the world—the language of the closest neighbors: the British study French, Americans—Spanish, Australians—Chinese and Japanese. According to the data of 2001, 90% of Britons stop studying foreign languages at the age of 16.

This, of course, is a minus, since the knowledge of other languages and, through them, cultures, spiritually enriches one, broadens horizons, and gives a new outlook on the world. Moreover, the great Goethe was absolutely right when he said that one must also study foreign languages so as to get a better grip on one's own. And the sadly well-known dislike of the British for foreign languages and all things foreign is connected to this as well. You cannot remain indifferent to the people whose language you study.

Thus **the first** is the unwillingness to study foreign languages.

**Secondly**, in the opinion of D. Crystal, in this situation **there arises a linguistic elite consisting of native speakers** that can use English for sordid motives and manipulation in various spheres.

**Thirdly**, and very importantly, having become a language of international communication, **English** has, as it were, crossed over into general use; it **has become universal, international, and global property**.

**Two consequences are connected to this.**

**First**, since language is not only a barrier separating nations, but also a shield protecting national identity, **English-speaking peoples**, have given over (sacrificed?) their native language into foreign “international” hands. Consequently, **they are losing their shield and facing the threat of losing their national identity**.

It seems that right now the English language, the culture imbedded in it, and thus English national identity are on display, as it were, in a certain global shop window with the commercial slogan, “use it, our language is your best means of communication.” And everyone uses it, and the number of those who want to do it grows every day.

This impression became formulated after a certain episode in my academic life. I was in Italy at a linguistic conference on the problems of teaching English at universities. After the lectures, many conference participants went to have dinner at the nearest café. There we found both local dwellers and delegations from different countries. Our Russian gang discussed with pleasure in the native language the conference lectures, Italy, and Italians. We felt safe because Russian was our defense, our shield and we spoke on all kinds of topics easily and freely. Our neighbors were two young men who were talking in English on very intimate subjects. We unwillingly began to eavesdrop, and I saw that the Italians, French, and Finns sitting at neighboring tables were doing the same. The entire small café understood them and was listening

with interest to their private conversation. They were put out for show, as it were; their language did not protect them, was not a shield to them, because everyone knew it.

As you know, language carries out two basic functions in relation to the ethnic group formed and “served” by it: it serves, first of all, as a means of communication, and, secondly, as a means of identification. Because of its global nature, English is highly weakened in terms of performing the function of identification. Thus, while its function of communication is booming, that of identification is permanently and dangerously weakening. Indeed, as a language of identification, as a shield, it is already very thin and in fact transparent. It is a fragile glass shield: the entire world observes, studies, criticizes, and borrows all that the English language mirror reflects, that is, the life, everyday reality, and culture of English-speaking peoples. This calls to mind the nightmarish TV reality show *Behind the glass*. It is the high price paid by speakers of the great and mighty English language for its status as the means of international communication.

And **secondly**, since English is given over to the use and power of the entire world, **all nations**, especially large ones, **tamper with it to fit their culture, mentality, and language, that is, they create their own versions of English**. In other words, along with the American, Australian, and Canadian versions of “archetypal” British English, there exist, develop, and multiply versions created in “other countries”: Indian English, Chinese, Japanese, Russian one, and so on.

When millions of multilingual people use one language, it shows in the level and quality of the language. And since the number of foreign users greatly exceeds that of native speakers and grows much quicker, the future of natural or original English use to some apprehensions. I heard a story from foreign colleagues about how an international digest rejected a native speaker’s article and asked him to rewrite it because his English was “not like everyone else’s.” To me, this story seems improbable, but the very fact of its appearance in the world—even as an anecdote, myth, or joke—is significant.

The term “World Englishes” has become very popular right now and an academic journal under this name is published by Blackwell Publishing in Oxford, UK, and Boston, U.S.

The ex-president of TESOL, David Nunan, discusses the same topic:

In becoming the medium for global communication, English has detached itself from its historical roots. In the course of doing so, it has also become increasingly diversified to the point where it is possible to question the term *English*. *World Englishes* has been used for quite a few years now, and it is conceivable that the plural form *Englishes* will soon replace the singular *English*...

**Fourth**, the problem is that such a massive expansion of English as a global language has led to **the creation of a certain variety in the “English as a foreign language” taught at schools and universities**, a certain form neutralized and simplified for “poor foreigners,” **a standard, unified, “distilled” language**. The author of *Basic English*, Charles K. Ogden, wrote in 1930 that the question of global communication (he called it “debabelization”) must be resolved not with the help of an artificial language, but rather through a simplified form of English. (*Basic English*, a dictionary that was shortened by Ogden to 850 words, was designed as an auxiliary international language).

In Russian academic literature, the “educational” variant of English received the name “pragmalinguistic”. This style occupies a special place since in it neither the function of message nor that of impact dominates in its pure form. Its main purpose is to serve as a basis for creating linguistically irreproachable, impeccable educational aids, to give students examples of lexis, grammar, phonetics, and so on. Accordingly, its basic characteristic feature is a strict normativeness on all levels: from phonetics (RP, Received Pronunciation) to lexis (no slang, dialectisms, or jargon).

I would like to remind you that what is being discussed here is not the quality of educational materials from the outlook of foreigners; this is a separate problem that is now being widely investigated. In fact, I believe that from the foreigners’ point of view, everything is all right: give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, give to foreigners what is the foreigners’; we must know our—foreign—place in using a foreign language. For deviation from the norm, games, defacement, and creativity, we have our own native languages. This is like behaving as if you were at home when you are a guest. The topic at hand is the problems of natural English that appear in connection with such a wide distribution of its pragmalinguistic international variant. This is the fourth problem. The gap between foreign and authentic English is growing and deepening.

