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REGIONAL INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION MODELS: STRUCTURAL AND TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper is an analysis of regional intercultural communication, using structural and typological method and culture materials from Siberia and Russia's Far East, and covering the time span between XVII and XX cc. Our interest to these issues was driven by the necessity to further develop communication theory through expanding our knowledge of various cultural contexts and interaction mechanisms. Our key findings are as follows. To build up a model of regional communication between local peoples we can rely on different types of material (archives, research, folklore texts), provided that we cross-verify the facts. The structure of a communication model contains the following interrelated components: communicants, context, communication means, actors, cultural filters. The novelty of the study lies in how we subdivide communication actors into communication agents (initiators) and novelty champions (those who adjust new information to the surroundings), and in the fact that we include "cultural filters" into this component. Regional communication in historical perspective can be reduced to three main model types: symmetrical horizontal, asymmetrical diagonal, asymmetrical vertical. Each of the models has in it all the structural components, their content, however, is different. Each type of communication's outcomes differ in their degree of system transformation, but the change towards sophistication is prevalent.

1. Introduction

Intercultural communication has been a priority in social and humanitarian research for over half a century. The study of this aspect of social life, during the five decades, has developed its own regional traditions, a set of problems to solve and leaders to follow, adopted scientific approaches and interdisciplinary links. The multi-paradigmatic methodology in intercultural communication is what integrates intercultural psychology, political science, social philosophy, cultural studies, psychological & educational studies and other fields. It should be noted that prevalent today are practice-oriented studies of how foreign students or migrants adjust themselves to or are accepted in the receiving society, of intercultural communication and conflict management in a globalized context, of forming communicative competencies when teaching students of a specific field, of the semantics and various linguistic worldviews, of changes occurring to communication on the WWW. These issues are naturally important for today's society, and yet cannot encompass all of its problems in the realm of communication. The areas of activity that might be of interest for the theory and practice of intercultural communication are education, politics, tourism and business. Intercultural communication methodology keeps on its development with new fields of application for this science and its results opening up along way.

1.1. Furthering the theory of intercultural communication: attractors

A need to have intercultural studies as a field of social science has been ever clear and important since the very moment of its appearance. At the turn of XXI c., ethnic conflicts broke out here and there, some of the ethnic and religious groups have been politicizing their respective identities and forming nationalistic discourses. These trends have remained valid till today. As Akova and Kantar (2020) justly point out, the idea of multiculturalism that was once devised and developed by the multinational company Global Capital for the sake of making the world an open market, was what paved way for ethnical division within national states and challenged the classical national state pattern.   At the same time, the multiculturalism ideology was for a long while regarded as a tool for managing social stability, harmonizing the ethno-cultural diversity in a number of national states. Today multiculturalism ideology seems to be much less relevant and important, yet it lives on in 'multicultural personality' concepts (Hofhuis et al., 2020). To replace "multiculturalism" another category was put forward – "diversity" or "social cultural non-homogeneity" which, as Schönwälder views it, is more positively perceived by the society and helps depoliticize inequality problems. And yet it did not enjoy the spread and popularity of "multiculturalism".

Due to the criticism, multiculturalism has been subjected to and a lack of alternative conceptions that work well, what we need today is a revision of the intercultural interaction theory to gain new opportunities for studying the changed geo-political contexts. Presumably this is the point of attraction for all striving to search for a new theory. If so, then to solve theoretical problems what we need is a better and deeper knowledge of new cultural landscapes and their historical dynamics. As Lie and Shrikant (2019) mention in their paper, close inquiry into the issues of intercultural interaction in various local historical situations is conductive to a better understanding of intercultural communication and its nuances in the new global context.

1.2. Today's 'monopolies' and 'gaps' in the study of intercultural communication

To date, USA science retains its lead in intercultural interaction studies, as the field's pioneer. But North American scholars theorize on the material gained from a relatively narrow social cultural context, which, first, contracts the scientific perspective of cultural diversity, and second, gives rise to a one-sided interpretation of interaction processes. In particular, Hamza R'boul (2020) writes that there are very few studies of the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia, which in its turn testifies to the fact of only limited knowledge of anything beyond the Americas. The author insists on the idea that we need a more diverse intellectual landscape of intercultural communication, and opposes the Western hegemony in the study of these issues.

