

DOI: 10.31866/2410-1915.20.2019.172387

UDC 81'246.2+316.722]:159.923.2

## MULTICULTURALISM: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IDENTITY PROBLEM

Oksana Biletska

*Candidate of Cultural Studies, Associate Professor,  
ORCID: 0000-0003-1785-9607, bel\_o@ukr.net,  
Kyiv National university of Culture and Arts,  
36, Ye. Konovaltsia Str., Kyiv, 01133, Ukraine*

Thus the purpose of the work is to study the language (tongue) and culture identity as a means of self-awareness and self-identification in the context of multiculturalism. The methodology of the study is to use such research methods as study, analysis and generalization in order to reveal the notion of language and culture identity, depending on the modern world cultural heterogeneity and the revival of cultural identities, with the cultures enriching each other. The scientific novelty is to disclose the problem of language and culture identity as a means of self-awareness and self-identification in context of multiculturalism as a cultural studies phenomenon. Conclusions. The existence of language and culture identity, most fully manifesting itself in the social expression of the individual, being the ethnos representative, softens current globalization trends, convincingly confirming the revival of ethnic self-consciousness in modern conditions taking place parallel to the process of assimilation.

*Keywords:* culture; language; identity; self-disclosure; identity self-awareness; multilingualism; multiculturalism.

### Introduction

The modern world cultural heterogeneity requires a new level of the different cultures representatives' coexistence comprehension. Different cultural groups create a kind of ethnic and cultural mosaic, due to which all cultures enrich each other. In its turn, the modern countries' nonacceptance of the cultural homogeneity ideal and the cultural diversity provision, contributes to the revival of cultural identities. However, the existence of such diversity as ethnic, cultural, and linguistic cannot yet lay the basis for recognizing society as a multicultural one, as different ethnic groups' representatives may belong to the same culture, depending on the self-awareness of their identity.

The modern globalized world raises a whole range of questions. Of great importance there is an issue of language and culture identity, closely associated with the processes of self-awareness and a world-view orientation of the modern personality. The linguistic identity as an important means of self-awareness and self-identification acquires a special attention in the conditions of the modern society transformations.

The heart of each particular culture is a specific model of the world, defining a man's worldview, a nature of creativity, a leading cultural paradigm, a range of moral and aesthetic imperatives for human activity, with these models being the result of cultural and historical practice. The model helps to understand particular culture spiritual and material phenomena uniqueness, its inner meaning. Being engaged in a lively chain of the information transmission from generation to generation, man tends to find his "niche" within society for the realization of his human dignity.

Nowadays the concept of multiculturalism has replaced the concept of a "melting pot" society, with the assimilative ideology in the countries of the West having not found a real support. It is due even a multicultural society, a person preserves his identity despite the other cultures influence. Multiculturalism has long been recognized as one of the basic postulates of the world community existence.

In the conditions of globalization every society is in communion with other societies and is interested in preserving its language and culture identity, which is a rather difficult task, because of the global information space and the ease of trans-boundary influences conditions (Semyhivska, 2007, p. 46). In modern philosophical science the concept of culture belongs to fundamental ones, and the search for language comprehension forms, as a culture communicative component in conditions of the globalizing environment, does not meet the stereotype of its study as an instrumental phenomenon, representing the logical connection of the subject and object ethical relations.

There are many nations with each one developing a special culture, language, symbols, norms, morals, ways of communication and activities, etc. However, the most important factor of the human creation process is the language: it makes the basis of universality within the cultures diversity at the same time always belonging to a certain nation. The nation's development history reflects the culture formation processes, its social varieties and international relations. Therefore, each people's linguistic material is an indispensable source for studying cultural development, in which "culture is first of all a message: means of expressions, built according to the rules of a certain language and lexical material; it is sets of clusters semantically and pragmatically tied, and the reality they appeal to. The sign system connection with reality form a pragmatic aspect of culture built on certain rules and norms, learnt by traditional bearers of this culture (Semyhivska, 2007, p. 47).

The problem of a person language and culture identity in a modern multicultural and multinational world becomes especially relevant due to the processes of social and cultural formation, the territories redistribution and the struggle of countries for independence, etc. A few decades ago this concept belonged purely to the sphere of sociology and psychology interests, but today the problem of language and culture identity draws attention of linguists and cultural studies specialists.