**Fifth**, this **“authentic, real English” does not exist at all as such. There are several variants of “authentic” English** among which the two basic ones, used as material for studying English as a foreign language, are British and American. And the gap between them also grows all the time. The British variant is more prestigious (history, great literature, a vividly expressed national character, traditions), American is more practical and profitable for a career. In “other countries,” the older generation is, as a rule, in favor of the British variant, while the youth prefers the American one.

**Both variants**, by the way, **stumble upon big problems**.

America is a country of immigrants and the “American” language is represented by a big collection of variants, beginning with the most primitive. This is problem #1.

Since it was in America that the idea of fighting for human rights was born, it is not surprising that it was there that the question of recognizing **linguistic rights** as human rights arose. This is problem #2, directly connected to problem #1.

The difficulty of this question is well illustrated by an incident that T. Lobachev describes in the academic collective monograph “The Resolution of National-Linguistic Questions in the Modern World.”

The gist of this incident is that a certain Mexican woman named Marta Sandoval sued the Alabama state government for denying her a driver’s license “because of poor knowledge of English.” In this state, there is a law on the monopoly of English in everything not related to speakers’ private lives. The plaintiff, on the other hand, appeals to a foundational law—a 1964 act on civil rights that prohibits any kind of discrimination on the basis of nationality. Since such discrimination is prohibited in the 1964 law in all institutions that receive state funds in one form or another (the relationship in the private sector is regulated differently), the Department of Mobile Vehicles of Alabama must submit to this law since it falls under this category.

The British variant has its own problems, connected directly or indirectly with the global status of English.

Modern British English shows a tendency toward the erosion and loosening of linguistic norms, toward a departure from RP (Received Pronunciation) and the Queen’s English. This is expressed in the fact that jargon, slang, dialectisms, a lower vocabulary, and vulgar expressions are now used in literary, standard English, in the language of the mass media. This is what MSU professor V. S. Elistratov, following a well-known Soviet philologist B.A. Larin, calls “barbarization,” which accompanies the end of any stable epoch. According to Elistratov, “the historical evolution of any literary language can be presented as a row of subsequent ‘reductions,’ barbarizations.”

In the early 90s, *The Times* commented on the soon-to-be-published dictionary *BBC English* in the following way: “The BBC is to publish the first comprehensive guide to ‘BBC English’ in its history in an attempt to rid programmes of Americanisms, cliché’s, jargon, inaccuracies and bad taste” (*The Times*, 5 July, 1993).

Nonetheless, despite the publication of dictionaries and society’s concern, the violation and thus transformation of norms can no longer be stopped. In his lecture on the theme, “The Changing English Language 2000-2010,” given at the MSU Faculty of Foreign Languages and Regional Studies, a British linguist Ron Carter said, “What is being said right now on British television, 20 years ago would have caused the immediate dismissal of the entire editorial staff, 10 years ago—a torrent of indignant viewer responses, but now it does not provoke any kind of reaction.”

A serious blow in this same direction was struck by the use of English as a global language for electronic communication. Here is what the ambassadors of France and Germany to the UK say about this: “You should protect yourselves from Electronic English. Electronic communication is a good thing. But it is equally important to maintain the quality of spoken and written English” (*The Spectator*, 17 Feb 2001, op. cit.).

Yes, this is important, but impossible and impractical.

Presumably, one of the reasons—in my opinion, the main one—for the “barbarization” of modern British English is the ever growing globalization of English. This loosening of norms can be seen as an attempt to depart from normative language, which has been given for communication to the “global village,” and thus enter into a substandard, “reduced” variant, inaccessible for “those foreigners.” It can become a new shield, a language of identification. The next question to arise is: what will it identify? What kind of a nation will this be?! The British, who speak (and write!) in jargon, vulgarisms, and so on?! It turns out that they give away their exquisite, elegant costumes, the models of which were created by great tailors (Shakespeare, Swift, Wordsworth, Byron, Austin, Dickens, Thackeray, Shaw, and many, many others), and put on rags or modern youth clothes.

Hence, British English has its own problems in connection with its global status. This problem is seen especially clearly in the example of the British literary language, a paragon for all variants that followed or were born in its womb. But in reality, this problem concerns all the existing Englishes of all English-speaking peoples, and thus the **sixth tendency is a threat of barbarization of all “authentic” Englishes.**

Finally, the **seventh: as a global language, English acquires a certain negative tinge, and this can provoke a negative attitude to those who use English as a means of communication—first and foremost to English-speaking nations.**

English’s negative connotations are determined by a whole host of reasons.

A dominant position always provokes discontent. English has the mark of prestige, elitism, prospect, and the promise of material prosperity. This irritates other nations, especially those that have lost their high international status (French for many years was the exclusive language of diplomacy and correspondence; Russian ruled over the huge Soviet space and its neighbors; German was the language of science, etc.), as well as those that never had it. Each nation has its own language, the language of its homeland, its mother tongue, beloved and dear.

The growing negative attitude toward English is provoked also by the fact that the opinion held by people of many countries about the international policy of the U.S. has taken a turn for the worse. Just as in the SAR (South African Republic) Afrikaans lost its dominant position after having been labeled the “language of aggressors,” English faces the threat of

getting the same label with corresponding consequences. In our country, after World War II interest in German (and thus the amount of those studying it), drastically fell: one of the main reasons was the association with violence and aggression.

