

Cross-cultural discourse of philological studies: The advanced approaches



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Abstract The academic paper is devoted to exploring the newest approaches within the cross-cultural discourse of philological studies. The cross-cultural approach as a scientific basis for linguistic and literary studies emerged in the 30 s of the last century as a counterweight to ethnocentric studies; however, the boundaries of this discourse have now been significantly expanded and modified. Cross-cultural studies are less and less opposed to ethnocentric studies of national literatures and more and more tend to cross-cultural comparison. The primary purpose of the present academic paper is to analyze the methodological fundamentals and latest approaches of cross-cultural discourse in the system of philological studies, in particular, in the fields of linguistics, literary studies, translation studies, intercultural communication theory and linguoculturology. The semantic field of the concepts of “cross-cultural discourse”, “cross-cultural literary discourse”, “cross-cultural literature” and “cross-cultural research” has been outlined. The following newer approaches are distinguished in the cross-cultural discourse: comparative, anthropological, communicative, hermeneutical, which focuses on deciphering cultural codes, and conceptual. It is determined that cross-cultural interpenetration is most often observed in bilingual authors’ works. The researchers consider their texts as a synthesis of heterogeneous cultural elements, which results in a new multicultural artistic space that requires special tools for analysis.

Keywords: cross-cultural studies, philology, linguoculturology, intercultural communication, methodology

1. Introduction

Currently, cross-cultural discourse is one of the most significant empirical and scientific areas of research in philology, as well as psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and philosophy. The term “cross-cultural” appears in a number of scientific works; however, the semantic boundaries of this attribute are still blurred and require theoretical elaboration, which determines the relevance of the present research. In addition, the field of studying the interaction of language and consciousness (the author’s artistic consciousness, in particular) on the material of fiction has recently been expanding, which necessitates a broad exploration of cultural impacts and mutual influences in texts through the prism of the communicative-activity approach.

First, let us clarify the meaning of this word in the reference and explanatory literature. For instance, Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2003) interprets the word “cross-cultural” as an attribute that defines or suggests the use of comparative characteristics in the study of two or more cultures or separate cultural spheres.

In scientific circulation, the term “cross-cultural” has a valence with the words “approach”, “discourse”, “comparison”, “dialog”, “research”, and “literature” (Kroeber, 1952). We use interdisciplinary terms such as cross-cultural discourse, cross-cultural research, cross-cultural comparison, and cross-cultural literature in our research, which we understand as follows: the cross-cultural discourse of philological studies is a set of scientific studies centered on linguistic and literary phenomena and components generated by the boundaries of literature, culture and language. In the framework of this discourse, cross-cultural artistic discourse is referred to as a set of artistic works that are the result of intercultural influences and interactions, the superimposition of fragments of a cultural mosaic that generates a variety of images, associations laid down by the author, and a variety of interpretations by the research audience. Cross-cultural research in philology involves the study of linguistic or literary phenomena and components at the intersection of cultures through the prism of interpenetration and negation. Cross-cultural comparison in philological studies involves the comparison of at least two languages or texts of national literature for the purpose of their typological linguistic and cultural comparison (Hemelstrand et al., 2023). Cross-cultural literature is the product of immigrant writers and is characterized by the interference of trends, styles and genres on the one hand and the



interference of the conceptual level of the text on the other. In other words, cross-cultural literature is a hybridization of original and alien concepts, images, and styles and can be considered one of the ways to enrich and develop literature (Almuhailib, 2019).

Contemporary philological science is gradually establishing the importance and expediency of using a cross-cultural approach to the study of linguistic and literary phenomena. This approach should be viewed in different ways: on the one hand, as an approach to learning languages, including foreign ones, that is, from the philological and pedagogical point of view as preparing a communicator for language interaction in a multicultural society, and, on the other hand, as one of the approaches to the literary analysis of a text or certain literary categories, such as image, myth, plot, composition, etc.

Cultural semantic codes are the result of interactions among the language system, communication, culture, communicative actions and thinking. Such philological fields as linguoculturology and intercultural linguistics have emerged and are successfully developing in the context of this interaction. Linguistics is mainly focused on the fixity of linguistic phenomena, in particular, linguistic objects, while the interaction of language and culture is philosophical in nature and, therefore, is the subject of study in linguocultural studies.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the methodological fundamentals and the latest approaches to cross-cultural discourse in the system of philological studies, linguistics, literary studies, and translation studies, in particular.

