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THE ROLE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN TOURISM AND RECREATION

Key words: intercultural communication, tourism, recreation.

ABSTRACT

This paper considers the concepts of culture, tourism and communication issues and their mutual relationships. The authors claim that culture influences the norms and patterns of behavior of different societies, including the role and significance of culture in the process of creating communication styles. Particular attention was paid to the significance of the diversity of communication ways during the interaction of people from different cultural areas, especially while traveling, and the significance of communication process in tourism. The paper also deals with the question of awareness of the existence of different cultures and attitudes towards their otherness.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND THE NOTION OF CULTURE

In the past most people were born, lived and died in one specific geographical region, never meeting people from different cultures. Nowadays, however, one can hardly meet people who live their entire life without entering any interaction with people from a different culture. Even members of groups who until recently have lived in isolation, e.g. the Tasadays in the Philippines [14, p. 523], make now frequent contacts with representatives of other cultural groups. In 1972 Malcolm McLuhan called the world a "global village". We are living now in a historical era characterized by the abundance of international contacts between people from different cultures, and their ability to understand and communicate effectively is becoming extremely important. There are no more uncharte-red territories on the map of the world as it has been entirely 'explored' by tourists who have reached every corner of the globe. On their way tourists still encounter new cultures. Communicating with representatives of other cultures is nearly always made difficult by cultural differences, so to make the process easier and more efficient, studies into the process of communication have been broadened to include communication between cultures. In this way a new science, called by Edward T. Hall "intercultural communication", has been created. This notion is difficult to define due to the fact that it is dependent on other fields of science. It is an interdisciplinary field of science as it draws from cultural anthropology, psychology, sociology, social psychology, social communication and linguistics [12, p. 15].

One of its most popular definitions is that, "intercultural communication always takes place when a statement, which is to be understood, is

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created by a representative of one culture, whereas its receiver is a representative of another culture" [3, p. 24].

The United States boasts the longest tradition of research into intercultural communication. First studies in this area commenced in 1946, when the Congress passed the act establishing the Foreign Service Institute that was supposed to educate foreign diplomats in the field of language and cultural anthropology [11, p. 24]. One of the scientists working in the Institute was E.T. Hall, the originator of proxemics, a science studying the cultural conditioning of mechanisms of maintaining physical distance among people. Studies into intercultural communication show that during an act of communicating with representatives of other cultures one must pay attention to the fact that culture and communication are strongly interconnected. The condition of success in intercultural communication is possessing features making such relationship easier for the receiver and the sender. These features, among others, are the interlocutors' strong personality and communication skills (verbal and non-verbal), ability to adjust to new situations, and understanding acts and ways of thinking of people representing different cultures. Tolerance and acceptance of others are as important as self-esteem and self-acceptance.

TYPES AND THEORIES
OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Intercultural communication is defined as a process of communication with people representing different cultures by means of a verbal and non-verbal communication channel and with the use of different ways of transmission. The following types of intercultural communication are distinguished:

– *intercultural communication*, which is communication between representatives of different national or ethnic cultures (e.g. Pole – German, Pole – Spaniard). It takes place at the interpersonal level, either in a culturally alien area or in a situation when someone deals with representatives of different cultures in one's own cultural area. Nowadays, intercultural communication has an increasing reach, which is caused by such factors as migration, international tourism, free market and globalisation processes [5, p. 176].

– *cross-cultural communication*, which is communication between members of different groups within one national culture (e.g. citizens of Poznan – citizens of Warsaw). Within one national culture there are different communities and social groups which differ in customs, patterns of behaviour, historical experiences or hierarchy of values. The research into this type of communication deals with such differences, their origin, functioning, changes, and influence on integration or disintegration of the entire society. Cross-cultural communication, like intercultural communication, takes place at the interpersonal level.

– *international communication* is communication between representatives of different national cultures. It takes place between institutions of different cultures such as state governments, organizations and associations. International communication can take place between representatives of different civilisations, for example, between the representatives of the Mediterranean culture and the culture of the Far East, Europe and Africa, or between western and eastern cultures [4].

– *global communication* is an aspect of international communication and deals with statements transferred from one to another cultural circle. Researchers of this type of communication analyse the influence of foreign statements on the culture of a given country, on its ideology and economy.

– *intracultural communication* is communication of persons representing the same culture, but a part of their system of values differs from the values of the dominating culture. It concerns, first of all, the communication of representatives of different sexes, races, generations, or communication between able-bodied and disabled people.

There are also theories crucial for understanding the concept of intercultural communication; the most important of them include:

– *Uncertainty reduction theory* [5, p. 177] by Chowles Berger and Richard Calabrese.

