

## **ABSENCE OF CULTURAL SHOCK: POSITIVE EXPERIENCE OF PLUNGING INTO MODERN KAZAKH CULTURE**

The article under consideration deals with the problem of intercultural dialogue from the point of view of an individual. The personal experience helps the author to define the factors for successful plunging into foreign culture, taking modern Kazakh culture as an example. The author offers some pieces of advice to avoid cultural shock as two cultures clashes, e.g. following of the codes of conduct, studying of local habits and traditions, taking interest in local names and toponyms as basic foundations of history and culture of the country. The author also suggests introducing certain measures insuring the stimulation of cooperation and friendship between two neighboring countries, Russia and Kazakhstan.

*Keywords:* *intercultural communication, cultural shock, cultural cooperation, dialogue of cultures.*

In today's interaction and interpenetration of cultures it is becoming ever more important to understand certain mechanisms assuring positive outcome of the clash of cultures experience. Such mechanisms help to ensure mutually beneficial results of the contacts and can prevent any negative consequences. Of course, the interaction of cultures can besometimes a difficult and multilevel process. «The processes of cultural exchange and communication are of cross-cutting nature. The interaction of cultures can occur in a uniform co-operation and as a result of the forcible seizure of territories, military conquest. In the latter case, the result of cultural interaction is aimed at taking advantage of one of the parties to the detriment of the other» [1, p. 84].

In this article, however, we do not intend to study thoroughly the impact of global factors on major social systems in a cross-cultural interaction. On the contrary, we would like to dwell on the analysis of the experience of the dialogue of cultures from the perspective of an individual, forced by circumstances to face the cultural environment previously unfamiliar and somewhat alien.

No doubt, almost every person faced the problem of culture shock when immersed in a social environment different from the familiar environment of the individual. As Ms. Michelle LeBaron points out that « though largely below the surface, cultures are a shifting, dynamic set of starting points that orient us in particular ways and away from other directions. Each of us belongs to multiple cultures that give us messages about what is normal, appropriate, and expected. When others do not meet our expectations, it is often a cue that our cultural expectations are different. We may mistake differences between others and us for evidence of bad faith or lack of common sense on the part of others, not realizing that common sense is also cultural. What is common to one group may seem strange, counterintuitive, or wrong to another» [2].

Conflicts associated with negative experiences of a clash of cultures are often linked to the inability of the individual to realize the irrationality of any evaluation as the personal attitude towards foreign culture. Tolerance, sincere interest and deep study of traditions, customs and realia will prevent the negative effects of immersion into a foreign culture. As rightly emphasizes Mr. Koksharov, «a dialogue of cultures is penetrating into the system of values ... of a given culture, showing great respect for them, overcoming stereotypes and original synthesis of other nationalities, leading to mutual enrichment and entry into the global cultural context. The dialogue of cultures supposes the importance of adopting universal values ... of interacting cultures» [3]. It is through understanding and adequate perception of cultural values comes the possibility to overcome any cultural barriers for successful dialogue.

It should be noted the close ties between Russia and Kazakhstan, promoting cultural interaction at both the political level and the level of individuals, especially around the border regions. The absence of a language barrier should be taken into consideration, which allows you to safely overcome a number of difficulties which would certainly arise in the collision of different cultures. Official bilingualism of Kazakhstan is certainly a cornerstone of the accord of cultures, both within the country and outside (former Soviet Republics' culture of neighboring states with Kazakhstan, in particular Russia).

Taking into account our personal experience of first acquaintance with the culture of Kazakhstan, we should point out some peculiar features the awareness of which can be of some help in ensuring the success of personal contact. To start with it is important to identify some characteristic elements of Kazakh culture as a whole. As Ms. Akizhanova and Ms. Satenova state the Kazakh culture can be positioned as universalistic (rules and laws are applied to everyone), collectivistic (the frequent usage of « we», people achieve greater success in a group and share common responsibility, although they tend to avoid personal responsibility), affective (verbal and nonverbal expression of ideas and feelings, clear manifestation of emotions, free flow of emotions), diffusive (there is no clear distinction between work and personal life), culture which is oriented towards respect to older generation (based on the cultural indexes of G. Hofstede) [4].

Let us discuss some of the abovementioned characteristic features of the modern culture of Kazakhstan. Undoubtedly, the first thing to be noticed by a foreigner entering the country for the first time is the way the people greet each other. These forms of polite greetings are quite different from e.g. those of Russia. People here shake hands (as many cultures do), but people who are acquainted or related will embrace each other or at least touch shoulder or forearm. It is a tradition to ask «How are you doing?», although it is not necessarily an inquiry of your personal matters, just polite way of saying «hello».