The issue of the research was partially considered by different scholars (O. Potebnia, V. Ivanyshyn, P. Kononenko, L. Kostiuk, H. Lozko and others) and it was found that language is both a precondition for the culture and society development, and the human culture product and the society's genesis. It is also extremely interwoven with national culture and national identity, because the each language

history coincides with the history of a particular people and its culture, and any language is a national feature. However, the issue of language and culture identity as a means of self-determination and self-identification within the context of multiculturalism remains insufficiently studied. And this aspect determines the scientific novelty of the article.

### **The purpose of the article**

To characterize language and culture identity as a means of self-awareness and self-identification in the context of multiculturalism.

### **Presentation of the main material**

*Defining Multiculturalism.* Multiculturalism is one of the globalization specific aspects. It makes a special interest to the countries of the West; however, for Ukraine as a post-Soviet country, the study of multiculturalism has acquired a particular relevance. The current concept of multiculturalism covers many aspects of the modern society existence. The linguistic aspects of multiculturalism seem to be one of the main and most discussed issues, because in the social integration process the individual's language acts as the first human socialization means.

Modern approaches to the problems of multiculturalism or cultural pluralism are based on the actual recognition of cultural and ethnic affection as an integral part of the individual psychology. Moreover, the idea about mutual enrichment of cultures is becoming increasingly popular.

In the modern world the phenomenon of multilingualism has become more widespread. At the turn of the XX and XXI centuries, with the irreversible growth of the globalization process, the ability to speak many languages becomes a necessity not only for educated people or the society's elite, but also for other social classes. (Shalagina, 2015).

Multiculturalism is a policy that involves cultural diversity and contributes to its development. In a multicultural society, all citizens have equal rights in developing their culture, language, traditions, ethnic and religious values. It is a policy being very close by its essence to the policy of tolerance. The most important feature of a tolerant society is the parallel existence of different cultures. In a tolerant society, multiculturalism promotes the mutual enrichment of cultures; one culture penetrates into another for further people cultural unification.

As multiculturalism is one of the varieties of cultural diversity; in other words, it is a variety of different reactions to cultural diversity, supported not only by the dominant ethnic groups of people, but also by newcomers and minorities. These specific features characterize it as a positive phenomenon, ultimately contributing to the society development.

The process of a multicultural society formation and development was determined by the historical development peculiarities, and more specifically, by social factors. It should be noted that democracy plays a key role in the process of a multicultural society education and development. First of all, the multicultural society emerged in democratic parts of Western Europe and North America, with

these regions' high level of tolerance, morality and democracy providing excellent conditions for the multiculturalism ideas dissemination.

One of the main problems of multiculturalism is that culture to be perceived as a stable integrity and as a certain group objective attribute, as an ethnic culture. These groups are characterized by homogeneity with the boundaries between them being out of the question. That is why multiculturalism often acts as a synonym for a segmented society or cultural pluralism, and vice versa, cultural pluralism is sometimes referred to as multiculturalism in a normative sense.

The starting thesis of multiculturalism is to deny a single cultural standard. At the same time the term of multiculturalism may be used to refer an individual socialization under the influence of different cultural environments, the right of an individual to self-identification and choice of life strategies, different types of multilingualism, consequences of secularization and westernization, development of consumer markets, effects of globalization, etc. But in practice all this potential diversity is reduced to one perspective, called mosaic multiculturalism, with the dominant narration, denying existence of a unified society and recognizing only the conglomerate of "communities" (Barry, 2001, p. 300; Sarat, 1999, pp. 2–3).

*Language and culture identity.* The language and culture component of identity is not everywhere the same status. The representatives of mono-ethnic countries do not raise a linguistic question, what language to communicate either their native language, or the other one. People clearly distinguish between native and foreign languages, aware of their role, meaning and function. In polyethnic countries, language problems are always of relevance, causing discussions and interethnic frictions.

That is why the current situation builds up new models of identity, with its specifics being a person to feel himself as "his" for the world and "other" for his close environment. In a state of total uncertainty, practices of identification are becoming increasingly important. As in modernism the problem of identity was how to create and preserve it as a stable and strong one, so in postmodernism the issue of identity transformed itself and focused on how to avoid the identity fixation and to preserve freedom (Baumann, 2005).