Negative feelings toward a language can be—unfairly, but logically—transferred to its speakers. In Russia we experienced this in both directions: from language to people and from people to language. Indeed, in many of our republics and countries of the “socialist camp” dissatisfaction with the political regime took on the form of the rejection of Russian. And neither Pushkin, nor Tolstoy, nor Dostoevsky, nor Chekhov, nor Sholokhov saved it.

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## Lecture 7. Language, Culture and National Security

Nowadays it is common knowledge that the national language and the national culture as encapsulated in words play a very important part in moulding the personality of the user as well as the national character, mentality, identity.

Traditionally, national security is supposed to be the problem, task and responsibility of police, armies, military intelligence. However, national security implies not just the actual fighting with an existing threat but, even more so, investigating the origin, the roots of this danger which, thus, could be nipped in the bud. Here are the results of my investigation of the actual and potential sources in **Russian** and **English** that **may** and **do** provoke intercultural and international conflicts. The material of the research is Russian and English languages and cultures.

Let us begin from the very beginning, i.e. from early childhood.

### 1. Lullabies, children's rhymes

The first lines of Michael Lermontov's (a 19<sup>th</sup> century classic of Russian literature) very popular "A Cossack's Lullaby" go as follows:

*A fierce Chechen is crawling along the rapid, stormy river Terek,  
Sharpening his dagger.  
But your father is an experienced warrior,  
So don't worry, my dear little boy,  
You may sleep soundly.*

The lullaby was written by Lermontov during the war of Russians with Chechens, a nation in the Caucasus. Lermontov was exiled by the Russian tsar to the battlefield for his anti-tsarist poem "On the Poet's Death" where he accused the tsar Nickolas I and his court of Alexander Pushkin's death. Nowadays, after the war with the Chechens in the late nineties of the last century, this lullaby could easily trigger off a conflict.

A most popular Russian children's counting-out rhyme sounds quite aggressive: *A new moon is coming out of the fog, takes out a knife, I will cut, I will beat...* During World War II there appeared another variant: *A German is coming out of the fog, takes out a knife...* In Russian the two words: *mesiets* (a new moon) and *nemets* (a German) sound alike.

50 English Children's Favourite Songs:

*Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief,  
Taffy came to my house and he stole a piece of beef.  
I went to Taffy's house, Taffy wasn't home,  
Taffy came to my house and stole a marrow bone.*

This **English** children's **favourite** song describes Welshmen as successful thieves.

## **2. Fairy Tales, Folklore**

Fairy tales and other folklore items in both languages and cultures under investigation are full of horrible stories about monsters, ogres (man-eating giants), wicked witches (baby-gobbling old ugly women), violence, murders, etc.

The Russian *Baba-Yaga*, an ugly wicked witch in Russian fairy tales who steals babies and little children and then fries or bakes them in the oven for a meal. Usually they are saved at the last minute by a hero or a heroine.

The Oxford Dictionary of English Folklore gives the following titles: *The Princess who Murdered her Child. Shooting at the Father's Corpse*

## **3. School children's "folklore"**

It is very popular with schoolchildren in Russian secondary schools from the Far West to the Far East. This kind of folklore is full of violence as regards to teachers and school administration.

Interestingly, these "jocular" rhymes and poems where schoolmasters and schoolteachers are shot, hanged, drowned, etc. invariably cause slightly embarrassed smiles with all the adult audiences where I spoke on the subject. It was clear from the reaction of the listeners that they are fully aware of this kind of folklore and still remember all these "poems" (with slight variations) from their own happy school days.

In "The Book of Children's Folklore" published in Bashkir Republic there is a section called "Sadistic Rhymes" having 4-line rhymes which times more than all the other parts of the book. I could not read them. They are not just cruel or unpleasant, they are *s a d i s t i c*.

This confirms the well-known truth that children's upbringing is extremely important because the ideas acquired by people in the early years are basic and well remembered for the rest of their lives. It is confirmed, among many other things and words, by an old oriental saying: "If you want to defeat your enemy, bring up his children."

Adult language supports, reinforces and intensifies all these motifs of violence and aggression with a great variety of linguistic means.

The evidence of aggression, violence and xenophobia inherently present in a language can be found in the following sources:

## **4. Dictionaries**

The Thesaurus Dictionary of Russian Idiomatic Collocations [Baranov, Dobrovolskiy: 2007] has **119 units** in the long columns headed: *Physical Violence*.

The absolute majority of the entries are marked as *common, plain, jargon, indecent, obscene, low style, popular, everyday usage*. No comments!

Next comes the column of antonyms which has four headings: *kindness, humanity, inoffensiveness, docility*. Under the four headings there are only **7 entries** (opposed to 119 for “Physical Violence”!) used to show *kindness, humanity*, etc. which are marked: *journ.* for *journalism* and *bibl.* for *biblical*.

Thus, the Russian language provides its users with a very large group / arsenal of linguistic means to express aggression and violence which are **widely used** in everyday life. They are opposed to **a handful of kind** and inoffensive **expressions** used by journalists and priests. As for journalists, the themes of kindness and docility, etc. are not very popular with them, putting it very mildly.

### **5. Language Teaching Materials: Dictionaries, Textbooks**

Longman Active Study Dictionary of English presents a bloody drama illustrating the verb *to kill*: *First she killed her husband, then she killed herself*.