The theory analyses the regularities of the initial stage of the interpersonal communication process. The beginning of the interaction is characterised by the feeling of uncertainty and fears concerning the ways of a partner's reaction and the exact course of the communication process with a 'stranger'. The participants in the interaction try to gather some

information about a (prospective) participant in communicational interaction, enabling them to predict his behaviour. There are also other methods – different in different cultures – reducing the uncertainty in the communication process, such as establishing closer private relationships, making closer contacts in the professional area, etc. Berger presented the results of his research in the form of two statements:

1. similarities between people reduce uncertainty; lack of similarity increases it;
2. seeking information is negatively correlated with similarity [5, p. 178].

– *Theory of building the third culture*

This theory says that every culture has a heterogenic character and its participants act and communicate with their environment in a different way. Efficient communication takes place when partners from different cultures, desiring some interaction, resign from some guidelines compulsory in their own culture by reducing the divergences, and at the same time, formulating common principles of effective communication. One of the examples includes communicational interactions based on the feelings of sympathy to or love of representatives of different cultures.

– W. Gudykunst's *intercultural adaptation theory*

A starting point for this theory is the uncertainty reduction theory describing the initial stages of intercultural communication processes. Gudykunst assumed that this theory, properly modified, could also find its application in the explanation of the processes of communicative interactions taking place between representatives of different cultures. According to Berger's theory, if at the beginning of the interaction people tend, first of all, to reduce uncertainty about their partner in communicative interaction, this behaviour takes place in intercultural interactions, where the level of uncertainty is much higher. Therefore the reduction of certainty is seen as playing a much greater role in the process. The result of Gudykunst's research was the theory of intercultural adaptation which concerns not only communication of interpersonal character, but also all the issues connected with the functioning of an individual in a foreign cultural environment [3, p. 33].

– *Theory of cultural orientation* by G. Kelly and E. Glenn

The assumption of this theory is the conviction that different cultures structuralise knowledge differently, and these differences, to a great extent, determine many aspects and ways of communication, for example, topics of conversations recognized as valuable, ways of organizing information during the communication process, or types of arguments used to support voiced opinions.

With reference to this theory, G. Borden introduced the so-called axioms of the cultural orientation theory, explaining failures in intercultural communication.

Axiom One refers to the principle that communication between people takes place only when both participants display the intention to communicate with each other. Thus, the condition for the communication process to take place is the relation of mutuality. As far as the sender is concerned, the intention is spending cognitive energy aimed to code information into a signal, while in the case of the receiver the intention is spending energy on decoding the statement [11, p. 26]. If the sender and the receiver both display communicative intentions, a cognitive process takes place in their minds and the meanings connected with it appear. In the case of intercultural communication aiming at reaching an agreement, the consensus shaped in the minds of communicating people must be strong. The importance of this is connected with the fact that everything we consider to be knowledge about some culture is based on our perception, not on communication, and that is why it can be deceptive. The basic form of the information buzz is the overlap of meanings formed in one culture with meanings attributed to the patterns of behaviour typical for the other culture.

Axiom Two concentrates on understanding the intercultural communication process, i.e. on the fact whether we understand the borders of the communication system established by the communicating people. Borden distinguishes three types of borders: personal, situational and cultural. Therefore, understanding the communication processes between representatives of different cultures depends on how the participants of these processes understand themselves and their own abilities to control the personal limitations of communication between people. It also depends on the ability to determine the circumstances of the situation in which the process takes place, and on the ability to

control situational limitations. Also the level of acquaintance with the norms of one's own culture, and the norms of the other culture, as well as the ability to control the cultural limitations of the people's communication system are very important [11, p. 27].

Axiom Three refers to the notion of cultural competence, i.e. understanding of cultural communication depending on how far we can read our own culture and the culture of the receiver of the statement. This, among others, means the ability to use the systems of signs, and especially the ability to conduct verbal discussions. Competence is our knowledge about the relations between our language and its references in the environment.

Axiom Four (axiom of value) shows that understanding international communication depends on the degree to which we understand the systems of values specific for our culture and for our interlocutor's culture, i.e. on understanding the beliefs concerning social equalities and inequalities, the feeling of uncertainty specific for a given culture, the importance attributed to an individual (as opposed to the importance attributed to the community), or on attitudes and beliefs connected with the social roles of man and woman.

Axiom Five is of cognitive character. It attributes the crucial role in understanding intercultural communication to the understanding of cognitive categories of a given culture. Glenn calls it a "cognitive style" [11, p. 27]. It depends on the understanding of the place of our own culture and our interlocutor's culture on the association/abstraction continuum. The associative style is based on spontaneous experiences taken from the environment; whereas and the abstractive style on more precise ways of gathering information ordered according to a previously defined hierarchy of meanings [1, p. 57].

