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ПРЕОДОЛЕНИЕ КУЛЬТУРНЫХ РАЗЛИЧИЙ С ПОМОЩЬЮ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ: ВЛИЯНИЕ РАЗНООБРАЗИЯ АНГЛИЙСКИХ ДИАЛЕКТОВ НА КОММУНИКАЦИЮ

В условиях глобализации и стремительного технологического развития проблема преодоления культурных различий становится все более актуальной и сложной. Цель настоящего исследования – выявление и анализ влияния вариативности английского языка на межкультурную коммуникацию, а также оценка роли современных технологий в преодолении возникающих при этом барьеров. В ходе исследования анализируются различные формы английского языка на примере британских и новозеландских территориальных вариаций, выявляются специфические трудности их восприятия и понимания. Особое внимание уделяется современным технологиям, таким как автоматический перевод и распознавание речи, а также обучающим приложениям, направленным на улучшение понимания различных диалектов. Полученные в результате исследования выводы подчеркивают значимость инновационного подхода к использованию технологий для создания эффективной межкультурной коммуникации и преодоления культурных барьеров. Это исследование не только расширяет теоретические знания о влиянии языковых вариаций на межкультурную динамику, но и предлагает практические рекомендации для улучшения международного взаимодействия в условиях многообразия языковых и культурных контекстов. Эмпирические данные основаны на опросе, проведенном в Институте иностранных языков РУДН с целью оценки современных технологий, таких как инструменты цифрового перевода.

К л ю ч е в ы е   с л о в а: *диалекты; новозеландский английский; языковая вариативность; автоматический перевод; межкультурная коммуникация.*

BRIDGING CULTURAL GAPS WITH TECHNOLOGY: THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH DIALECT DIVERSITY ON COMMUNICATION

In the context of globalization and rapid technological advancement, the challenge of overcoming cultural differences is becoming increasingly relevant and complex. The aim of this study is to analyze the influence of English language variability on intercultural communication, and to assess the role of modern technologies in overcoming these barriers. The research examines various forms of the English language, focusing on the British and New Zealand territorial variations, revealing specific challenges in their perception and understanding. Special attention is paid to modern technologies such as automatic translation and speech recognition, as well as educational applications aimed at improving the understanding of various dialects. The findings underscore the significance of an innovative approach to utilizing technologies for fostering effective intercultural communication and overcoming cultural barriers. This study not only expands theoretical knowledge on the impact of language variations on intercultural dynamics but also offers practical recommendations for enhancing international interaction amidst diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. Empirical data is based on the survey at the Institute of Foreign Languages at RUDN University assessing contemporary technologies like digital translation tools.

K e y   w o r d s: *dialects; New Zealand English; language variation; automatic translation; intercultural communication.*

In the modern era, globalization and technological progress are radically transforming the methods of interaction between representatives of different cultures and nationalities. One of the key aspects for successful intercultural communication is the effective overcoming of linguistic and cultural barriers.

Currently, there are approximately 6,500 living languages in the world, but their numbers are rapidly declining. In the twentieth century alone, the number of languages worldwide has been halved. The primary drivers of this trend are globalization and various socio-economic changes within societies, leading people to adopt more "prestigious" or "promising" languages. The English language, being one of the most widespread and commonly used in international contexts, represents a unique object of study, particularly in the context of its numerous dialects. The variability of English within British, American, Australian, New Zealand creates additional complexities in perception and understanding, which undoubtedly hinders communication between speakers.

Therefore, technologies play an increasingly significant role in overcoming these barriers by providing tools for automatic translation and speech recognition, as well as educational applications aimed at enhancing mutual understanding. However, despite the wide range of available technologies, their effectiveness in the context of the diversity of English dialects remains insufficiently studied.

This article is dedicated to investigating the impact of English dialect diversity on intercultural communication and evaluating the role of modern technologies in overcoming the associated challenges. The study examines examples of British and New Zealand variations of English, identifies specific problems related to their perception and understanding, and analyzes technological solutions that contribute to improving intercultural interaction. The primary goal of this work is to develop practical recommendations for the effective use of technologies in creating a more productive and mutually understanding communication environment in the context of global diversity.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating descriptive and comparative analysis. Empirical data is collected from students at the Institute of Foreign Languages at RUDN University, focusing on bachelor's and master's levels in linguistics to explore communication challenges. Linguistic analysis is applied to identify dialectal distinctions, while statistical methods assess contemporary technologies like automatic translation tools and speech recognition through user testing.