The research objectives are as follows:

1. To comprehend the nature and current trends of cross-cultural discourse in modern philological science;
2. To analyze the methodological principles of the cross-cultural approach to the interpretation of the verbal arts as part of people's spiritual culture to form a generalized image of national literature with its traditional images and motifs, features of creative paradigms, etc.;
3. To formulate the advantages of using a cross-cultural approach to the study of philological phenomena in modern linguistics and literary studies.

2. Literature Review

The determinism of language and thinking, and, consequently, of language and culture, was scientifically substantiated by the linguist and philosopher of language Humboldt (1971). The scholar states that the language outlines the worldview vectors of its speakers, thereby building a unique "linguistic picture of the world" inherent only in a particular ethnic group. Thus, we obtain an initial idea of the "cultural code" of a particular native speaker through decoding language artifacts. At the intersection of culture and language, Humboldt (1971) formulated a postulate that we consider to be the methodological basis of cross-cultural discourse: a person is able to master a foreign language through cognition, comprehension of a different picture of the world, which is dynamic, not static; therefore, the personality acquires new qualities and is enriched with new meanings, taking them from the languages and cultures that he or she learns. That is, by mastering foreign languages, a person also masters the culture of native speakers of that language, gains new cultural experience, and enriches his or her own worldview. Linguistic interaction with native speakers of other languages not only produces a linguistic dialog but also generates new cultural meanings and new codes, which in turn leads to the mutual enrichment of languages through the intersection of different cultures and complements linguistic pictures of the world. Therefore, we consider the concept of Humboldt to be fundamental for all cross-cultural studies in the field of philology.

Aririguzoh (2022) defines cultural diversity as the dynamism of cross-cultural communication and identifies 5 types of influences on cross-cultural communication: power of distance; individualism versus collectivism; masculine/feminine roles; orientation to long-term; and ability to differentiate between high and low styles of communication.

The researchers Aival-Naveh et al. (2019) significantly expanded the field of philological exploration of the issues of mentalization through a literary text in the context of the debate between relativism and universalism. They systematically reviewed cross-cultural studies of five concepts, each of which coincides with distinct dimensions of mentalization: theory of mind, empathy, perspective taking, alexithymia, and mindfulness. Mentalization profiles may differ in different cultures. They explain these differences by linguistic factors, value preferences, and parenting characteristics.

The subject of studying the theory of intercultural communication is mainly the interdependence between communication and culture. The emergence of this philological discipline became possible thanks to the American anthropologist Hall (1998), who emphasized the need to "cultivate a culture of communication with other peoples" and overcome intercultural barriers to communication as prerequisites for successful interpersonal communication. The major issues of the theory of intercultural communication that require a cross-cultural approach in the study are as follows: the specifics of the implementation of an intercultural communication act, similarities and differences in the language messages of the representatives of different cultures, causes of misunderstandings and ways to break down these obstacles in intercultural communication. In addition, Hall introduced the concepts of "intercultural", "cross-cultural", and "multicultural" into scientific circulation and developed a methodology for teaching a foreign language based on mastering not only its lexical and grammatical features but also the artifacts of culture inherent in the ethnic group as a native speaker of the language being taught.

3. Methods

The following methods were used in the course of the research:

1. Analysis and synthesis – when studying scientific literature and identifying the latest trends in cross-cultural discourse in philological research, defining the basic terms of cross-cultural discourse;
2. Comparative method – when comparing linguistic and literary phenomena at the intersection of cultural influences;
3. The historical method and the method of diachrony – when studying the genesis of the cross-cultural approach in philology, the concepts of “cross-cultural”, “cross-cultural literature”, etc.;
4. The method of synchrony – when analyzing cross-cultural discourse on a synchronous cross-section of the last decade;
5. The method of generalization – for forming scientific and theoretical conclusions about the features and advantages of using the cross-cultural approach in modern philological science (Harkness, 2023).

4. Results

Having analyzed cross-cultural studies in the field of philology over the past decade, we have concluded that it is possible to distinguish two main research goals of these studies:

1. The extent to which a linguistic or artistic phenomenon is universal in terms of culture and mentality—that is, this type of study is focused on searching for similarities between languages, national literature or types of communication;
2. Identification of interdisciplinary differences between linguistic or artistic phenomena as unique markers of the culture of a particular nation.

