

**NEW TRENDS IN CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH AND  
PUBLICATION ACTIVITY OF SCIENTISTS. INTERNATIONAL  
SCIENTIFIC INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE “FUNCTIONAL  
ASPECTS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION.  
TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING ISSUES”, NOVEMBER 2020**

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This paper gives a brief summary of the work of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Interdisciplinary Conference on Research and Methodology “Functional Aspects of Intercultural Communication. Translation and Interpreting Issues” held by RUDN University on November 20, 2020. Representatives of different countries took part in the conference: Russia, the UK, the USA, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Spain, Paraguay, and Tunisia. The conference aims to reveal the diversity of functional aspects of intercultural communication within the process of world education integration, focusing on translation and interpreting issues in today’s society. The theoretical and applied problems raised at the conference are pressing and relevant to the study of modern professional cross-cultural discourse.

On November 20, 2020 Institute of Foreign Languages of Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University) ran the 7<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Interdisciplinary Conference on Research and Methodology “Functional Aspects of Intercultural Communication. Translation and Interpreting Issues” dedicated to new trends in intercultural research and publication activity of scientists. Within the conference a special session “Culture and Education: Social Transformations and Multicultural Communication” was also held. The date of the conference was timed to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of the university. The conference was held online with the usage of modern technological tools.

The conference organizing committee included representatives of different education institutions: the Institute of Foreign Languages of RUDN (Russia), Faculty of Philology of Moscow State Lomonosov University (Russia), Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the University of Granada (Spain), Russian Centre of the University of Granada (Spain), Higher Institute of Languages in Tunis of the University of Carthage (Tunisia), UniNorte University (Paraguay), Moscow State Linguistic University (Russia), Institute of Education University of Reading (UK).

The goal of the conference was to reveal the diversity of functional aspects of intercultural communication within the process of world education integration, focusing on translation and interpreting issues in today’s society. The thematic areas of the conference were determined by modern trends in this field. The main issues to be discussed were the following:

- interrelation between functional approaches of intercultural communication and interpretation issues;
- intercultural communication in educational activity;
- intercultural component of linguistic personality in understanding socio-cultural reality;
- hypertextuality and discursive approach in computational linguistics;
- formation of the discursive socio-cultural competence of future translators and interpreters in the language training process;
- digital technologies in teaching/learning foreign languages;
- computational linguistics and artificial intelligence.

All theoretical and applied problems raised are distinguished by their relevance and timeliness of consideration.

The conference started with the Plenary Session and was opened by Natalia L. Sokolova, Professor, PhD in Philology, Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages, RUDN University (Russia). The keynote speakers of the session were Dr. R. Harald Baayen, Professor of Quantitative Linguistics of Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen (Germany) and Dr. Walter Daelemans, Professor of Computational Linguistics of University of Antwerp (Belgium).

Dr. R. Harald Baayen spoke on the topic “A discriminative perspective on learning a new language”. He introduced a computational model based on the mathematical framework of linear discriminative learning to explore the acquisition of a small trilingual vocabulary, with English as L1, German or Mandarin as L2, and Mandarin or Dutch as L3. The results of a series of exploratory simulations revealed the dependence of qualitative differences emerging between the learning of a first, second and third language on distributional properties of the particular languages involved rather than the order of acquisition per se, or any difference in learning mechanism. Another interesting finding concerns the importance of suprasegmental information in determining the kinds of production errors made. The speaker also presented some initial findings on the bilingual learning of German and Czech inflected words.

Dr. Walter Daelemans made a report on the topic “Computational Stylometry: profiling authors of social media text with machine learning methods” which is rather relevant today due to the popularity of different means of Natural Language Processing like Machine Translation, Text Generation and Speech Recognition. In this process Deep Learning as a method of Artificial Intelligence approaches can be of significant help. The speaker gave an overview of some recent work they did at CLiPS in this area, both from a sociolinguistic point of view and from a predictive point of view. He focused on recent results revealing drastic improvement in computational stylometry tasks by combining classical Machine Learning approaches with Deep Learning or by applying these models in a new way to the tasks.