Only one ELT Dictionary illustrates the verb as *You shalt not kill*. The obsolete form *shalt* is not quite appropriate for foreign students of English but the content of the example is good.

Here are only two examples from the sea of language teaching materials. One is from a school textbook of English for Russian schoolchildren studying English, the other one is a text of a lesson in Russian for American Students.

#### **1. LOST IN THE TAIGA**

*A hundred miles from any settlement in the midst of the wilderness the Lykov family lived, spoke and thought in the manner of the 17th century. In 1932, Karp Lykov had taken his wife into the remote Siberian taiga, deep into the Abakan River valley in response to disturbing events in Russian society. The family grew, and the men and women lived separately in a pitch-dark house with no lighting. It was a tiny colony with the primitive living conditions of the time of Peter the Great. They missed World War II and all the shake-ups that followed. The family had lived there for 46 years all alone, until geologists discovered them in 1978. Within a month three of the five family members suddenly died one after another and there is still little explanation for it. Soon Karp Osipovich, the family head, passed away, too. The remaining younger daughter Agafia, in her fifties, began to build a fragile relationship with the outside world with thoughtful dignity...*

The other one has been taken from an American site on teaching Russian as a foreign language.

## 2. В ПАРКЕ КУЛЬТУРЫ И ОТДЫХА

*В парке культуры и отдыха написано:*

*Товарищи, лежать на траве в парке культуры и отдыха некультурно.*

*Директор парка культуры и отдыха*

*Владимир лежит на траве в парке культуры и отдыха. Почему он лежит на траве? Не знает ли он, что лежать на траве некультурно? Он знает, но ему все равно. Он любит лежать на траве и думать о жизни.*

*Директор парка: Мальчик, почему ты лежишь на траве? Ты ведь знаешь, что тут есть скамьи. Товарищ Бородин сидит на скамье. Я сижу на скамье. Все, кроме тебя, сидят на скамьях.*

*[пауза, пока Владимир думает]*

*Владимир: Мне все равно. Я не могу сидеть.*

*Директор: Почему ты не можешь?*

*Владимир: Я слаб, товарищ директор, слаб от недоедания.*

*Директор: Знает ли твой отец, что ты слаб от недоедания?*

*Владимир: Отец знает, но ему все равно. Весь день он лежит на диване*

## IN THE PARK OF RECREATION AND CULTURE

*In the Park of Recreation and Culture there is a sign saying:*

*Comrades! Lying on the grass in Park of Recreation and Culture is not cultured.*

*Director of the Park of Recreation and Culture*

*Vladimir is lying on the grass in the Park of Recreation and Culture. Why is he lying on the grass? Doesn't he know that lying on the grass is not cultured? He knows but he doesn't care. He likes to lie on the grass and think about life.*

*Director of the Park: Boy, why are you lying on the grass? You know that there are benches here, don't you? Comrade Borodine is sitting on the bench. I am sitting on the bench. Everyone but you is sitting on the benches.*

*[A pause while Vladimir is thinking]*

*Vladimir: I don't care. I can't sit.*

*Director of the Park: Why can't you?*

*Vladimir: I am weak, Comrade Director, I am weak of undereating.*

*Director of the Park: Does your father know that you are weak of undereating?*

*Vladimir: He knows but he doesn't care. He lies on the sofa and drinks*

	<i>и пьет алкогольные напитки.</i>		<i>alcohol the whole day.</i>
Директор:	<i>[с отвращением] Какой жестокий человек!</i>	Director of the Park:	<i>[disgusted] What a cruel man!</i>
Владимир:	<i>[с грустью] Товарищ директор, никто не любит меня. Никто не понимает меня. Я один. Я один.</i>	Vladimir:	<i>[sadly] Comrade Director, nobody loves me. Nobody understands me. I am lonely. I am lonely.</i>
	<i>Директор плачет.</i>		<i>The director is crying.</i>

**6. Proverbs, quotations, aphorisms, collocations, set expressions** are full of violence, xenophobia, aggression.

An African proverb: *If you meet a snake and an Ethiopian, first kill the Ethiopian, because the snake may not be poisonous.*

A Russian set-phrase meaning *to have a deep sleep* goes as follows: *to sleep like a murdered/killed one*. It can be used about anybody, including babies.

*Don't mention a rope in the house of the hanged* (*В доме повешенного не говорят о веревке*). (Mind: the form *hanged* implies a crime, not a suicide.)

The English language, culture, mentality are notorious for their open negative attitude to everything foreign and foreigners. These words are most often used in negative, xenophobic contexts. **Xenophobia**, as is well-known, means extreme dislike or fear of foreigners, their customs, their religions, etc.

English words *foreign* and *foreigner* are used as a rule in negative contexts. In English dictionaries the use and meaning of these words are usually presented quite negatively.

*Anne's father would not consent to her marrying a foreigner* (Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Contemporary English);

*He has a distrust of foreigners* (Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Contemporary English).

*My grandparents are suspicious of foreigners to the point of xenophobia. Xenophobia and racism became an increasingly strong undercurrent in the films they made at that time. The twin pressures of recession and immigration have undoubtedly fueled xenophobia* (Cambridge International Dictionary of English (CIDE), CUP, 1995, p. 1694).

In "Oxford Dictionary of Quotations" foreigners are also described negatively.