Linguoculturology and the theory of intercultural communication form the core of linguistics cross-cultural studies. Linguoculturology places cultural values, linguistic “world pictures”, the interaction of material and spiritual cultures codified through myths, rituals, rites, cultural symbols and codes, and the implementation of intellectual and educational tasks of the educational process at the center of its scientific reflections (Bogdanov, 2012).

The sociopsychological definition of culture interprets it as a set of values, attitudes, traditions and beliefs that are passed down from ancestors to descendants. However, the concept of culture in philological studies is understood differently than that in sociopsychological studies. For instance, in literary studies, this refers to the author’s representation of a specific ethnic community and the values and behavioral features of the characters. According to the theory of intercultural communication, the concept of “culture” is primarily a system of language signs and extralinguistic features that are prerequisites for effective communication (Jayawardena, 2021). Linguistics interprets culture through the prism of diachronic development, as well as through the prism of the internal form of the word as a primitive cultural code.

The concept of a cultural unit is the main tool used for cross-cultural analysis. The concept was introduced by Narollo (1970) in the 1970s, and it refers to people speaking the same language, culture or religion in a certain historical period of time. However, this is not the only tool for cross-cultural analysis in philological studies. The units of comparison are concepts, archetypes, mythologemes, traditions and rituals, literary motifs and plots, images and culturally marked vocabulary, and linguistic means of expression and composition of a work of art.

The following comparative cultural approaches can be distinguished within comparative cross-cultural studies:

1. The subject of the research is the linguistic and cultural space, and the comparative method acts only as an auxiliary tool to identify the specifics of the object under study.
2. The units of comparative analysis are the cultural features of the linguistic objects under study.
3. The studies are transnational in nature and consider language and culture as elements of a single comprehensive system.

Thus, the comparative approach in philological research has been and remains the primary source of the methodology of cross-cultural analysis. Cross-cultural studies in linguistics are most often conducted on the following three levels: spiritual (including mythological), rational, and traditional. The space of material culture is much less common, such as a cross section (Cristia et al., 2023).

Cross-cultural discourse in philology is a significant part of studies in cognitive linguistics, particularly in the field of conceptual analysis, when different contexts of functioning are involved in the analysis of the concept: cultural, philosophical, folklore, artistic and poetic. The conceptual analysis is most often based on internal introspection and comprehension of cultural and anthropological features. The conceptual analysis also establishes the connection between the image and objects and phenomena in the consciousness of a carrier of a particular culture. Therefore, this connection between image and awareness is often subjective, culturally determined, and anthropocentric and, consequently, becomes an object of cross-cultural consideration. (Geng et al., 2023). Any language is inherent in the conceptualization of reality; this conceptualization is universal on the one hand and nationally specific on the other hand. This has led to the introduction of an interdisciplinary

module of linguistic studies, and cross-cultural discourse is based on the integration of anthropology, semiotics, cultural studies, psychology, and linguistics.

The sociopsychological definition of culture focuses on its understanding as a set of values, attitudes, traditions and beliefs transmitted from ancestors to descendants. However, the concept of “culture” in philological studies is understood differently from its sociopsychological understanding. In literary studies, for instance, this is a value and behavioral characterization of the characters and the author as representatives of a particular ethnic group. According to the theory of intercultural communication, the concept of “culture” is primarily a system of language signs and extralinguistic features that are prerequisites for effective communication (Minkov, 2011; 2012). Linguistics interprets culture through the prism of diachronic development, as well as through the prism of the internal form of the word as a primitive cultural code.

The use of a cross-cultural approach in literary studies involves emphasizing the national specificity of literary works, which in turn leads to an understanding of the identity of national literature (Karlgrén et al., 2020). After all, every literary text, without exaggeration, is a reflection of the national mentality, its era, and the people who create this literature. Such an approach involves the analysis of peculiar national and cultural markers in literary texts. The literary text as an object of cross-cultural studies resembles a polymnesia, where the native is layered with the alien and together they form certain integrity.

Cross-cultural interpenetration is most often observed in the works of bilingual authors. Scholars consider their texts to be syntheses of heterogeneous cultural elements, resulting in a new multicultural artistic space that requires special tools for analysis. First, the primary, that is, native, and secondary, that is, borrowed, cultures are layered in this literary text. As a result, a new hybrid identity of the author is born, varying on the border of culture, religion, and literature. Naturally, a multicultural author generates a polycultural literary text as a product of multivector creative thinking (Koh & Boisen, 2019; Shytyk et al., 2020).