Tangible gaps are found in our study of other regions of the globe, in particular, Siberia and Russia's Far East. At the same time, in Russia's constituent entities we also find ethnic tensions and even conflicts because the country's geo-political development has been carried out as colonization and modernization of indigenous cultures. The events of those past periods are being made relevant again quite regularly, although in a negative way more often than not.

1.3. Study of intercultural communication in Siberia and Russia's Far East: characteristics and problems

The study of ethnic interaction in Siberia and Russia's Far East was and still is done by Russian history scholars predominantly, but the communication models, tools and patterns/rules used have never been the object of analysis. We have to note here that there are fundamental books on specific archaeological cultures, the books that document culture diffusion facts as a result of peoples' interaction. Social anthropologists of XX – early XXI c. have described many an episode of ethnic history, and identified historical and cultural entities that had formed themselves in Siberian regions and in the Far East due to interaction between various tribal and ethnic groups. These works are mostly monographs or edited volumes not entered on international scientific databases. Only a narrow circle of scholars has access to these, so the latter are only very rarely taken into account for the purposes of communication theory.

To be able to generalize on the specific features and dynamics of communication in such a large part of Eurasia, we've got to have a fuller picture of peoples' interaction, a wider chronological scope and the theory and methodology that would correspond to such tasks. The second halve of XX c. witnessed some efforts to establish and evolve a Russian cultural-philosophical theory of communication aspiring to provide a wide spatial and temporal description of the phenomenon. The theory as it is, bases itself on the interactive/dialog concept of culture by (Bakhtin, 2015; Bibler, 1989; Dokuchaev, 2004; Kagan, 2020) and theory of communication and interaction, Markaryan's (1983) ideas about the culture of intertribal and interethnic links and relations, Flier's (1995) theory of culture-genesis, etc. The enlisted works gave a methodological foundation for the study of intercultural communication issues in a range of Russia's regions. It was already in the second decade of the 21st century that the interest towards large-scale descriptions of regional cultures receded. At the same time, a complex holistic picture of intercultural communication processes in Siberia and Russia's Far East has never been born.

2. Problem Statement

Analysis of the study's background in the area of intercultural communication allows us to mark out a number of problems as follows:

- Practice oriented studies obviously prevail, while works dealing with the issues of communication theory appropriate to various social cultural contexts are lacking.
- There are national monopolies, isolated local academic traditions, and no constructive international scientific discussion concerning study of intercultural communication.
- Fragmentation in studies on communication contexts and situations, insufficiently shaped general picture of intercultural links between peoples in the world, lack of works dealing with certain regions; materials on Siberia and Russia's Far East are not easily available to scholars from other countries.

3. Research Questions

In the context of the above defined problems, the paper strives to provide answers to a range of questions, as follows:

- What sources appropriately reflect the processes of interaction between non-literate peoples of Siberia and the Far East in the period from the 17th to the 20th century?
- What typical models did exist in the history of regional communication? Who were the actors? What were the results?
- What theoretical and methodological toolkit can allow us to systematize materials on intercultural communication, in larger cultural areas and in longer periods of time?

4. Purpose of the Study

The goal of the study is structural and typological analysis of regional intercultural communication strategies, on the materials from Siberia and Russia's Far East in the 17th-20th century.

5. Research Methods

Achievement of the tasks set required reliance upon a fundamental methodology:

5.1. Comparative analysis

The method of comparative historical analysis allows us to demonstrate changes in communication in historical perspective; the method of contrastive analysis is used to reveal both shared and individual features in various communication models that coexist in time.

5.2. Structural analysis

The method of structural analysis is good at revealing structural components of intercultural communication and studying links between these.

5.3. Typological analysis

The method of typological analysis serves to defining the types of intercultural links in regions and establishing a general typology thereof.