The specificity of the language and culture identity formation is determined by the tendencies of the modern society development: globalization processes, return to authenticity, emphasis on identity, as well as trends in contemporary social and humanitarian cognition associated with the peculiarities of social reality. In social reality there is a variety of variants of social experience encoding, since human life is increasingly shifted from the natural world to the sphere of meanings and senses.

The notion of identity was introduced by psychologist E. Erikson in 1950. According to him the identity is a process of organizing the human life experience in the individual "I" (Ericson, 1996, p. 8). The contemporary humanitarian paradigm of knowledge regards identity as a psychological presentation of a person about his own "I", characterized by a subjective sense of his individual self-identity and integrity, the identification of a person himself (partially conscious, partially unconscious) with those or other typological categories (Chetvertak, 2013). Identity is an indicator of "his own" as opposed to "alien" and it is the result of person

awareness in him belonging to a certain group, which allows him to determine his place in the social and cultural space.

Maintaining relationships with the family and the culture, the person grew up, helps to preserve personal integrity and identity. Rejecting one's own culture and devaluing one's personal past experience can be destructive to the individual. Today it is already clear that a much more effective way is not a mechanical rejection of the previous culture and self-identification, but an attempt to adapt, reconstruct culturally determined habits and customs in order to fit them into the new life conditions (Olshtain, Kotik, 2000).

The state language policy of multilingual communities is mainly of two types: either monolingualism is maintained in all their territories, and bilingualism remains a "private affair" of migrants and immigrants; or for administrative purposes, one or two languages become official, and for the languages of the national minorities, a policy is pursued to meet their ethnic and cultural needs, primarily in getting education in their native language.

Within the context of culture and language identity, Y. Karaulov and V. Neroznak distinguish between bilingualism and multiculturalism as an independent problem and suggest a dichotomous separation of bilingualism according to the criterion of completeness/incompleteness. Based on this criterion, intense (continuous) and extensive (discrete) types of bilingualism are distinguished. The first involves the continuous use of both languages with a full communication load. The second is associated with an optional bilingual thesaurus. It is emphasized that an intensive bilingualism generates literary bilingualism, combining ethnic and cultural variants of a single one language (Karaulov, Neroznak, 1988). A feature of such bilingualism is a bright connection with biculturalism.

A linguistic person, as a certain language carrier, stores information arranged in linguistic units, rules and norms of usage. As a particular language and culture carrier, the linguistic personality becomes a national type. V. Karasik distinguishes language and cultural types, recognizable images of representatives of a certain culture, the totality of which constitutes the culture of a society. Language and cultural type is a type of concept, the content of which is a typified personality (Karasik, 2005). The language personality may be referred to as a social type, with taken into account various parameters as age, profession, gender, education. Cultural and language classifications of individuals suggest the selection of those personality types that have had a significant impact on the behaviour of the relevant culture representatives (Karasik, Dmitrieva, 2005). Researchers identify various language and cultural types that correspond to a particular culture. This emphasizes the recognition of the images of a certain culture representatives, the totality of which constitutes the culture of a particular society (Zhusupov, 2015).

## Conclusions

Culture, as a language, functions as a sign system, performs the function of information encoding in order to accumulate, distribute and transmit it to subsequent generations. Culture is a broader concept than language; it is a set of languages for describing physical, social and economic reality, as well as languages

for the description of these languages themselves. So, we can say that globalization from the point of view of culture means the formation of a sign system that would be suitable for describing the realities of all societies involved in this process.

The language and culture identity, most fully manifesting itself in the social expression of the individual and the ethnos, softens the rigid and inevitable globalization trends, convincingly confirming that in modern conditions the revival of ethnic self-consciousness is parallel to the process of assimilation.

Consequently, in the context of globalization, as a result of the resettlement of people and the strengthening of cultural communication between peoples (and civilizations), the phenomenon of language remains the “identifying” code of individual ethnic groups, peoples, socio-economic formations.