Politeness is of great importance here especially during contacts with senior citizens – it goes without saying that in public transport no older person will be left without a seat. Such polite attitude towards the elderly has very deep roots in Asian cultures and in the Kazakh culture in particular. Older relatives will be looked after (usually the

youngest child in the family takes responsibility to help parents) and they will be by no means doomed to live in misery alone.

Speaking further on about politeness we should also note a much less number of vulgarisms in the speech of Russian speaking Kazakh citizens. It is probably linked with greater control of emotions exercising by the people here. Traditionally the nomads were less emotional and passionate than the people of the cities. They just didn't have time to be idle. The influence of Islamic rules also prevents locals from expressing their emotions in a disturbing uncontrollable way. Such strict code of conduct of course is being under pressure from modern tendencies (free expression of emotions, lack of self-control, lack of respect to other people). Modern world changes traditions and destructive power of certain « technological achievement» of means of communication, Internet and TV badly influence younger people. A Russian-speaking person will sure to hear some notorious Russian invectives in the fluency of Kazakh speech. Fortunately, such incidents are much rarer than in Russia where taboo words are part of almost every person everyday speech.

Unlike politeness in public transport one should be ready for a certain surprise while driving a car. The abovementioned self-control of emotions is absent on the road. One might think that some deeper buried instincts of nomads take control over the driver on the road. The spirit of steppe «Tengri» possesses modern «riders» making them famous batyrs (legendary warriors of Kazakhstan). The drivers are rather impatient and easily irritated excessively using horns and flashing lights. But no one should be disturbed by such behavior. Just follow the rules and be patient.

Also deep historical origin is at the core of Kazakh hospitality. The steppe life is full of hardships and it is crucial to have close ties with relatives and friends. That is why all family events are held at a scale unusual for a western-European guest. Not only close relatives and friends are invited but also rather distant relatives and acquaintances and colleagues. E.g. the school graduation party is traditionally organized at a restaurant and not only school leavers and their parents are invited but all teachers of the school, school administrative staff (for example school nurse and accountant) and all willing relatives as well. The custom has it to order many dishes. The main reason is not the hunger but the wish to show that the hosts of the event are not misers and they will treat their guests as fine as they can. We heard once at a meeting where the school graduation prom was discussed a following remark in response to the suggestion to be a bit more economical and take away some dishes from the menu, « What will other schools think of us, is we had only three salads on our tables?». It is also worthy to mention that such behavior is characteristic of all the nationalities of the Republic, not only the Kazakhs. The end of each event is marked by the giving of small take-away gifts to remember the event. After children's birthday parties it is traditional to have a small pack of sweets or souvenirs (for example, a mug with a name of a birthday child).

Undoubtedly modern Kazakhstan is greatly influenced by Islamic culture and it is the dominant religion in the Republic. Most population tries to follow the basic rules of the belief. But unlike in other neighboring countries where Islam is the dominant belief here one would not notice many manifestation of religion, like for example in historically Muslim country like Egypt. A foreign guest may notice some religious gestures e.g. while passing by a cemetery. Also one would notice that the population of the country drinks much less than its northern neighbor. The policy of the government is oriented towards secular country with tolerance to all the religions and confessions.

Speaking about certain difficulties which may arise during stay in Kazakhstan we probably should mention the personal names. Although here the following advice can be given. The guest can try remembering the names by translating them with the help of a dictionary. It could be useful not only for remembering the names of new acquaintances but it can ease the process of cultural assimilation and be very entertaining. The names in Kazakh culture are given with a purpose and all have certain meaning known for the locals. In modern Russian tradition many names have no cultural identity for the people and have no meaning known to modern Russians, e.g. the name « Dmitrii» is a Greek name meaning «The follower of Goddess Demeter». Unlike such Russian traditions the Kazakhs give names which have meaning identified by modern people as well and have certain importance in the culture. For example, the Moon (Ai) played very important role in the lives of Kazakhs that is why the word also signifies something beautiful, fine, and elegant. Many female names have « Ai» in their roots: Aiasel, Aibanu, Aibala, Aibarsha, Aibibi, Aigansha, Aigul, Ainur(a), Aisheshek etc. If we think about the environment where the Kazakhs lived we would remember the vast steppe where only during a very short period beautiful flowers appear. Of course many female names have the word «gul» – flower in their root: Aigul, Gulnara, Gilfia, Bibigul, etc. There are also many names connected with certain historical personalities: Tamerlan(e), Timur, Adil (Edil) – Atilla, Cengiz (Genghis), Tomiris, Nursultan, etc. Going back in history of the Kazakhstan peoples and their culture can help one not only enrich his/her horizon but also prevent from making silly mistakes at a first meeting. Our names are very precious to every one of us and making blunder while being introduced can be of certain unpleasant consequences.