6. Findings

Implementation of the tasks set in the study was preceded by reconstruction of the processes that took place between peoples in Siberia and the Far East of Russia from the 17th to the 20th century. The lower bound of the period was the time when the processes of Russian colonization of Siberia and the Far East were only starting. Our findings based on such a modeling are set forth in a separate paper (Ivashchenko, 2011). To make a holistic description of the processes, we relied on: records and materials from the Russian State Historical Archive, Peter the Great's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) under Russian Academy of Sciences, studies on inter-population gene migration, ethnographic descriptions from late 19th – early 20th century, folklore collections of indigenous tribes. Here it should be noted the weighty role of original historical ethnographical studies that have not been digitized yet and are contained at special and rear collections of the Russian National Library, Peter the Great's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, the Far East State Scientific Library. Scientific value of these sources, along with other archives, for reconstruction of the communication culture of the past is beyond any doubt.

A controversial issue was that of whether we can legitimately use for such modeling the folklore materials coming from Siberia and the Far East. It was resolved by scholars of history who also use such sources. According to Berezkin and Touchkova, folklore can be taken as a representative historical source, although the dating of when folklore stories were formed might be viewed as only very relative (Touchkova, 2018). Mythology, writes Berezkin (2017), "is the ideal material for revealing intercultural links" (p. 6) but its "tropes and motifs have to be compared to data from archeology, population genetics, linguistics and (for later periods) written stories" (Berezkin, 2019, p. 28). Dolgikh, Varlamov, Vassilievitch believe that the majority of all folklore sources and epic poems from a territory that have survived till XX c. most likely originated in the 17th and 18th century, which perfectly fits our chosen scope of time (cit. ex Touchkova, 2018). In reconstructing communication processes in Siberia and Russia's Far East, our key objective seems to be not the exact dates of what actually happened, but rather conditions for and results of interaction, its interpretation by actors; therefore we can justly regard folklore sources as fully relevant for being relied upon in reconstructing and simulating interaction events.

6.1. Types, subjects and results of intercultural communication in Siberia and Russia's Far East

Making a typology does not require having an exhaustive list of communicators. In our case what we need are structures of all models, and comparison of various strategies of interaction, and their grouping. For analysis we used typical relationship situations, while discarding individual facts. At the same time it was important to keep in mind that we should not unduly expand the concept list of communication theory and, if and when possible, always rely on the concepts that are already at hand.

The structure of a regional communication model is made up of the following interrelated components: communicators (the contacting parties), context, means of communication (media); additionally, we have to mark out communication actors, the ones who initiate and accelerate changes to the system, along with cultural filters that put a limit to alien culture invasions. The ways Siberian and Far Eastern peoples interacted were defined by the communicators' status, their cultural level, and differed in what results the interaction brought. According to these criteria, we've marked out the two main types of relationship: symmetrical and asymmetrical, each having variants in its turn.

The symmetrical communication type is relation between communicators of the same status. The subjects' equal status is determined by their being at the same stage of progress. The term "stage" within this typology is determined by, first and foremost, the state of material technology and in particular the economy type. The symmetrical type was observed in relations as follows:

1) between different kinship-based groups/clans (or clan coalitions) with the prevalent appropriating forms of economy (foraging, fishing, hunting, deep sea fishing, reindeer breeding);

2) between various tribes having productive economy (farming, cattle breeding);

3) between government institutions (primarily China and Russia).

The typical contexts of symmetrical communication are: direct barter/trade, war/war alliances, exchange of matrimonial partners/purchase of wives (exogamy), diplomacy. The result of such horizontal contacts was modification made to all parties, although these changes never led to increased complexity and phase transformation of their material technologies, social relations and worldview.

Culture-genesis in Siberia and Russia's Far East entailed such contacts not only in situations of necessary resource seizure, but also when forging kinship clan alliances, which was the more so important amid foreseeable and constantly possible attack from the outside. Cultural borrowings and culture transformations, as a result of horizontal interaction between nomads and semi-nomads, also were an effective way towards their self-adaptation at newly obtained and developed lands. Therefore another result of such interaction was differentiation of local communities in a region thanks to emergence of new groups of contact which combine the traditions of different interaction partakers. Thus in the vast expanse of Siberia and Far East there formed itself historical and cultural communities or culture areas.