THE NOTION OF CULTURE AS A BASIC COMPONENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

"A fish learns that it cannot live without water only when it is taken out of it" [1, p. 58]. Our own culture is for us what water is for fish. It keeps us alive, we breathe with it. It differentiates us: what is important in one culture can be meaningless in another.

According to Larry Samovar and Richard Porter, culture is the essence of our birth and life.

The first anthropological definition of culture was created in the 19th century by Sir Edward Taylor: "Culture, or civilization, is a complex entirety including knowledge, beliefs, morality, laws and customs of a given community" [12, p. 16]. According to Professor T. Bestor from the University of Harvard the above definition implies that culture:
– is not inborn but learnt;
– it comes from the biological, environmental, psychic and historical elements of human existence;
– is a common property of all people, it marks out the borders between particular social groups;
– is multiaspectual, its various aspects are interrelated: by moving one aspect we move all the others;
– it is dynamic;
– it is an element of an individual's adjustment to the surrounding environment, and of gaining the means of creative expression [2, pp. 41-42];
What is more, Geert Hofstede claims that "culture is like our nose":
– although we cannot see it precisely ourselves;
– all other people can notice it,
– and think it is strange if it is different from their own culture, and
– we always go where it leads us" [8, p. 57].

Social co-operation and conscious communication assume the existence of commonly accepted ways of reading information which people send to each other. It results in specific consequences in intercultural communication.

In the terminology of intercultural communication, culture is defined as a vague set of attitudes, beliefs, norms of behaviour and basic assumptions and values which are common for a defined group of people and which influence the individuals' behaviour and the interpretation of other people's patterns of behaviour. To understand the notion of culture, it is often presented in the form of layers, compared to the structure of onion, where one has to take out one layer to see the next one.

The outer layer of culture is created by those of its elements which are perceived as first during our first contact with a given culture. The manifestations of this layer include, for example, language, cuisine, public buildings and private houses, monuments, crops, temples, open-air markets, clothing or the arts. Visible symptoms of culture reflect its deeper layers – norms and values. The norms designate the ideals (rules) of proper

behaviour in given situations and in relation to other individuals. The notion of cultural norm assumes that a given group has reached the basic consensus about the accepted standards of behaviour, and that the other members of the community judge the individual's patterns of behaviour according to the degree of their compliance or non-compliance with the accepted standards [8, p. 50]. A norm is an understanding common for a group, of what is good and what is evil. The norms may develop at a formal level as a written law, as well as at an informal level in the form of social control. An example of violation of cultural norms may be eating with your left hand when you are in Saudi Arabia – as this hand is used for some hygienic activities and it is considered "dirty". Another example can be found in Thai culture. The Thais worship their king so much that they hardly speak about him, and Thai culture bans touching the monarch. Suppose we dropped a Thai coin which is rolling on a busy road. The reaction of a European or an American, which is stepping on it to stop it, would be shocking and forbidden for the Thai people, as the coin displays an image of the Thai ruler. Stepping on the coin would be equal to its desecration.

On the other hand, values determining the definition of good and evil are connected with the ideals common for a given group. For example, the United States is for many a symbol of democracy and freedom, where the latter is a superior value. However, even freedom, depending on a culture, may be interpreted in a different way. "An old Vietnamese woman said that she couldn't accept the lack of freedom in the United States. In Vietnam she was able to sell vegetables from her small stand on the pavement, not being bothered by the police or municipal police, and she did not need a permission to mend the roof of her house. If she wanted to vote for the communist party candidate, she was allowed to do so. In her opinion, in the United States where her children live, people are expected to say what they think. In Vietnam she was allowed to be silent. The way in which she perceived freedom influenced her behaviour – she refused to immigrate to the States and to live together with her children" [13, p. 84]. Culture is stable when the norms reflect the values of the group.

The most interior layer, the core of culture, consists of the ways of coping with adversities. They are strictly connected with the character of the natural environment in which a given group lives.

For example, the Dutch struggle with the sea, the Swiss with mountains and avalanches, the inhabitants of Central and South America with droughts, and Siberian peoples with severe cold. Those people are organised in such a way as to be able to cope with the natural environment by means of natural methods. The noun "culture" has the same root as the verb to "cultivate", which means to prepare and utilize land for growing crops [16, p. 39]. Therefore, culture is the way in which people influence nature, in which people have organised themselves for many years to deal with daily problems and meet various challenges. In this meaning, culture undergoes changes when people realise that some old working methods cease to be effective.