*We cannot bring ourselves to believe it possible that a foreigner should in any respect be wiser than ourselves.* Anthony Trollope. Orley Farm (1862), ch. 18.

*...abroad is unutterably bloody, and foreigners are fiends.* Nancy Mitford. The Pursuit of Love (1945), ch. 4. This quotation is widely spread in Modern English usage.

This dictionary gives a quotation from a French play which has become popular for its strong “anti-foreign tendency”:

*Plus je vis l'étrangers, plus j'aimai ma patrie.* (The more I see foreigners, the more I love my country). Du Belloy. *Le Siège de Calais* (1765, act 1 sc.3).

Tom Stoppard, a well-known English writer, makes a somewhat disdainful assessment of Roman poets through the mouth of a character of his play who is an expert in the classical literature of antiquity: “*Romans were foreigners who wrote for foreigners two millennia ago*”.

This attitude to foreigners is clearly (forcefully) expressed in a well-known joke about an English lady visiting Hungary who spoke about Hungarians scornfully calling them: “*these foreigners*”. When she was politely explained that in Hungary it is she who is a foreigner she was greatly astonished and retorted: “*I cannot be a foreigner anywhere! I am English*”.

The dislike and distrust of foreigners is so deep and strong that even such a neutral educational term like *foreign languages* is being ousted by *international* nowadays.

**Derogatory, scornful ethnonyms**, i.e. names of nationalities. For example, in Russian *fritz* for German, *zhid* for Jews, *yaposhki* for the Japanese, *kitajozza* for the Chinese, *khachik* for Caucasians, *khokhol* for Ukrainians, *Moskal* for Russians (by Ukrainians), *chuckchi/eskimo*es for Inuits. They are considered to be very offensive and trigger conflicts often and easily, especially with young people.

The English language also has a great collection of scornful, derogatory names of nationalities (ethnonyms) provoking conflicts and violence.

English derogatory ethnonyms presented as follows show an increase of negative connotations. The mildest of them is *Johnny foreigner* – usually about a young male foreigner.

*hans* – a German (cf. *fritz* in Russian);

*iti* – an Italian;

*yid* (strong) – a Jew;

*paki* (very strong) – a Pakistani;

*dago* (very strong) – a man of dark skin;

*wag* (very strong) = Am. *nigger* – a black man;

*limeys* (Am.) – Englishmen.

Another explosive and conflict-generating sphere of linguistic means are so-called **international jokes** when representatives of different nationalities find themselves in the same situation but their behaviour differs (reactions are different) according to the stereotypical images that are attached to certain nations.

These images are usually far from being complimentary, putting it mildly. There are many jokes about one particular nationality (often – the closest neighbour), like, for example, the French make mockery of Belgians, the English – of Scots and the Irish, Russians of Inuits, etc.

The stereotypical Scot in international jokes is absurdly greedy. For example: 1. *A boy from Glasgow killed both of his parents to get a free meal for orphans*; 2. *The Grand Canyon in the USA came into existence when a Scot dropped a penny into a ditch.*

The Irish are invariably presented as drunkards. For example: 1. *An Irishman is sitting next to the conveyer belt at Dublin airport crying his eyes out.*

*“What’s the problem?” – asked a fellow passenger.*

*“I’ve lost all my luggage”, – he wailed.*

*“How did it happen?”*

*“The cork fell out”.*

2. *A man walked into a bar and saw an Irishman he knew sitting at the table with an empty pint glass in front of him.*

*“Would you like another one?” – asked the man.*

*The Irishman looked at him quizzically and said, “Now what would I be wanting with two empty pint glasses?”*

Invariably, stereotyped images of nations are either critical or openly derogatory, especially, as has been mentioned above, when they nominate neighbouring (and, therefore, more familiar) peoples. Ethnic (Ethnical) jokes are very popular all over the world and have become quite a flourishing business. Indeed, cards, plates, souvenirs with these jokes are in a brisk demand and sell very well. However, they hurt national feelings of the peoples that are mocked at. The modernized version of these jokes under the influence of political correctness tendency / trend presents the “vices” of the nations which are being mocked in a kind of “perverted” way as their would-be virtues: through the words with the opposite meaning, i.e. through antonyms. For example, a widely spread text goes like this:

*“The perfect European should be... sober as the Irish, cooking like a Brit, driving like the French, organized as a Greek, humble as a Spaniard, humorous as a German, famous as a Luxembourger”, etc.*

Nevertheless, the thinly disguised mockery shines through in these jokes, and the smaller in size or the more insignificant / less significant a nation is, the more hurt its representatives are.

There are – alas! – many more conflict-provoking linguistic means and a comprehensive survey will require a thick volume. A specially important and serious spheres are language teaching materials, mass media language, non-verbal means of communication and many others.

The conflicts provoked by language also vary greatly – from a quarrel within a family to a war between nations. However, as a remarkable 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian humourist writer Alexey Konstantinovich Tolstoy (not to be mixed up with Alexey Nikolaevich Tolstoy or the greatest of all the Tolstoys – Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy) wrote, “no one will cover the uncoverable” especially in the genre of an academic paper. Its main purpose has been to draw attention to the extremely important subject of national security through language.

Talking about aggression and xenophobia in language it is worth mentioning some linguistic changes in modern Russia and the Russian language.

The words *aggressor* and *aggressive* which imply *a bitter and deep hostility to people* were especially active in usage in 1930’s when the Second World War was approaching. No wonder that at that time Russian collocations like *немецкие/японские агрессивные планы / агрессоры* (*German/Japanese aggressive plans / aggressors*) became clichéd.