To this type of relations we can ascribe contacts between the following peoples:

▪ the Evenks/Evens of the Okhotsk Sea coast and Kamchatka peninsula; and indigenous tribes of the North-East Asia such as the Yukagirs, the Koryaks and the Chukchi (the Evens emerged as a mixture of the Tungus and Yukagir tribes);

▪ the Evenks of the Middle and Lower Angara River, and the Ket-language tribes of the same area;

▪ the Evenks of the interfluve between the Ob and Yenissei rivers and indigenous peoples of the area: the Kets, Selkups, Khanty, Enets, Nenets;

▪ the Negidals of the Lower Amgun River and the Tungus-Manchu of the Amur River area;

▪ the Ulchis and Nivkhs of the Lower Amur (the Amur River estuary);

▪ the Oroks of the Sakhalin Island and other tribes in the Amur-Sakhalin area;

▪ the Udeges, Nanais and Orochis living along the Tatar Strait coast;

- the Tungus-Manchu tribes of the islands and the inland of the Japan Sea, and the Ainu (some evidence of their past wars and marriages are to be found in the Orochi folklore);

- the Evenks of the Lower Tunguska, the Evens and the Samoyeds (the ancestors of today's Enets and Nganasans). Here we find mixed Tungus-language groups like the Bulyash and Nyurumnali (these are the Selkups and Samoyeds assimilated by the Evenks) who are hardly mentioned in written records more recent than the 18th century; closer to the Lower Tunguska estuary and north of it, interaction of the same peoples formed several Samoyed-language groups. Relations between the Evenks and Evens with the Samoyedic local inhabitants at the Taymyr Peninsula brought about the emergence of a new Northern nation – the Samoyedic Nganasans.

This cultural diffusion was helped both by direct contacts and those mediated by other peoples, among which we can single out as follows:

- relations between the Evenks/Evens and the Komi and Nenets as mediated by the Khanty and Selkups (some sources hold that the Nenets directly contacted the Tungus-language groups including armed clashes, which is also reflected in the Nenets folklore);

- relations between the Evenks/Evens and the Nivkhs as mediated by the Ulchis;

- relations between the Negydals and Nivkhs as mediated by the Ulchis (although some records maintain that there were direct contacts and even matrimonial relations of the Negydals and Nivkhs);

- relations between the Evenks and Tunivians/Toghis as mediated by the Tofalars.

The asymmetrical type of communication is that when interacting parties have unequal statuses:

1) between kinship-based clans (clan alliances) with appropriating economy, on the one hand, and tribes with productive economy, on the other;

2) between the above mentioned groups and peoples having statehood of a kind.

Initially, interaction between the subjects of asymmetrical communication was marked by war, gradually however conflicts were replaced by relations of trade or control. Wars for tribute to be imposed upon the natives were waged then by equal parties having statesmanship systems. Exchange of brides was found more rarely than in the first type of relationships; its goal was to establish good trades; a young girl could also be given to a merchant/creditor as debt repayment. Several communication contexts was there exemplified by special spheres of contact. In the first type of asymmetrical relations we have to do with diagonal links, in the second – with vertical ones.

The concept "diagonal" is applied to a model that oscillates between the horizontal and vertical types. A diagonal, like a horizontal, denotes a tendency towards change but already both in space and in phase. The results of such contacts were transformations leading to higher complexity and phase changes of one of the cultures. The idea of a "vertical" is used in the communications theory to designate a one-way (upstream or downstream) flow of information in a situation of control. Here we need not revision/reshaping and rethinking of the information coming from above, but its unconditional acceptance.

In the area under investigation, there were two vectors of the diagonal, too:

1) the one going bottom-up and left to right as an ascending transformation (sophisticating);

2) the one going up-down and left to right as a descending transformation (simplificating).

The history of Siberia and the Far East, indeed, provides examples of cattle herders/farmers and even Russian veteran inhabitants turning semi-nomad hunters and gatherers. In general, the first variant of the diagonal prevailed. These situations, although quire rare ones, were a result of considerable numerical superiority of the absorbing community over the absorbed one.