To make the acquaintance with the Kazakh culture more entertaining one can be advised to pay special attention to the toponyms. It can enrich the vocabulary of the guest with new Kazakh words, e.g. the name of the capital city of Kazakhstan is Astana, which means actually «capital of the country». There are many streets named «Dostyk» meaning «friendship». Every city has a street «Zhenis» celebrating the Victory in the World War II. Many towns' names have «tau» in their root meaning «hill, mountain»: Temirtau (Iron Mountain – there iron ore is produced). Special interest should be taken towards toponyms which have antroponyms at their root. Such toponyms can help in identifying the symbolic events in the history of Kazakhstan. For example, every town of Kazakhstan has a street named after Abai Kunanbaev, who was most prominent Kazakh philosopher, poet, teacher. As in other parts of the former Soviet Republics the people of Kazakhstan still cherish the names of the WW II heroes, there is, for example,

a street and a monument to the hero of the War B. Momyshuly, who fought in the famous Moscow battle in 1941-42. There are several toponyms related to the renowned Soviet scientist, geologist K. Satpaev. It is interesting to know that there is a monument to Satpaev in Tomsk-city not far from one of the buildings of Tomsk Polytechnic University. This study could be of great assistance to any guest of the country to deeper understand what the people of the country like, respect, feel, what they are proud of, what they want to remember. Toponyms are at the very core of the culture of any nation.

Frankly speaking our own successful experience in Kazakhstan was ensured by the fact that we mostly traveled and stayed in modern cultural and political centers of Kazakhstan Almaty and Astana. It is a known fact that such big cities have certain universal for other world capitals features, e.g. greater open-mindedness, tolerance, fluency in foreign languages (in case of Kazakhstan – the knowledge of Russian), orientation to western culture (films and music, addiction to communication technologies, «mall» culture – traditions of passing time at a shopping mall). So to be totally true we can't define our staying in the country as total plunging into the culture. Although it should be noted that during the last 20 years there have been many changes in the country and of course the country has obtain new features and is still shaping its identity. There is much influence of neighboring Asian and Eastern cultures (China, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey). Some new traditions are introduced, for example, Nauryz, the holiday celebrating new beginning, coming of spring and the end of winter. The holiday was widely celebrated by the peoples of many regions within and outside of Kazakhstan before the Revolution of 1917, so we can say that the tradition is not introduced but rather renewed. Some traditions become extinct like, e.g. the celebration of February, 23<sup>rd</sup> – the holiday in the Soviet Union commemoration the organizing the Red Army. There are new dates in the calendar, e.g. May, 7<sup>th</sup> honoring the Kazakh Army, or December, 1<sup>st</sup>, the Day of the First President, December, 16<sup>th</sup>, Independence day. New traditions are of course very important for a young nation like Kazakhstan to promote its identity, to unite the nation and to give new generations some foundation for national pride and honor.

Despite some changes Kazakhstan does not try to close from its northern neighbor and two official languages provide greater opportunities for contacts of the two countries citizens. Tourism benefits a lot from such policy as many Russians travel every year to Burabai (Borovoye) a wonderful resort in the Northern part of Kazakhstan, to the Almaty region with its many attractions (skiing resorts, natural reserves, urban places of interest) as well as to the capital of the country with its modern architecture. The second official language guarantees equality of nationalities within the country and ensures political stability in this multinational and multicultural country in such difficult geopolitical situation in Eurasia continent.

To sum it up it would be reasonable to mention some initiatives which in our opinion should be launched in the bordering regions of Russia to advance mutual contacts and encourage further cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan taking into account the experience of education system in the states close to the border with Mexica (the USA). It would be practical to introduce the study of the Kazakh language at schools. In primary school there should be included some examples of Kazakh literature such as fairy tales and legends. History curriculum can be broadened to pay special attention to the events in the history of our countries which had great impact on the relations of the nations. We find it important to increase cooperation in educational and cultural spheres (concerts, film festivals, youth camps, competitions, cultural events, etc.) Younger people especially need to be encouraged to participate in such events to make them better understand the culture of other nation. Without cultural background knowledge, without cultural awareness of individual people the contacts of the countries will gradually slip into political small talks and nothing more. If we let limit our relations by only political events we will destroy the ties of two historically and culturally intertwined nations. There should be introduced a new type of cultural orientation – a personal cultural contact.

We would like to finish the discussion with the words we find very appropriate here of the great Russian literary philosopher M. Bakhtin: «the alien culture discovers itself to its full capacity only in the eyes of another culture. One sense opens its depths only when it meets or touches a different, alien sense...there begins a dialogue, which overcomes closeness and one-sidedness of those senses, of those cultures... Such dialogue meeting of two cultures prevents them from mixing and mingling but rather lets them enrich each other...» [5, p. 354].