Interestingly, that nowadays in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium, that is in the post-Soviet period of Russian history, the Russian word *агрессор* (*aggressor*) is hardly ever used in mass media texts. However, the Russian noun *агрессивность* (*aggressiveness*) and especially the adjective *агрессивный* (*aggressive*) suddenly have come to the fore, but they have changed their collocability and have acquired new – positive! – connotations. These words may be used as terms in scientific and academic texts: in economics – *aggressive portfolio*, in linguistics – *speech/language aggression* where they are stylistically neutral. That is how t h e l o s s o f n e g a t i v e c o n n o t a t i o n s began. However, now they are used more and more frequently with positive connotations: *sports aggressiveness, aggressive music / advertisement*. In positive contexts these words are associated with being *purposeful, active, energetic, initiative*. The Chancellor of Moscow State University: “We must be more aggressive in forwarding our ideas...” Deputy Minister of Education: “Humanitarians must be more aggressive in demanding grants for their research”.

### **To sum up**

There is no doubt that national human languages loaded with national culture, ideology, the system of values, etc. play a major role in developing aggression and xenophobia and thus may provoke or trigger off international and intercultural conflicts.

We all live now at the wonderful and disturbing times. W o n d e r f u l – thanks to the technological innovations having opened up new kinds and ways of human communication, first and foremost the Internet. Disturbing because most nations have become aware of the threat of losing their national identity in the globalizing world. The reaction is paradoxical, as has been mentioned above.

And there is a threat of a world conflict between the national security and the international one.

In this situation a very important aspect or factor should not be neglected, it is the human one: the national language intertwined with the national culture.

If one hand, one bomb is stopped from being used for violence because a word has not been spoken or written – all the expenses of money, time, etc. will be justified.

*Memento lingua.*

## Lecture 8. In Search of National Character

Human language and man are inseparable. Language does not exist outside man and man as Homo Sapiens does not exist outside language. So, man cannot be studied outside language and vice versa. Language reflects the world around us – through man and for man, language likewise reflects the culture created by man, preserves it for posterity and hands it down from generation to generation. Language is a cognitive tool through which man perceives the universe and culture. And, finally, language is a cultural tool: it moulds people, determines their behaviour, way of life, outlook, mentality, ideology and national character. The last term and the concept of national character are to be discussed in greater detail because the paper is focused on them.

**Language reflects the world and culture and moulds the native speakers of this language as well as their national character.** All these well-known truths look obvious. However, the mission of scholars is to doubt the obvious, investigate and analyze it. In humanities it is even more so than in sciences for obvious reasons: the subject of scientists' investigation is the world outside man, it is more definite and more "objective" in the sense that it exists irrespective of humans.

The national character is not an object of the outside world, it exists only in the human mind. No wonder that this concept arouses some doubts and arguments about its existence.

Indeed, what is meant by the national character? Is there such a thing? How correct is it to generalise and extrapolate typical features onto a whole nation when it is a well-known fact that all people are different? There is a very true English saying that goes: "It takes all sorts to make a world". Can one, then, say: "It takes one sort to make a nation?" Or does the national character imply a set of stereotyped qualities attributed to one nation by another – often not quite friendly – nation? Where should one look for the concept of national character? This paper is an attempt to answer these questions.

The questions concerning the term and the concept of national character have been in the focus of scholarly attention beginning from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the researchers of the concept agree that, as has been mentioned above, the personality of a native speaker is moulded by his/her mother tongue. Accordingly, the national language both reflects and shapes the national character. In other words, if language shapes the personality of the individual native speaker, then it follows that it must play an equally constructive role in the formation of national character. At the same time it is clear that it is impossible to separate the passive, "reflective" and active, formative functions of the language, that this is no more than a heuristic technique, a convention used in research. Fully aware of its conventional nature, I will

continue to make use of this technique, however, in order to show, with examples taken from English and Russian, how the language moulds the personality through a great variety of means at its disposal of which the national culture is, undoubtedly, the main one. As a rule, people are unaware of the active role language plays in moulding their character, determining their behaviour, attitude to life, people, etc.

A lot has been written by psychologists, culturologists, sociologists and philologists on the correlation between the national culture and personality. Distinguished Russian Scholars, E. Vereshchagin and V. Kostomarov, comment as follows in this connection in their book, "Language and Culture": "A man is not born a Russian, German or Japanese, etc., but becomes one as a result of living in the relevant national community of people. In its upbringing, a child is exposed to the impact of the national culture to which the people surrounding it belong" (Vereshchagin, Kostomarov, 1990, p. 25).

The controversial and complex nature of the concept of national character indicates a certain terminological confusion – a problem common to all humanities. Instead of **national character**, Nikolai Erofeev uses the term **ethnic idea** which he defines as "a verbal portrait or image of a different nation" (Erofeev, 1982, p.7) and S. Arutyunyan – the term **psychological make-up of a nation** which he defines as "a unique sum total of different manifestations of a people's spiritual life" (Arutyunyan, 1966, p. 23). However, the **national character** remains the most common term.

Many believe that the national character is not a combination of specific traits characteristic of a given nation, but rather a unique set of universal human traits.