As part of the conference, there was a Round table discussion entitled “Thematic trends in research publications and the ethical policy of scientific journals (Education & Psychology)”

with the participation of foreign chief editors of highly ranked foreign scientific journals (Scopus and Web of Science). The discussed topic concerned the importance of theory and methods in research articles. The main speakers were:

1. Vanessa Dennen, Editor-in-chief of “The Internet and Higher Education”, Professor of Instructional Systems & Learning Technologies, Florida State University (USA). Her presentation on the issue “Prioritizing research topics: Making what we SHOULD publish what we CAN publish” addresses how to identify the research topics that are germane, timely, and likely to make a meaningful contribution due to new challenges posed.
2. Roger Säljö, Co-editor of “Learning, Culture and Social Interaction”, Professor of the Department of Education, Communication and Learning, University of Gothenburg (Sweden). His “Research on children and child development in a digital age: Research ethics and epistemic responsibilities of research on childhood” is devoted to the shift from viewing children as objects of research to participants and agents in social interaction, from less knowledgeable to competent actors in their own environments. Rather, increasingly they now are referred to as ‘informants’ and ‘participants’, thus recognizing a different position from which they are involved in social practices with implications for how they have to be studied.
3. Ian Thompson, Co-editor of “Teaching Education”, Associate Professor of the Department of Education, University of Oxford (UK). Introducing the problem on the topic “The importance of theory and methods in research articles”, the author draws on the example of his co-leadership of the large ESRC funded Excluded Lives project which aims to develop a multi-disciplinary understanding of the political economies and consequences of school exclusion across the UK. The research leads to a greater understanding of the cost of exclusions at individual, institutional and system level, as well as pupils’ rights, entitlements, protection and wellbeing, and the landscapes of exclusion across the United Kingdom’s four jurisdictions.

The conference covered the issues which were presented in ten sessions:

- Intercultural communication, language and identity;
- Social aspects of intercultural communication;
- Intercultural communication and translation, interpretation issues;
- Teaching, learning, translation and communication: Chinese discourse;
- Communication and interpretation;
- Linguistic and cultural aspects of translation;
- Teaching Russian at the US universities in the time of pandemic;
- Linguistic intercultural component in understanding socio-cultural reality;
- Intercultural communication in educational activity;
- Culture and education: Social transformations and multicultural communication.

Also, two workshops were organized to cover the issues of digitalization of Russian education and social, political and economic context of the modern transforming society.

A representative of MGIMO University took part in the conference. Victoria L. Malakhova, PhD in Philology, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor of the English Language Department №4 contributed to the “Intercultural Communication and Translation, Interpretation Issues” Session with the report on “Complications in understanding and translating metaphors in economic discourse”. A conceptual metaphor is presented as a complex combination of linguistic, pragmatic, sociocultural, psychological and other factors of speech production which complicates comprehension and translation of the metaphor in the economic discourse. The speaker reveals the peculiarities of a metaphor in the economic discourse, introduces the main methods of translation and illustrates their specifics. This can contribute to professional cooperation and business communication in the modern economic sphere.

There was additionally organized professional development programme “Smart Technologies in Modern Education” in the online format. The conference participants could take the three-pronged courses and get a state certificate:

- Pedagogical practices in smart education;
- Smart education: learning and development technologies;
- Smart education in the modern educational environment.

Although the conference lasted only one day, a lot of researchers and academics from different countries and universities could take part in it. A wide range of issues was covered. The conference was organized at a high scientific and technical level. The event provided a warm atmosphere for both fruitful work and professional communication.

The International scientific interdisciplinary conference “Functional Aspects of Intercultural Communication. Translation and Interpreting Issues” is an annual event which gives a great opportunity for discussions of theoretical and practical issues in the field of communication and translation.

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