In modern intercultural communication, there is a trend of studying language and culture through individuals' interpretations of linguo-cultural characteristics. This aligns with the anthropocentric paradigm in linguistics, which views individuals as bearers of language and culture. According to S.G. Ter-Minasova, the pioneer of the intercultural communication theory as an academic discipline in Russia, language mirrors culture, reflecting not only the real world and living conditions but also the collective consciousness, mentality, and values of the people. She defines the term 'intercultural communication' as *«... communication among people representing different cultures»* [1, p. 5]. The dictionary of I.N. Zhukova comprises the definition as *«the process of cultural and linguistic interaction among participants of communicative acts belonging to different national cultures»* [2, p. 172].

Given that cultural phenomena are conveyed through language based on the cognitive background of the language user, and since each individual's conceptual framework is unique to their linguistic and cultural context, discrepancies in concepts arise. This leads to challenges in understanding and interpreting linguistic units. The main cause of misunderstanding in intercultural communication is that each ethnic group's process of translating thoughts into words is influenced by culturally specific mental representations, images, and cognitive structures [3, p. 4].

There are several key models of intercultural communication. Integrating these with dialect studies can contribute to a better understanding of the intricate relationship between language diversity and cultural interactions, which enhances effective cross-cultural communication.

The initial model distinguishes between *macrocultures* and *microcultures*, suggesting that macrocultures, being more widespread and extensively studied, are easier to interpret linguistically.

To clarify, there are extensive global regions that are structurally and organically integrated into cohesive social systems characterized by their distinct cultural traditions. Examples include American culture, Latin American culture, African culture, European culture, Asian culture, and others. These cultural types, named after continents due to their extensive scope, are referred to as *macrocultures* [4, p. 135].

In contrast, microcultures refer to smaller, distinct cultural groups within a larger, more dominant culture. These groups often have their own unique

customs, beliefs, behaviours, and communication styles that differentiate them from the broader macroculture. Examples include ethnic minorities, regional communities, or specific interest groups within a society. For instance, within the macroculture of American culture, there are various microcultures such as Native American cultures, Hispanic-American cultures, and African-American cultures, each with distinct cultural practices and communication norms [4, p. 136]. These microcultures interact both within themselves and with the broader macroculture, influencing overall cultural dynamics and communication patterns. Microcultures, despite their significance, are frequently overlooked by scholars, thereby complicating linguistic interaction within the broader macroculture.

Dialect variations predominantly exist within microculture, emphasizing nuanced linguistic differences and distinct regional characteristics, as defined in the encyclopedia: a dialect is a type of language that is common in a certain area having its own phonetic, lexical and other features that distinguish it from the national language and other dialects [5]. However, both micro and macro levels should be taken into account while analyzing the possible interpretations of the dialect units within intercultural communication.

The picture below illustrates the intricate process of context translation within intercultural communication (Pic.1). It encompasses both the macro level, which includes broad cultural groups, and the various micro levels, which cover specific cultural nuances and subcultures. These micro levels add layers of complexity to the translation process by imposing unique interpretative and semantic demands. It is essential for the translator to meticulously consider these cultural specificities to ensure that the translated message accurately reflects the original context and maintains its intended meaning across different cultural backgrounds. This holistic approach underscores the importance of understanding and integrating both broad cultural frameworks and subtle cultural distinctions in the translation process.
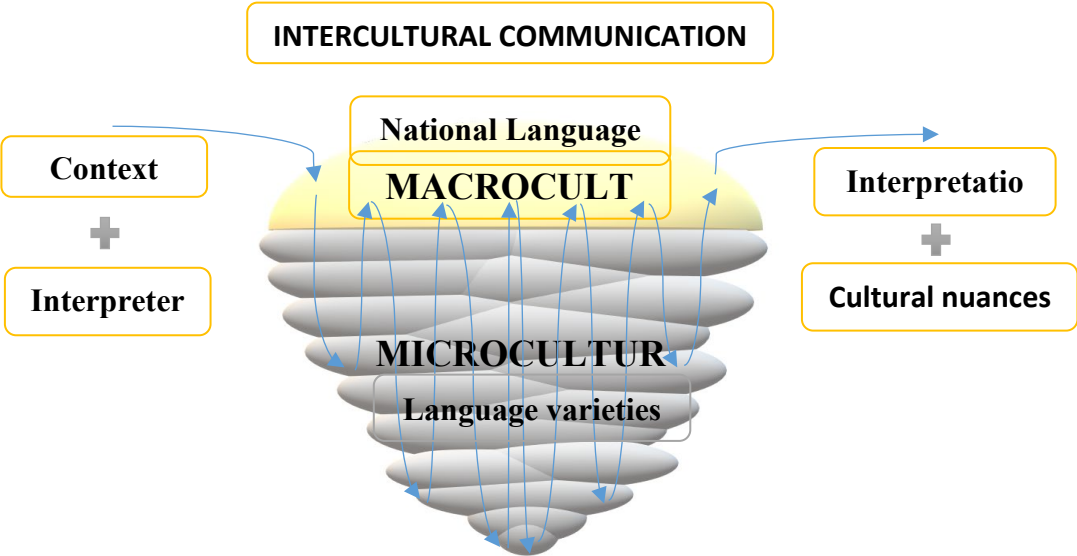
Pic. 1. Multi-Level Intercultural Context Translation Framework