## References

---

- Akopyan, K.V. (2008). Mul'tikul'turalizm: osnovnye teoreticheskie podkhody [Multiculturalism: basic theoretical approaches]. *Forumy rossiiskikh musul'man*, no. 4, pp. 139–142.
- Barry, B. (2001). *Culture and Equality. An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Individualizirovannoe obshchestvo* [Individualized society]. Moscow: Logos.
- Chetvertak, Ye.O. (2013). Natsionalna identychnist u movnii kartyni svitu [National identity in the language picture of the world]. *Sotsialno-humanitarni aspekty rozvytku suchasnoho suspilstva: materialy Vseukrainskoi naukovoï konferentsii vykladachiv, aspirantiv, spivrobitnykiv ta studentiv fakultetu inozemnoi filolohii ta sotsialnykh komunikatsii*. Ukraine, Sumy, April 19–20 2013. Sumy : Sumy State University, pt. 1, pp. 117–119.
- Erickson, E. (1996). *Childhood and Society*. St. Petersburg : University Book.
- Karasik, V.I. (2005). Lingvokul'turnyi tipazh “russkii intelligent” [Linguocultural type of “Russian intellectual”]. *Aksiologicheskaya lingvistika: lingvokul'turnye tipazhi*. Volgograd, pp. 25–61.
- Karasik, V.I. and Dmitrieva, O.A. (2005). Lingvokul'turnyi tipazh: k opredeleniyu ponyatiya [Linguocultural type: on the definition of a concept]. *Aksiologicheskaya lingvistika: lingvokul'turnye tipazhi*, pp. 5–25.
- Karaulov, Yu. and Neroznak, V. (1988). Atlas dvuyazychiya kak instrument sotsiolingvisticheskogo analiza [Atlas of bilingualism as a tool for sociolinguistic analysis]. *Izvestie Akademii nauk SSSR. Seriya literatura i yazyk*, vol. 47, no. 3, pp. 249–254.
- Olshtain, E. and Kotik, B. (2000). The development of bilingualism in an immigrant community. *Language, Identity and Immigration*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, pp. 201–217.
- Sarat, A. and Kearns, T.R. (1999). Responding to the Demands of Difference: An Introduction. *Cultural Pluralism, Identity Politics, and the Law*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, pp. 2–3.
- Semyhivska, T.H. (2007). Vplyv hlobalizatsii na movu yak aspekt kultury suspilstva [The influence of globalization on language as an aspect of the culture of society]. *Visnyk Sumskoho Derzhavnoho Universytetu. Seriya Filolohiia*, no. 1, vol. 2, pp. 45–49.

Shalagina, O.V. (2015). Yazykovye aspekty mul'tikul'turalizma i problema mnogoyazychiya v polikul'turnom obshchestve [Language aspects of multiculturalism and the problem of multilingualism in a multicultural society]. In: *Nauchnye issledovaniya: ot teorii k praktike : materialy III Mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii*. Rusiia, Cheboksary, April 30 2015. Cheboksary: CNS Interactive Plus, pp. 103–105.

Zhusupov, A.E. (2015). *Bilingvizm i mul'tikul'turizm* [Bilingualism and multiculturalism], [online] Available at: <[http://www.rusnauka.com/42\\_PRNT\\_2015/Philologia/9\\_202459.doc.htm](http://www.rusnauka.com/42_PRNT_2015/Philologia/9_202459.doc.htm)> [Accessed : 18 February 2019].