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## **ОТСУТСТВИЕ КУЛЬТУРНО ШОКА: ПОЛОЖИТЕЛЬНЫЙ ОПЫТ ПОГРУЖЕНИЯ В СОВЕМЕННУЮ КАЗАХСКУЮ КУЛЬТУРУ**

В настоящей статье рассматриваются проблемы диалога культур с позиции индивидуума. На основе личного опыта автор сделал попытку разобраться в факторах, способствующих успешному погружению в иностранную культуру, на примере современной казахской культуры. Автор предлагает ряд действенных советов, следование которым гарантирует отсутствие культурного шока при столкновении культур, среди них: соблюдение норм поведения, изучение традиций казахского народа, ознакомление с глоссарием традиционных антропонимов, изучение топонимов как знаковых опор для погружения в историю и культуру страны. Автор также предлагает ряд мер, введение которых будет способствовать углублению добрососедских связей России и Казахстана.

*Ключевые слова:* межкультурная коммуникация, культурный шок, взаимодействие культур, диалог культур.

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## **ОТРАЖЕНИЕ КУЛЬТУРНЫХ ЦЕННОСТЕЙ И ХАРАКТЕРА АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКОГО НАРОДА В ТРАДИЦИЯХ И ОБЫЧАЯХ**

В настоящей статье рассматриваются такие понятия, как культурные ценности азербайджанского народа. Представлен типичный характер изучаемого народа, его основные черты, отраженные в традициях и обычаях. Культура и ценности азербайджанского народа недостаточно хорошо известны другим нациям, по сравнению, например, с ценностями английского или немецкого народов. Авторы статьи, являясь представителями азербайджанской народности, выявляют ключевые аспекты своей культуры.

*Ключевые слова:* нация, традиции, культурные ценности, обычай, Азербайджан.

В настоящее время возникла необходимость всестороннего и глубокого изучения влияния культурных традиций и обычаев разных народов. Следует отметить, что, несмотря на различные жертвы и войны в течение многих столетий, азербайджанский народ сохранил разнообразные генетические и культурные характеристики, интеллектуальные ценности, этические нормы, обычаи, традиции и т. п.

Цель данного исследования: представить основные особенности азербайджанской культуры. Проблема заключается в том, что не все представляют, как важно почитать и соблюдать строгие законы азербайджанского народа. Особенно следует выделить те ситуации, когда человек находится в Азербайджане в качестве гостя или туриста. Запрещается нарушать нормы поведения в общественных местах (одежда, особенно женская). В культуре Азербайджана существует еще одна, не менее серьезная проблема молодежи, которая воспринимает собственную культуру как исчерпавшую наследие культурных и нравственных ценностей.

Прежде всего, следует дать определение понятию «традиции». Традиции – это вошедшие в привычку, закрепившиеся формы человеческого поведения. К традициям относятся любые преемственные правила поведения. В литературе можно встретить такие словосочетания, как «традиции и обычаи» или «традиции и обряды». Обычай – содержание поведенческой нормы, обряд же – внешнее оформление обычая. Отсюда следует, что традиция – понятие более широкое, чем обычай. Она включает в сферу своего влияния почти все стороны деятельности человека, в то время как диапазон обычая ограничен, охватывает более узкую сферу жизни – нравственные отношения.

Для определения культурных особенностей и ценностей исследуемого народа необходимо охарактеризовать его с точки зрения происхождения и географического аспекта. Азербайджанцы – тюркоязычный народ, составляющий основное население Азербайджана и значительную часть населения северо-западного Ирана; относятся к каспийскому типу европеоидной расы. Общая численность – свыше 30 миллионов человек [1].

Культурная политика Азербайджанской Республики является составной частью общей государственной политики. В результате агрессивной политики Армении были оккупированы Нагорный Карабах и прилегающие территории, более одного миллиона человек оказались в положении беженцев и вынужденных переселенцев. На оккупированных территориях, наряду с жилыми домами, промышленными и сельскохозяйственными объектами, остались сотни культурных учреждений, в том числе 927 библиотек, 808 дворцов, домов и клубов культуры, 85 музыкальных и художественных школ, 22 музея и музейных филиала, 4 картинные галереи, 13 памятников истории и культуры мирового, 242 – национального и 434 – местного значения и др. В этом списке числятся 6 архитектурных и 7 археологических памятников мирового значения, таких как 11-ти и 15-ти пролетные Худаферинские мосты (VII–XII вв.) в Джебраильском районе,