Examples of the diagonal model of communication are relations between:

- the Tungus-Manchu and cattle-herding tribes of the Southern Siberia and Mongolia;
- the Evenks and Buryats of the Baykal Region; due to these contacts between the two peoples, cattle breeding began spreading among some groups of the Tungus, chiefly those who practiced horse breeding;
- the Evenks and Yakuts; the outcome of this relation was that the Evenks turned into semi-sedentary cattle breeders and partly farmers; development of land farming among the Yakuts is viewed as a results of contacts with the Russian economic tradition;
- marginal groups of the Evenks and Yakuts who left the bulk of the tribe and migrated historically to the south of the Far East. It was this region (today's Amur River Territory, south of the Khabarovsk Territory, the Middle and Upper Amur) where there formed itself a community with a dominating Yakut tradition introducing the types of economy never characteristic of the Tungus people: land farming and cattle breeding;
- the Tungus and Manchu of the southern Far East (predominantly the Nanai and Udege) along with land farmers of the East Asia. Ultimately, the end of the 19th century saw the Tungus and Manchu of the southern Far East breeding pigs, ploughing land, but at that time they served ritual purposes and barter trading. Individual Nanai family clans thought themselves to have originated from the Manchu and Chinese. The result of such processes taking place was that new groups sprang up: Chinese migrants mixed with the Asian population of the southern Far East in the Ussuri River basin in the middle of the 19th century and were called "mangxi", while "Sinicized" Udege earned the designation "Taz".

The shift from appropriating economy to productive one or vice versa led to a change of the culture's spacetime. Not unfrequently, transformations on such a scale were accompanied by language and religions borrowings from the more 'respectable' party to the contact. In the closing of communication subjects in on each other we can observe the following patterns: nomadic hunters and gatherers more often learned life examples from cattle breeders, while semi-sedentary fishers – those from land farmers. That these pairs did exist means that similarity in the way of life was significant.

But for semi-nomadic and more so nomadic peoples (who live their lives in constant motion) to learn land farming and sedentary lifestyle was a hard choice. Spatial movement – the axiological center of these peoples' culture – was represented in two key symbols: a circle meaning migration of nomadic hunters and reindeer breeders, and a spiral as that of fishers travelling along a meandering river. These two were the basis for ornamental motifs, found place in village topography, were reflected in the structure of dwellings and society, in dance, ritual and myth. Due to this fact, for a long time land farming had been there a very difficult lesson to learn; it "took root" only as a consequence of a focused educational effort.

The vertical asymmetric communication model is represented by a relationship between all the above described groups, i.e. indigenous peoples of Siberia and the Far East, on the one hand, and migrants from Russia's central regions, on the other. Links between the aboriginals and China, as study shows, developed as a diagonal model. It should be noted here that this model was also prevalent at the beginning stages of relations between the indigenous peoples and Russian migrants.

The methods the Russians used for settling in these territories were determined by the national policy of Russia. At the same time it was accepted from the outset that the key attitude towards the process was based on the idea that the world is imperfect and subject to change. The very word "osvoyeniye" (Rus. for land appropriation and development) and a range of other terms used in the official literature to characterize the process and events, testifies to the fact that these lands were perceived as uninhabited and uncivilized. As a consequence of the active "appropriation and development" of the region, indigenous peoples there were provided with ready-made new culture forms which the dominant party to the contact linked to the idea of "civilization".

Mixed marriages were practiced freely in a situation when women were in great demand among Russian migrants; however, the pivot of the vertical model were nevertheless relations of control. This control embodied itself in planning, organization and management of changes being introduced to the culture of the indigenous tribes. As the key goal of their Project, *civilization champions* saw not gradual evolution but a leap forward bringing the new adepts from *nature* towards *culture*. It was due to this and to the long-standing paternalism that adaptation mechanisms of the locals broke down and culture traditions were disrupted.

6.2. Communication actors and filters in Siberia and Russia's Far East

Culture, as a dynamic system, needs actors to make it move forward. To designate these roles we propose the terms *communication agent* and *innovation champion*. Communication agents are subjects (individuals/institutions) that are more than active in the communicative aspect and come forward as change initiators and mediators between social groups. Novelty champions having got an impulse from the agents, perform the function of further disseminating the information in the surrounding thus changing it from within. At the same time, each of the systems has its filter through which necessary or acceptable new elements are let in, while unnecessary rejected.

