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INTRODUCTION TO PROXEMICS ACROSS CULTURES

У статті розглянуто поняття проксеміки як один із засобів невербальної комунікації. Автори розкривають особливості використання дистанції та простору в повсякденному спілкуванні. Особлива увага приділяється одному з найбільш неоднозначних питань невербального спілкування – використання простору представниками відмінних культур.

Ключові слова: *міжкультурна комунікація, невербальне спілкування, проксеміка, дистанція, відстань, особистий простір, неправильне тлумачення.*

В статье рассматривается понятие проксемики как одного из средств невербальной коммуникации. Авторы раскрывают особенности использования дистанции и расстояния в повседневном общении. Особое внимание уделено одной из наиболее неоднозначных тем невербальной коммуникации – использование пространства представителями разных культур.

Ключевые слова: *межкультурная коммуникация, невербальное общение, проксемика, дистанция, расстояние, личное пространство, неправильное понимание.*

The notion of proxemics as a means of nonverbal communication is examined in the article. The authors reveal the peculiarities of using distance and space in everyday intercourse. The special attention is given to one of the most ambiguous issues of nonverbal communication – use of space across cultures.

Key words: *intercultural communication, nonverbal communication, proxemics, distance, space, personal space, misinterpretation.*

In many cases, when traveling abroad, we encounter peculiarities of the host culture that may seem unfamiliar, disturbing, or even hostile to us. Such strange features of the new culture evoke our responses that may be too far from positive ones. We can overcome the negative reactions by adapting smoothly and effectively to the host culture. The best way to do it is to learn the alien peculiarities of the host culture and to come to terms if not to make friends with them.

Nevertheless, this task gets complicated because most of the culture features that evoke incomprehension, misunderstanding, or even protest derive from the culture's nonverbal behavior, which even native speakers are often unconscious of and/or cannot explain properly. Culture's influence is so pervasive that we often do not realize it exists, just as we do not notice the air we breathe [4].

We should also take into consideration that when speaking, normally we never restrict ourselves to using just words. In communication, a great deal of meaning in is expressed by nonverbal means, which are always accompanied by oral talk – intended or not. In other words, a spoken message is always sent through two ways simultaneously, verbal and nonverbal ones.

If verbal communication has been the key issue of many linguistic investigations for centuries, nonverbal communication began drawing scholars' attention just several decades ago.

Most speakers and/or listeners are not conscious of the fact that, actually, nonverbal communication both intentionally and unintentionally is sending and receiving messages in a variety of ways without the use of verbal language. From our handshakes to our hairstyles, nonverbal details reveal who we are and impact how we relate to other people.

Each element of nonverbal communication has its own code closely connected with the culture it represents. In order to understand the nonverbal message of that culture's native speaker, we should be able to decode these elements of nonverbal communication.

One of the means of nonverbal communication that are often overlooked but very important to master in everyday interaction is *proxemics*. Coined by the sociologist Edward T. Hall in early 1960 s, the term means the study of how we communicate with each other

through space. Proxemics also refers to the way personal space is structured, including the space within rooms, buildings, precincts and cities, or the distance between people during conversation or interaction.

E. Hall has discovered that the space between two people change every time when one person subconsciously notices differences in the sound or pitch of the other person's voice. The scholar has also found that people allow a very specific amount of distance between themselves and other people, depending on the relationship of the people and their particular interaction.

In proxemics, Edward Hall has distinguished four distances, each having close and far phases:

– *Intimate distance*, varying from touching to 6 inches in the close phase and from six to eighteen inches for the far one. Intimate distance is generally used for close friends and family.

– *Personal distance*, which can vary from one and a half to two and a half feet in the close phase and from two and a half to four feet for the far one. Such distance can be usually observed in informal conversation with friends.

– *Social/social-consultative distance*, varying from four to seven feet in the close phase and from seven to twelve feet for the far one. Social distance is generally used for doing impersonal business and attending social gatherings.

– *Public distance*, which can vary from twelve to twenty five feet in the close phase and from twenty five feet and more for the far one. Such distance is well outside the circle of involvement. It is usually set around important public figures or during public occasions [2, p. 116–126].

When people are not aware of these distances and their meanings, violations may occur resulting in tension and suspicion. All of us feel uneasiness in movie theaters, elevators, or airplanes when the stranger on either side unintentionally touches us. It happens because our personal space is invaded and we feel uncomfortable and indignant.

People can be successful in designing purposive buildings only when they apply the "laws" of proxemics. For example, the building a hospital to be cannot look like the same as the building, intended to be

used as a concert hall. The setting in each building is meaningful as the building is constructed to pursue some specific goals. Even furniture, technical aids and appliances, and other objects are organized in definite spaces taking into consideration established notions and purposes of the person who works or lives in that space.

Spatial preferences do vary if the people are of different age, generation, gender social class, etc. People who live in towns and cities are used to squeezing closer to people so have smaller spaces, while country people stand so far apart they have to lean forwards to shake hands [3].

The interlocutors' temperament also influences the distance between them. Extraverts tend to keep smaller distances than introverts do. Recent studies prove the space between interlocutors can directly relate to their interpretation or the meaning of the messages coming from the sender.

