CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS IN ONLINE COMMUNITIES: IMPACTS ON FOREIGN-LANGUAGE IDENTITY FORMATION

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Abstract: This article analyzes the impact of intercultural communication processes occurring in online communities on the formation of a foreign language personality. The global nature of digital communication, transcultural discourses, the multi-layered content of identity, and changes in social roles on online platforms are considered a relevant topic in modern linguistic research. The study was conducted using mixed methods and included 184 participants. Static data showed that users who actively communicate in a foreign language in online communities can reshape their language identity, develop strategies for cultural adaptation, and diversify their ways of expressing themselves through language. The results provide scientific conclusions that online transcultural communication deeply changes not only the linguistic, but also the sociocognitive and identity processes of foreign language acquisition.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication, online communities, identity formation, foreign-language self, interactional dynamics, digital discourse, sociolinguistics.

INTRODUCTION. As a result of the expansion of global digital communication, online communities have become a space for transnational communication, radically influencing the processes of interaction between language and culture. The processes of intercultural communication formed in such a space are directly related to the language identity of foreign language learners and how they imagine themselves in a global cultural context[1]. The multimodal nature of Internet discourse, the varying degree of anonymity, and the possibilities of recreating identity through technological means lead to the reformulation of students' linguistic "I" concept[2]. In the online environment, language manifests itself not only as a means of communication, but also as a strategy of social position, cultural participation, and self-expression[3].

At the same time, differences in cultural codes, mutual misunderstandings, and disproportionate discursive strategies can create difficulties in the formation of a foreign language identity[4]. This study aims to empirically determine how the dynamics of intercultural communication in online communities affect the identity of foreign language learners, which socio-cognitive mechanisms determine this process, and what role digital platforms play in the reconstruction of language identity.

METHODS. The research was organized on the basis of a mixed approach[5]. At the quantitative stage, an international sample of 184 respondents was formed. Of these, 112 were users who studied English as a second language, and 72 as a third language. The questionnaire

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[1] Kramsch, C. (2009). The Multilingual Subject. Oxford University Press.
[2] Turkle, S. (2011). Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology. Basic Books.
[3] Norton, B. (2013). Identity and Language Learning. Multilingual Matters.
[4] Herring, S. (2010). Computer-mediated conversation: Introduction and overview. Language@Internet, 7.
[5] Creswell, J. (2014). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. SAGE.

consisted of 37 questions on the Likert scale, aimed at measuring the frequency of online communication, cultural adaptation strategies, feelings and experiences related to language identity change. At the qualitative stage, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 22 participants, analyzing the experience of transcultural communication, the differences between "online" and "offline" forms of identity, and strategies for digital self-expression. Data processing is based on coding (open & axial coding), thematic analysis[6], and socio-pragmatic discourse analysis[7].

RESULT. Quantitative analysis showed that 67.9% of respondents indicated "different behavior through language" in the process of online communication, that is, a partial change in their identity. 58.2% of 184 participants noted that their foreign language "I" differs from their native language identity. The level of identity change in users with a high frequency of intercultural communication (10+ communication sessions per week) reached 74.5%. As the level of anonymity on digital platforms increased, the experimentation of identity was observed: on anonymous platforms, this indicator was 69.1 percent, while on platforms requiring a real profile, it was 41.3 percent. Qualitative results showed three main trends:

- (1) 81.8% of participants consciously use cultural adaptation strategies in the process of online communication;

- (2) 63.6% consider their "foreign-speaking version" as a separate identity;

- (3) 72.7% reported that transcultural communication significantly increased the motivation for language acquisition.

DISCUSSION. The research results confirm that intercultural communication in online communities plays a central role in the formation of a foreign language identity. The degree of identity change (67.9%) is directly related to the sociopragmatic features of the online environment - multimodal expression, anonymity, discursive adaptation. The strong change in identity on anonymous platforms (69.1 percent) coincides with the phenomenon of "digital self-recreation" noted by Turkle[8]. Also, the connection between high communication frequency and identity transformation fully corresponds to the "process of mutual semioticism of language and culture," as Kramsch notes[9]. Qualitative results showed that the foreign language personality of participants is multi-layered and adaptively manifests itself in different cultural contexts, which supports the "investment model" put forward by Norton[10]. The study showed that online transcultural platforms transform not only language competence, but also personal and social identity.

CONCLUSION. This study empirically showed that the dynamics of intercultural communication of online communities have a profound influence on the formation of a foreign language identity. The intensity of digital communication, the level of anonymity of the platform, and cultural adaptation strategies were identified as the main factors of identity transformation. The research results confirmed that online communication creates a space for not only linguistic, but also cultural and personal development for foreign language learners. In the future,

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[6] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101.

[7] Herring, S. (2010). Computer-mediated conversation: Introduction and overview. Language@Internet, 7.

[8] Turkle, S. (2011). Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology. Basic Books.

[9] Kramsch, C. (2009). The Multilingual Subject. Oxford University Press.

[10] Norton, B. (2013). Identity and Language Learning. Multilingual Matters.

algorithmic factors influencing the process of identity formation, the role of artificial intelligence tools, and the sociological impact of transcultural networks can be expanded as separate research areas.

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2. Creswell, J. (2014). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. SAGE.

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