At the opening ceremony of "The Week of the Russian Language in France", in March 1998, V. Kostomarov spoke to that effect: "National culture is not a combination of unique features, characteristic of a particular people, it is a distinct set of universal features and ideas". And Yu. Bromley likewise notes that one can talk "only of the relative nature of national character traits, of nuances in their manifestation." (Bromley, 1975, p. 94)

Thus, we have an extremely contradictory picture. Is there such a thing, then, as national character? If there is, what evidence of its existence can be considered objective and scientific?

Where should we search for it?

What can be regarded as a source of objective information on the national character?

Let us try and identify these sources.

The material analyzed in the paper presents the results of a search for potential sources of information on national character.

What can be regarded as this kind of source?

The first thing that comes to mind when discussing the national character of a particular people is a set of stereotypes associated with the nation in question.

A **stereotype** is defined as “a schematic, standardised image or impression of a social phenomenon or thing, usually emotionally coloured and fixed. It expresses a person’s habitual attitude to something formed under the impact of social conditions and on the basis of previous experience...” (Onikov, 1987, p. 447) **Stereotyped** – “repeated in the same way, banal” (Ozhegov, 2014).

English dictionaries give a similar definition of the word *stereotype* – “something continued or constantly repeated without change; a stereotyped phrase, formula, etc.” (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical principals, vol. II); “fixed mental impression” (Concise Oxford English Dictionary); “a fixed pattern which is believed to represent a type of person or event” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English).

The words *stereotype*, *stereotyped* have negative connotations both in English and Russian because often they are defined by the words *trite*, *banal*, or *cliché* the latter defined as *hackneyed*, *devoid of expressiveness and originality*. This is not entirely fair with reference to the word *stereotype* in general and particularly unfair when it is used in the context of cultural communication. Though schematic and generalised, national and cultural stereotypes prepare one for an encounter with an alien culture, cushion the blow, mitigate culture shock. “Stereotypes enable a man to build up an impression of the world as a whole, to overcome the limitations of his immediate narrow social, geographical and political environment.” (Pavlovskaya, 1998, p. 17).

1. The most popular source of national stereotypes are the so-called “international” jokes built up round a clichéd theme: people of different nationalities, finding themselves in a similar situation, respond to it in different ways, according to the national character traits ascribed to them in the country where the joke originated.

Thus, in Russian “international” jokes.

The English are portrayed as extremely punctual, taciturn, pragmatic, reserved, fond of cigars, whisky, horse racing, etc.

The Germans – as practical, disciplined, organised, and as sticklers for order to the point of absurdity.

The French – as frivolous playboys, epicureans, thinking only of women, wine and gastronomic pleasures.

The Americans – as rich, generous, self-assured, pragmatic, known for good expensive cars.

The Russians – as reckless, happy-go-lucky, not fussy, hard-drinking, pugnacious, open, uncouth, fond of vodka and brawls.

In Russian “international” jokes all these nationalities live up to their stereotypes.

Take, for example, a very simple joke about how people of different nationalities behave when they see a fly in a glass of beer.

The German (practical) gets rid of the fly and drinks the beer.

The Frenchman (sentimental) fishes out the fly, blows on it, spreads out its wings and does not drink the beer.

The Russian (not a bit fussy and fond of the bottle) drinks the beer along with the fly ignoring or not noticing it.

The American (sure of his rights) summons the waiter, makes a scene and demands another mug of beer and a financial compensation for some moral detriment.

West European stereotypes are well illustrated in the following jokes:

Paradise is where the cooks are French, mechanics – German, policemen – British, lovers - Italian and it is all organised by the Swiss.

Hell is where the cooks are British, policemen – German, lovers – the Swiss, mechanics – French and it is all organised by Italians.

2. Another important source is national classical literature. The term *classical* is crucial in this context because classical literature has withstood the test of time. It follows, therefore, that such literary works appeal to the feelings and mentality of a few generations of this nation and this culture.

When the main characters of national literatures are compared to their stereotyped counterparts in international jokes, the contrast is striking.

Indeed the dramatic heroes of the classical masterpieces by Stendhal, Balzac, Hugo, Mérimée, de Maupassant and Zola, who are portrayed as being engaged in tackling complex human problems, are poles apart from the frivolous Frenchmen of the jokes whose only concern is wine and women.

The stuffy and reserved to the point of absurdity Englishmen of the jokes created a literature full of sparkling humour, irony and sarcasm. The majority of great humorists are English: Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Charles Dickens, Makepeace Thackeray, and, among others, Shakespeare who wrote 22 comedies as against 5 tragedies. No other culture puts such value on humour!

And the drilled, self-disciplined Germans from international anecdotes gave the world the very lyrical and profound poetry by Goethe and Heine.

And finally Russians, the hooligans and drunks of anecdotal fame, made a most valuable contribution to world literature: the works by Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov, Dostoevsky, Gorky, Sholokhov and so many others. With their philosophical quest and moral sufferings, the heroes of these works represent the intelligentsia amidst the characters of world classical literature (It is not for nothing that the word *intelligentsia* is of Russian origin).

So where should we look for the Russian national character type: in jokes or in classical literature? And who is a typical Russian – the man who greedily drinks beer with a fly?

It is a known fact that before invading Russia in the Second World War the Nazis mounted a campaign to gather information on Russia and the Russians. And one of the main sources on which they drew was Russian classical literature. It was this literature that provided the Nazi leaders with their view of the Russian national character. Russia, they thought, was “a giant on legs of clay” – push it and it would disintegrate – it is a country populated with indecisive, introspective and spineless members of intelligentsia such as Bezukhov, Nekhlyudov, Myshkin, Raskolnikov, Uncle Vanya, Ivanov, etc.