In translation, the inherent authenticity of the recreated world often diminishes, losing the depth conveyed by multilingualism in the process. As cultures are not interchangeable, translating dialects inevitably results in some loss of cultural nuances. Therefore, the translator's goal is to minimize these losses to ensure that the impact on non-native speakers closely resembles that on native speakers.

One of the most significant macrocultures revolves around the English language. This macroculture encompasses not only countries where English is the official language but also regions where it is widely used in business and cultural interactions. English exerts significant influence on international relations, science, technology, and culture, playing a pivotal role in the globalized world. English is the mother tongue of 380 million individuals (2023), ranking it third in the world by native speakers after Chinese (Northern dialects) and Spanish [6]. When considering those who speak English as a second language, the total number rises to around 1.5 billion people (2023), surpassing all other languages globally in terms of total speakers [7].

English dialects vary widely, with approximately 160 recognized globally. Linguists commonly categorize the primary local dialects of the English language into three broad categories: British Isles, North American, and Australasian dialects, which can be associated with both geographical regions and specific social groups [8]. Certain UK dialects like "brummie" are sometimes linked to crime, whereas others like "royal English" convey elegance and prosperity. The example of the Northern English dialect clearly illustrates its distinct regional usage. The phrase *"ey up"* is characteristic of regions such as Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Derbyshire, where it functions as an informal greeting similar to *"hello"* or *"hi"* in standard English.

In the context of New Zealand English and its regional variations, additional challenges may arise, regarding the specific influence of indigenous languages of the Maori tribe and numerous borrowings from their language. For instance: *Kia ora (Hi)! Me and the whānau (family) are planning a hīkoi (walk or trip) up to the maunga (mountains) this weekend. Gonna soak in some whenua (land) and enjoy the views. Aroha mai (sorry), I'll hit you up when we're back! 'Привет! Мы с семьей планируем поездку в горы на этих выходных. Будем наслаждаться природой и любоваться видами. Прости, свяжусь с тобой, когда мы вернемся!'* [9].

Another example of informal speech with New Zealand specifics covers multiple linguistic discrepancies: *Hey bro (friend), how's it going? We're having a barbie (barbecue) this arvo (afternoon) at Mike's place. You keen (eager) to come? Sweet as (awesome) if you can make it. Bring some snags (sausages) if you're coming. Cheers (goodbye), mate!* [9].

Accurate comprehension and translation of these dialects are essential for preserving the authenticity of the speaker's identity. This requires translators to carefully select appropriate lexical equivalents and consider contextual nuances that may not be directly translated by dictionaries, ensuring the integrity of the speech characteristics remains intact. Most commonly, the compensation method in translation is employed, where lost elements of meaning from the original unit are conveyed in the translated text through alternative means, not necessarily in the same textual position as in the original [10, p. 68].

Therefore, several key aspects can be identified through which the diversity of English forms may complicate intercultural communication: 1) lexical differences (unique words and phrases, leading to errors in interpretation); 2) pronunciation (accents and pronunciation vary significantly, making speech comprehension difficult for speakers of other dialects); 3) socio-cultural associations (certain dialects may evoke biases or stereotypes, complicating mutual understanding); 4) regional idioms (local expressions and idioms lack equivalents in other dialects); 5) cultural contexts (each dialect reflects the characteristics of its culture, adding another layer of complexity for participants in intercultural communication).

Currently, there is a growing development of digital tools utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance translation and speech perception, thereby fostering deeper understanding in intercultural communication. Linguists view dialects not as simple categories, but as sets of correlated features. Thus, considering dialectal diversity is crucial for creating effective natural language processing (NLP) systems that serve a wide range of users [11].