It should be mentioned that the distances, outlined by Edward Hall, are based on American culture in 1950 s. Nevertheless, all the scholars, who study proxemics, are unanimous in their opinion that four proxemic distances vary depending on the culture. Space orientations across cultures differ relative to territory, divisions into private and public, four distances, comfort or lack of comfort with physical touch and/or contact, etc. For example, the more high contact culture is, the smaller distance is required in communication and otherwise, the more low contact culture is, the larger distance in communication is usually observed. Arabs, Latin Americans, and Italians, being representatives of high contact cultures are used to the dimension of the personal distance in communication, which is equal to the intimate one in such low contact cultures as American, Canadian, Northern European, and Asian. No wonder, then, when in communication the Argentinean keeps moving closer to feel comfortable, the Norwegian subconsciously backs away.

In Saudi Arabia, a person might find him- or herself almost nose to nose with a business associate because Arabic social space equates to one's intimate space. We would probably find ourselves backing away trying to regain our social space, while our associate pursues us across the floor trying to maintain his or hers. Finally, we would come

away from the encounter thinking he or her was "pushy," and he or she would think we were reserved.

Proxemics is also applied to every material thing that surrounds us, to the way that material things are arranged both outside and inside, reflecting our cultural attitudes, preferences, and possibilities.

For example, for Japanese whose territory is comparatively small, space is a scarce resource. Therefore, Japanese people have learned to arrange their space in the most frugal way. They hide most furniture from sight and/or arrange it around the edges of a room in order to free maximum space and make it more functional.

On the contrary, Americans and Canadians, being "spoiled" by having huge territories national income, tend to organize their furniture around the middle of rooms. Such distribution of furniture establishes every possibility for comfortable and casual company's chatting, which Americans and Canadians love very much. Representatives of the mentioned cultures endow each room with a single function and cannot figure out how Ukrainians can have meals in small size kitchens being "squeezed up".

Australians are used to arrange the furniture in living rooms around the television set, therefore constituting the room's focal point and revealing their preferences to watch television instead of chatting with friends.

Emphasizing their strong sense of private space, in most of the cases, Germans prefer to keep their office doors shut. Their doors are usually heavy and soundproof. Germans' sense of privacy is uncomfortable with sharing offices or computer workstations. Germans' love to irreproachable order leads them to fix order in space. Therefore, Germans are very sensitive to moving furniture around the room even if those are chairs. Edward Hall even gives an example when a German bolted his chair to the floor in order not to let anyone move his chair in the office [2].

The other problem in proxemics across cultures is how strict the culture is towards intimate relations in public. If in America, Canada, and European countries, it is acceptable for a man and woman to be together in public can engage in intimate contact with one another, in some Eastern countries, for example, India and Pakistan, however,

women cannot behave so freely with men. Indians do not forgive any "frivolities" even to their queen of Bollywood Aishwarya Rai. We all remember that her kiss with Hrithik Roshan in the thriller "Dhoom 2" was found very extravagant in the Indian press. That scene had been chopped off from the movie after the Bachchans demanded from the producers, to axe the scene that showed at that time their to-be daughter-in-law doing a bold lip lock [1].

The interaction between proxemics and communication is quite complicated. Varying enormously across cultures, use of space is a continuous source of misinterpretation in intercultural communication.

Skillful communicators know how to use space to their advantage by influencing the behavior of others and decoding the messages others send to them through their use of space. Violating the rules of proxemics, we make other people feel uncomfortable in such a way impeding communication.

Realizing and recognizing these cultural differences improves intercultural understanding and helps eliminate discomfort, people may feel if the interpersonal distance is too large ("standoffish") or too small (intrusive).

Today, it is still difficult to fully follow the "laws" of proxemics in communication across cultures because the definitions of space vary a lot not only between the representatives of different cultures, but also may be interpreted mistakenly by the individuals who share the same culture but have different age, beliefs, and experience.

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КРИТЕРІЇ КЛАСИФІКАЦІЇ ТА ОЦІНЮВАННЯ ЧАСТИНОМОВНОГО СТАТУСУ КЛАСУ ПРИСЛІВНИКІВ СУЧАСНОЇ ФРАНЦУЗЬКОЇ МОВИ

Визначено основне коло проблем, пов'язаних із класом прислівників у французькій мові, а саме: інвентар класу прислівників та класифікація прислівників за морфологічними, синтаксичними, семантичними, семантико-синтаксичними критеріями.

Ключові слова: *категорія прислівника, морфологічна класифікація, синтаксична класифікація, семантична класифікація.*

Определен основной круг проблем, связанных с классом наречий во французском языке, а именно: инвентарь класса наречий и классификация наречий за морфологическими, синтаксическими, семантическими, семантико-синтаксическими критериями.

Ключевые слова: *категорияя наречия, морфологическая классификация, синтаксическая классификация, семантическая классификация.*

The article deals with the basic range of problems related to the class of adverbs in French, namely, the stock-class classification of adverbs and adverb's morphological, syntactical, semantically, semantico-syntatical classification.

Key words: *adverb's category, morphological classification, syntactical classification, semantically classification.*