### **Список використаних джерел**

1. Акопян К. В. Мультикультурализм: основные теоретические подходы. *Форумы российских мусульман*. 2008. № 4. С. 139–142.
2. Бауман З. Индивидуализированное общество. Москва: Логос, 2005. 390 с.
3. Жусупов А. Е. Билингвизм и мультикультуризм. URL: [http://www.rusnauka.com/42\\_PRNT\\_2015/Philologia/9\\_202459.doc.htm](http://www.rusnauka.com/42_PRNT_2015/Philologia/9_202459.doc.htm) (дата обращения: 18.02.2019).
4. Караулов Ю., Нерознак В. Атлас двуязычия как инструмент социолингвистического анализа. *Известия Академии наук СССР. Серия: Литература и язык*. 1988. Т. 47. №3. С. 249–254.
5. Карасик В. И. Лингвокультурный типаж «русский интеллигент». *Аксиологическая лингвистика: лингвокультурные типажы*. 2005. С. 25–61.
6. Карасик В. И., Дмитриева О. А. Лингвокультурный типаж: к определению понятия. *Аксиологическая лингвистика: лингвокультурные типажы*. 2005. С. 5–25.
7. Семигівська Т. Г. Вплив глобалізації на мову як аспект культури суспільства. *Вісник СумДУ. Серія: Філологія*. 2007. № 1. Т. 2. С. 45–49.
8. Четвертак Є. О. Національна ідентичність у мовній картині світу. *Соціально-гуманітарні аспекти розвитку сучасного суспільства: матеріали Всеукр. наук. конф. викладачів, аспірантів, співробітників та студентів факультету іноземної філології та соціальних комунікацій*, м. Суми, 19–20 квітня 2013 р. Суми : СумДУ, 2013. Ч.1. С. 117–119.
9. Шалагина О. В. Языковые аспекты мультикультурализма и проблема многоязычия в поликультурном обществе. *Научные исследования: от теории к практике : материалы III Междунар. науч.-практ. конф.*, Чебоксары, 30 апр. 2015 г. В 2 т. Т. 1. Чебоксары : ЦНС «Интерактив плюс», 2015. С. 103–105.
10. Erickson, E. (1996). *Childhood and Society*. St. Petersburg : University Book.
11. Barry B. *Culture and Equality. An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001. P. 300.
12. Olshtain E., Kotik B. 2000. The development of bilingualism in an immigrant community. *Language, Identity and Immigration*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2000. P. 201–217.
13. Sarat A., Kearns T. R. Responding to the Demands of Difference: An Introduction. *Cultural Pluralism, Identity Politics, and the Law*. Mich : University of Michigan Press, 1999. P. 2–3.

*The article was received in editors office: 01.03.2019*

## **МУЛЬТИКУЛЬТУРАЛІЗМ І ПИТАННЯ МОВНО-КУЛЬТУРНОЇ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ**

Білецька Оксана Олександрівна

*Кандидат культурології, доцент,  
ORCID: 0000-0003-1785-9607, bel\_o@ukr.net,  
Київський національний університет культури і мистецтв,  
Київ, Україна*

Мета роботи – дослідити мовно-культурну ідентичність як засіб самосвідомості та самоідентифікації в контексті мультикультуралізму. Методологія дослідження базується на використанні таких методів як вивчення, аналіз та узагальнення з метою розкриття поняття мовно-культурної ідентичності, яка залежить від сучасної світової культурної неоднорідності та відродження культурних ідентичностей з культурами, що збагачують один одного. Наукова новизна полягає у розкритті проблеми мовної та культурної ідентичності як засобу самосвідомості та самоідентифікації в контексті мультикультуралізму як культурологічного явища. Висновки. Існування мовної та культурної ідентичності найяскравіше відображується в соціальному вираженні особистості як представника етносу і це послаблює сучасні тенденції глобалізації, сприяючи відродженню етнічної самосвідомості, які в умовах сьогодення відбуваються одночасно з процесом асиміляції.

*Ключові слова:* культура; мова; ідентичність; саморозкриття; самосвідомість особистості; білінгвізм; мультикультуралізм.

## **МУЛЬТИКУЛЬТУРАЛИЗМ И ВОПРОС ЯЗЫКОВО-КУЛЬТУРНОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ**

Белецкая Оксана Александровна

*Кандидат культурологии, доцент,  
ORCID: 0000-0003-1785-9607, bel\_o@ukr.net,  
Киевский национальный университет культуры и искусств,  
Киев, Украина*

Цель работы – исследовать языково-культурную идентичность как средство самосознания и самоидентификации в контексте мультикультурализма. Методология исследования базируется на использовании таких методов как изучение, анализ и обобщение с целью раскрытия понятия языково-культурной идентичности, которая зависит от современной мировой культурной неоднородности и возрождения культурных идентичностей с культурами, обогащающими друг друга. Научная новизна заключается в раскрытии проблемы языковой и культурной идентичности как средства самосознания и самоидентификации в контексте мультикультурализма как культурологического явления. Выводы. Существование языковой и культурной идентичности, наиболее полно проявляется в социальном выражении личности



как представителя этноса. Это смягчает современные тенденции глобализации, тем самым способствуя возрождению этнического самосознания, что в нынешних условиях происходит одновременно с процессом ассимиляции.

*Ключевые слова:* культура; язык; идентичность; самораскрытие; самосознание личности; билингвизм; мультикультурализм.