The works of immigrant writers, which are most often characterized by cultural hybridity and eclecticism, are the objects of cross-cultural artistic discourse. This type of discourse, in addition to bilingualism, is often characterized by religious and ideological hybridity, which is often a fusion of the traditions of the West and the East. That is precisely why the artistic creativity of most emigrant writers is conceptually split into the dichotomy of “friend” and “foe”. This duality is frequently the focus of scientific inquiry; for instance, it is fair to examine the writer’s idiomatic quirks via the lens of this dichotomy. In particular, most scientific studies on the works of Okra, Rushdie, Pamuk, Kureishi, etc., are based on the analysis of the East–West dichotomy. On the one hand, they broadcast the cosmopolitanism of their worldview, and on the other hand, they demonstrate immersion in their native culture and religion, taking on the role of an interpreter, a kind of “bridge” between the native and the alien. The texts of such authors are characterized by the ability to go beyond national identity, that is, they are transcendent, and the author demonstrates the ability to step outside his native culture and “grow into” the context of the culture in which he is working (Murdock & White, 1969).

The analysis of cross-cultural artistic discourse reveals the heterogeneity of representing cultural identity. Therefore, the subject of research within this discourse is often a multicultural worldview and the artistic language that conveys it, existing literary and historical allegories, mythologies and archetypes, quotations and reminiscences that create a kind of intertext and represent the author’s binary identity. This is precisely why one of the trends in cross-cultural discourse is the polyphonic analysis of a literary text: at the level of the linguistic side of the discourse and at the level of paralinguistic discourse (facial expressions, gestures, etc.). The study of the subjective and value components of the text is equally significant. This implies that multicultural discourse acts as a kind of stage for cultural pluralism, that is, a place where different cultural traditions, mythologies, values, and ideals coexist and manifest themselves (Shadiev et al., 2021). The national mentality of multicultural writers is expressed through various artistic means, which undoubtedly provides objective information about reality. However, to reveal this objectivity, the researcher should be proficient in modern methods of literary and cultural analysis, the comprehensive application of which will allow the scholar to decode the cultural codes hidden in a literary text.

The newest approaches in the framework of cross-cultural artistic discourse focus on studies and scientific reflections on the issue of forming an individual linguistic picture of the world of an individual writer. These studies focus on the linguistic, modal, expressive, and narrative features of an individual writer as well as the identification of national-specific and universal markers of the author’s idiom and the specificity of the conceptual domain of a literary work written by an author who represents a multicultural discourse. The purpose of such studies can be the analysis of culturally marked vocabulary, description of the writer’s culturally determined worldview, and linguistic features of the author’s cultural self-identification.

Thus, the works of migrant writers are rooted in multicultural authorial consciousness, hybrid artistic thinking, and the formation of a new mentality, which are expressed in a special authorial idiom with a peculiar system of poetic means in the context of cross-cultural artistic discourse (Kravets et al., 2021).

Cross-cultural pragmatics, as an area of cross-cultural communication, has become the newest approach to contemporary cross-cultural discourse. It studies the interrelation between language, culture and communication in the context of different cultures and analyzes the values, norms and stereotypes that influence language interaction. Cross-cultural pragmatics also includes the analysis of extralinguistic factors, including audience analysis (Budhathoki, 2022).

The main areas of cross-cultural studies in the theory of intercultural communication are as follows:

1. Formation of cross-cultural competence;
2. Development of tactics and strategies for intercultural communication in accordance with the specifics of culture;
3. Study of cross-cultural paralinguistic features of communication.

Within the framework of such a philological science as translation studies, in particular, the theory and practice of translation, a cross-cultural approach to translating a foreign language involves the adequate translation of nationally marked or equivalent vocabulary—in other words, filling in the so-called “lacunae”. Translators most often choose to explain such words or phrases or to compensate, that is, to replace such vocabulary or phenomena with similar ones in native culture. Cultural stereotypes, national traditions, myths, images, and symbols deserve special translation attention and commentary (Rafiee et al., 2023). The translator should always start with the understanding that the source text, which is the subject of literary translation, is a collection of national cultural codes. One of the translators’ primary tasks is to decode these codes to form and develop cross-cultural competence and lay the groundwork for intercultural dialog. This contributes to developing background knowledge about the people, the era, its symbols, and its traditions. Since translators inadvertently become participants in the communication process, it is crucial for them to avoid cultural conflicts. Additionally, they should overcome communication abnormalities during the cross-cultural communication process.