In the traditional-type horizontal symmetrical model, the key agents were respected male members of a clan or tribe who participated in negotiations, on behalf of the community, on such issues as exchange of services and values, including women. Armed clashes after which the victor got new wives from the beaten can be also labelled as symmetrical relations. The "alien" war trophies (women) who subsequently set up the victors' homes, bore and socialized their kids etc. were a "soft power" – more capable of altering the victorious culture from within than any sort of external coercion. Before 1920s, the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the Far East had a cultural filter in the figure of the shaman who not only gave good advice to his kinsmen but also had the right of censure. The shaman could either veto any communication or sanction it. Unlike any other actor, he was a mediator in the sacral as in the social sphere.

The asymmetrical diagonal model retains former actors, still the key communication agent here becomes a merchant who brings goods and news from far away. Each of them had his own trade route and his clients. Debt obligations were the factor that contributed to cementing the merchant-client bonds. With time, many reindeer breeders and hunters in Siberia and Far East joined the process, began trading themselves and got their own debtors. The very imported goods became the equivalent of money in local exchange transactions. In a situation of social inequality increase, former cultural filters gradually weakened and transformed themselves. In the end, even the gods of the more prestigious communication party became revered as "helping better than the local ones".

If in the two described situations the filters were within the culture, in a vertical asymmetrical model they are outside it. Decision making on what reforms are good or unwanted for the indigenous peoples was taken over by the officials in charge of the national policy of the state whose subjects these tribes became. At this background, the authority of former cultural filters decreased step by step. The new center of power, as the key communication agent now, exercised its will through missionaries first, then came in teachers, culture and education officers, medical personnel and other individuals specially trained to work among the aboriginals. These workers, supported by the most active representatives from among the locals, played the role of novelty champions. The situations described above clearly demonstrate how the functions of the key communication agent and culture filter regulator can combine.

7. Conclusion

This study widens our scholarly picture of what intercultural communication is as a factor of regional culture development. It demonstrates that communication processes in Siberia and Russia's Far East in the 17th-20th century were intensive. Most active in this were local aboriginals –the Evenks and Evens (formerly called the Tungus). Traces of the Tungus culture are found across Siberia and the Far East and even beyond.

7.1. Sources used for reconstructing regional communication processes

In order to be able to reconstruct intercultural links between illiterate tribes, in particular, in Siberia and the Far East of Russia, it is acceptable to rely on the following sources and literature on the regional history: the key materials are genetic and linguistic research, historical records (archives, facts from archaeology and ethnography); in addition we can use various folklore sources provided the facts and events described there are cross-checked against facts from research literature.

7.2. Communication model structure

To the structure of regional communication model, apart from conventional components (communicants, context and means of communication) we added concepts that are opposite to them in their functions: actors and cultural filters. If communicants are all those individuals and institutions that interact, then actors are most active of them. For a high quality and systematic description of intercultural communication, it also seems reasonable to differentiate between actors by their type of participation:

communication agents/initiators and innovation champions – those who disseminate and implement innovations in the receiving community.

The higher is the authority of tradition in a community, the thicker are its filters. Weakening of cultural filters is assisted by more active intercultural relations and higher level of social inequality. Our analysis shows that the key agent of communication and the cultural filter could be represented by a single individual or institution, subject to their respective authority among people. In a traditional society, such bidirectional semantics was the specific feature of the key sacral persons and artifacts called mediators.

7.3. Types and outcomes of regional intercultural communication

The whole variety of relations in regional intercultural communication can be reduced to three large types: symmetrical horizontal, asymmetrical diagonal and asymmetrical vertical. The advantage of this typology is that it can be applied to study of both synchronic and diachronic dimensions of a regional culture simultaneously.

The chief outcomes of the first communication model are the improvement of adaptation skills of local peoples and the forming of cultural areas. The same result for the second model is structural transformation of systems towards sophistication, partly due to a wider acceptance of productive economy in the region. The third communication model demonstrates emergence of special cultural forms among indigenous peoples; yet such forms are found in their Russian version and on the basis of their inclusion into the fabric of the Russian state. Despite several regressive cases in the history of the regions and negative assessments of the interaction tools, communication in the cultural areas under investigation has helped their progressive development.

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