The empirical data, collected at the Institute of Foreign Languages of the People's Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba (RUDN University) across 120 students from bachelor's and master's levels in linguistic specialties, has demonstrated the increasing effectiveness of digital tools in enhancing comprehension of English dialects, improving the accuracy and depth of translations and interpretations within the English dialects' specifics (Pic. 2).
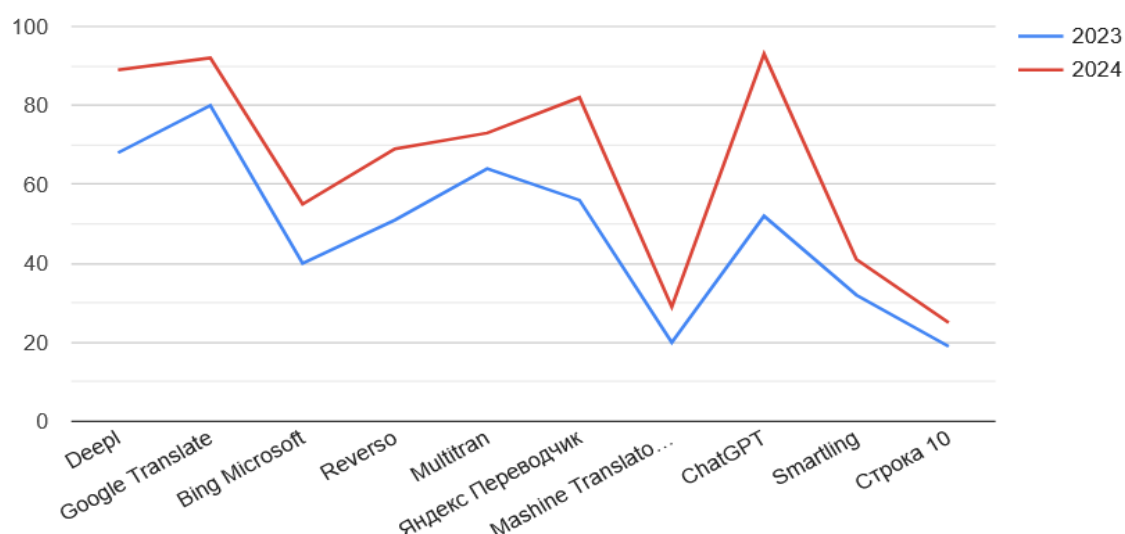
Pic. 2. Comparative Analysis of AI-Based Translation Tools:
User Preferences and Effectiveness in Handling Dialect-Specific Nuances

The statistical data from students on AI-based translation tools indicate varied preferences between the two evaluation rows. *Google Translator* and *ChatGPT* are the most preferred tools, showing significant increases from 80 % to 92 % and 52 % to 93 %, respectively, highlighting their reliability and user satisfaction. *Deepl* also has a high preference, rising from 68 % to 89 %. Tools like *Яндекс Переводчик* and *Multitran* also show strong preferences, with Яндекс increasing from 56 % to 82 % and Multitran from 64 % to 73 %. Conversely, *Bing Microsoft, Reverso*, and *Smartling* have moderate preferences, with *Bing* rising from 40 % to 55 %, *Reverso* from 51 % to 69 %, and *Smartling* from 32 % to 41 %. The least preferred tools are *Mashine Translator.com* and *SYSTRAN*, with only slight increases from 20 % to 29 % and 19 % to 25 %, respectively. These results indicate a clear preference for more established AI translation tools, with significant user satisfaction in Google Translator and ChatGPT.

The analysis has shown:

• Highest Preferences: *Google Translator* (92 %) and *ChatGPT* (93 %) are the most preferred tools, indicating strong user satisfaction and reliability in translation tasks.

• Moderate Preferences: *Deeply* (89 %), *Яндекс Переводчик* (82 %), and *Multitran* (73 %) also show high levels of user preference, suggesting they are effective and well-regarded.

• Lowest Preferences: Tools like *Machine Translator.com* (29 %), *SYSTRAN* (25 %), and *Bing Microsoft* (55 %) are less favored, indicating room for improvement in their translation accuracy or user interface.

The most effective tool for translating dialect-specific nuances among those reviewed, according to the collected statistical data, is ChatGPT. Its preference increased from 52 % to 93 %, indicating high user satisfaction. While other tools also show good results, ChatGPT stands out due to its ability to consider context and language subtleties, which is particularly important for translating dialects and regional variations of the English language.

In conclusion, the study of dialectal variation at RUDN University highlights the importance of understanding linguistic diversity for effective intercultural communication. Modern technologies like AI-powered translation and speech recognition show promise in overcoming these challenges, fostering more accurate and nuanced interactions. Ongoing research and development in this area are essential to bridging linguistic and cultural gaps.

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