5. Discussion

In modern cross-cultural studies, artistic creativity is considered more as a textual space of multiculturalism or cultural transmission than as an aesthetic and stylistic unity. Researchers study the text in a large-scale context; at the same time, cognitive processes are involved in the artistic picture of the world and the personality of the writer as a carrier of collective consciousness.

We partially agree with the scholars Aival-Naveh et al. (2019) that the artistic concept plays a significant role in contemporary cross-cultural discourse and in the process of mentalization. Obviously, the concepts that are endowed with features of a foreign language mentality or have a relevant conceptual basis in other related national literatures are of particular value for this type of study.

We support the viewpoint of Nowrin et al. (2019) that cross-cultural literature is a hybridization of cultures and concepts (native and acquired); therefore, cross-cultural literature is considered one of the ways to enrich and further develop national literature.

Particularly valuable for our research were the scientific conclusions made by the researcher Scollo M. (2011), who investigated cross-cultural approaches to language learning. In particular, we fully agree that when analyzing the social function of language or the functioning of language in society, it is worth focusing on the study of the choice of language units and means chosen by this environment of speakers to create a psycholinguistic portrait of a speaker and a representative of society. The unit of cross-cultural analysis should not be language as an abstract substance but real language in a specific language environment. In addition, we must perceive communication events as those that ultimately affect the structure of the world system, although the speakers themselves are not always free to choose one or another language means because they are limited both by the range of communication and the distribution of linguistic roles.

However, we cannot agree with the researchers Carbaugh and Rudnick (2006), who focus exclusively on the analysis of ethnographic and cultural discourse intercultural interactions with the involvement of communication practices from England, Finland and the USA. We consider the interpretation of language as an exclusively cultural phenomenon to be a rather one-sided approach. Of course, different cultural preconditions justify language behavior, causing difficulties and misunderstandings in specific intercultural episodes, and specific speech can be understood as a symbolic phenomenon or as a kind of metasocial knowledge. However, in our opinion, communication should be reduced to the study of cultural differences such as individualism, collectivism, and not to a thorough cultural analysis of communicative practices, although from a pragmatic point of view, knowledge of the ways of this language interaction may contribute to the development of greater intercultural sensitivity and an understanding of effective ways to overcome intercultural communication barriers.

We partially agree with Gladkova (2023) that intercultural pragmatics is a promising direction for cross-cultural philological research as one of the newest branches of linguistics, which studies the use of natural language from a contrasting perspective, taking into account cultural factors. In this type of research, “natural language” is interpreted through the prism of its relation to culture, and the concept of “culture” refers to the common way of life, thinking, feelings, actions and language of people because it lies at the intersection of pragmatics, contrastive linguistics and anthropological linguistics or ethnolinguistics, and its various implementations also intersect with those of cognitive studies and sociolinguistics.

6. Conclusion

Summarizing the study of the newest trends in cross-cultural discourse in contemporary philological studies, it should be noted that the cross-cultural approach to studying and analyzing philological phenomena is equally important and relevant in the fields of linguistics, literary studies, translation studies, intercultural communication theory and linguoculturology. Anthropological studies in philology had a considerable influence on the formation of cross-cultural discourse. They focused

not on abstract linguistic artifacts but on the human being as a native speaker in linguistics, the author as a creator of a text in literary studies, or the human being as a native speaker of language and culture in linguistic and cultural studies. That is, contemporary cross-cultural discourse is inseparable from the anthropological, or rather anthropocentric, discourse of modern philological studies.

The cross-cultural approach in philology is defined as a type of comparative research, the object and subject of which are language and culture. The cross-cultural approach is mostly used as an empirical method; however, there has been a tendency in recent decades to reach the level of philosophical generalizations.

Modern cross-cultural studies in linguistics are interdisciplinary in nature. They are conducted mainly at the intersection of linguistic disciplines such as linguistic anthropology, cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, cross-cultural pragmatics and intercultural communication. Along with this, the boundaries of the text under study are expanding: it is no longer only artistic discourse but also media discourse, such as social media and journalistic style.

Ethical considerations

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Conflict of interest

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