Ivan Solonevich writes bitterly to this effect: “It was Russian literature that provided the basic background for all foreign information on Russia: there are your Oblomovs, Manilovs, superfluous people, poor people, idiots and tramps” (Solonevich, 1991, p.166).

Critical of Russian classical literature being used as a reference source, Solonevich calls it “a distorting mirror of the people’s soul” (Solonevich, 1991, p.164).

Without engaging in polemic, I would like to try and ‘rehabilitate’ Russian literature. O.K., so it misled the Nazis. True, the Brest Fortress was defended by people of a different calibre to the Manilovs and Bezukhovs of this world. But who knows how these two characters might have behaved had they found themselves in the fortress. They too, perhaps, might have demonstrated that same kernel of “iron in the Russian national character” which, according to Solonevich, Russian literature failed to reflect (Remember Pierre Bezukhov’s heroic behaviour in Moscow sieged by the French in 1812).

While not following Solonevich in his indignant rejection of all literature, I believe that it is not so much a distorting, as an incomplete, mirror. It cannot be a complete mirror – “for no one can cover the uncoverable” as the Russian writer, Alexei Tolstoy under the pseudonym of Kozma Prutkov said. It is incomplete and subjective. **It is a subjective rather than a distorting mirror**, for each work of literature has a specific author with his/her own subjective, i.e., personal to himself/herself, vision of the world, formed to a large extent by his/her own individual life, creative imagination, and talent.

Thus, with certain reservations, literature too serves as a source of information on national character.

3. Finally, we come to the third source where one can and should seek for the “soul of the people, their national character – folklore, oral folk art. In this sense folklore has a great advantage over literature for works of folk art are anonymous, they are created not by an individual, but by an entire nation, this is collective creativity.

What light does folklore throw on national character? First and foremost, it reveals a certain uniformity because at the center of the epic works of oral folk art stands a real Hero: a warrior mighty, handsome (in modern terminology – a superman) who defends his people from all evil: dragons, monsters, natural calamities, hostile forces. In addition to his supernatural powers and abilities, he often possesses a magic horse, a magic sword or other magical objects. Like Robin Hood, he is the most skillful of archers and, like Ilya Muromets, he possesses unheard of strength. Such a hero is the embodiment of the people’s eternal dream of a strong and just protector who will punish wrongdoers. Russian folklore has paid tribute to such heroes in *bylinas* (heroic, epic songs) in which Russian warriors defend their land with the same zeal and success as do the heroes of the “Kalevala”, or David Sasunsky, or the Knight in the Tiger’s Skin.

However, the chief personage of Russian folktales is unique and not a bit like the hero-superman that has just been described. Here, evidently, is a solution to the riddle of the enigmatic Russian soul, as well as a key to the Russian national character.

This ‘hero’ – yes, the inverted commas are in place – is Ivan-the-Fool. He is a total opposite to a hero. He is neither strong, nor handsome and, what is more, he is a fool. Unprepossessing, ridiculous, down-trodden, stupid, submissive to cruel and evil people, but ever overcoming all obstacles and misfortunes, Ivan-the-Fool is a mass of contradictions. He has the appearance of a fool but, at critical moments, it is he who turns out to be the cleverest; he seems lazy and apathetic but, when need be, he is capable of acting quickly, boldly and very dynamically; he is uncouth and sensitive, carefree and concerned, cunning and trusting. By the end of the tale, he has got the better of everyone by virtue of his patience, kindness, native wit and absence of pretension. His strength lies in the fact that, due to his goodness and impracticality, he creates an impression, on the grasping people who surround him, of being weak and stupid and, as they believe he is a fool, it never enters their heads that he could be brainy, bold and enterprising. And, listening to folk tales, each new generation of children learn not to judge people by their behaviour and appearances.

The nation which has invented for itself a ‘small’ hero is a great nation.

Male and female characters in Russian folklore share the same characteristics: their inner beauty and talents are buried deep down inside them they are unseen to the naked eye. In order to perceive, a beautiful wife in a frog or a prince and husband in a monster, one should use one’s heart rather than one’s eyes.

To sum up, we have examined three sources confirming the existence of national character:

1) International jokes based on national stereotypes. These stereotypes do not so much reflect the salient characteristics of a people, as form them both in the eyes of other nations as well as in the eyes of the nation in question itself. A lot of Russians abroad, for instance, drink vodka, wear Russian-style flowered shawls and do things they never do back home just so as to confirm to the international stereotype of a typical Russian.

2) A national classical literature. Its reliability as a source is «undermined» to a certain extent by an author's individuality and, therefore, subjective viewpoint.

3) Folklore which, incidentally, also has written forms, is the most reliable of the above-listed sources. Although folklore falls back on stereotyped, schematic representation of heroes, personages and even plots, the very fact that it is the collective effort or work of a people and that through the process of oral transmission from generation to generation it has become as smooth and rounded as a pebble on the seashore and, therefore, devoid of the subjectivity and idiosyncrasies of individual creative writing – all this makes it the most reliable source and repository of knowledge on national character.

4) However, there is one more, the last – though not in terms of importance – most reliable and scientifically acceptable source of information on national character: it is His Majesty the National Language loaded and interwoven with National Culture. Language both reflects and moulds the character of its speaker and is the most objective index of national character.

However, revealing the part National Language plays in forming National Character requires another paper or, preferably, a book, so I have to stop at this.

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