We can distinguish three segments of culture:
– *normative culture* consisting of descriptions of proper and improper activities, or activities prohibited according to norms and values accepted in a given culture. Duties and prohibitions included in this segment form a normative pattern.
– *ideal culture* (symbolic) consisting of accepted beliefs, views, ideas, standards and symbols. They determine the proper ways of thinking, define meanings and establish the obligatory meaning of events or occurrences.
– *material culture* consists of objects we possess and use in our community: furniture, houses, bridges, machines, cars, but also arable fields, orchards, regulated rivers, etc [15, p. 352].

BARRIERS DISTURBING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

One of the main factors determining the effectiveness of communication is the awareness of existence of many cultures and the ability to understand these cultures. But the most powerful barriers in effective communication are cultural differences. However, as Gudykunst and Kim claim, we cannot take it for granted that these differences are the only obstacle to reaching an agreement, because they can be explored, learnt and understood by way of achieving the maximum of cultural competence, and, as a consequence, eliminating the negative influence of the unawareness of those differences on the communication process. This barrier, however significant, can be crossed. The multitude of cultures results in the fact that sometimes, despite our efforts, it is difficult to

understand the differences between them. Consequently, the unawareness of values, beliefs and norms dominating in a given culture stirs up the feeling of uncertainty and fear in the interaction with strangers. It is caused by the difficulty in predicting the reaction and behaviour of our interlocutor. This is another barrier which makes intercultural contacts difficult.

There are also other obstacles, depending on our attitudes towards the diversity of cultures, and due to that, difficult to eliminate. They may be extreme: from total acceptance to negative attitude or even hatred, which limits the ability to understand those cultures.

The most significant factors disturbing, and sometimes even making the intercultural communication impossible, include ethnocentricity, prejudices and stereotypes [13, p. 222].

The notion of ethnocentricity comes from two Greek words *ethos* – people, nation and *ketron* – centre, and means the degree to which an individual estimates a given culture as worse than his own culture [13, p. 50]. This notion can be divided into two parts: the conviction about the superiority of our culture, and the conviction of the consequence of the first one; namely, that other cultures are worse.

The sources of divisions and ethnic prejudices in today's Europe are often traced back to the dynamic development of archeology at the turn of the 19th century. Archeology became then a tool for emphasising the differences between one's own group and neighbouring groups, which stimulated the imagination towards elevating one's own group identity. Such exploitation of the archeological knowledge was in favour of creating and strengthening national stereotypes and prejudices against otherness [9, p. 41]. The result was, in many cases, creation of strong xenophobic attitudes, aggressive towards any distinctiveness.

Characteristic features of ethnocentric attitudes include hostile treatment of strange groups, considering them morally dangerous, weak and not valuable; identification with one's own group only and not with humanity as such, conviction that human nature contains an element of evil, conviction that struggle for power is inevitable and relations within a group should be hierarchic [9, p. 40].

Ethnocentricity is not merely an intellectual issue. Symbols connected with one's own ethnicity, religion or nation are the object of one's pride; whereas symbols of some other group, e.g. national flags become the objects of contempt and hatred. What is more, many national languages contain a certain amount of ethnocentricity, for example, in the majority of languages the word "foreigner" has a pejorative undertone, implicating somebody unwanted. For the Hindu people the word "foreigner" (*ferengi*) is offensive. The Chinese call their country "Middle Country" or "Middle Kingdom", which shows that they treat themselves as the inhabitants of the centre of the world. On the other hand, the inhabitants of the United States call themselves "Americans", forgetting that the other inhabitants of North America (Canadians), Central America and South America are also Americans.

Nobody is born with ethnocentricity; we have to learn it. Each of us learns it, at least, to some degree. The tendency to evaluate cultures according to our standards is somehow natural, and the problem arises not from the pride of belonging to one or another cultural group, or even putting it on a pedestal, but from making wrong conclusions that everything and everybody which is culturally distinct is worse. The ethnocentric attitude creates a serious obstacle in intercultural communication because it prevents us from understanding other cultures.

Overcoming the ethnocentric attitude is not only the question of the increased amount of information, but it should rather depend on the emotional change. One of the ways enabling us to get rid of this attitude is to develop more often contacts with culturally distinct people [13, p. 223]. Lots of people obtain information on different national cultures, or even travel to foreign countries, being convinced that the closer contact will help them get to know other cultures. However, according to Steinfatt and Rogers, the nature of such travels is a significant factor determining whether such a travel will increase or decrease our ethnocentricity towards the visited cultural group. As the results of their research show, short tourist trips have no impact on the decline in the ethnocentric attitudes of tourists. Tourists visiting a culturally foreign country for a short period of time and not knowing its language, become even more ethnocentric [13]. Only the language competence, long-lasting contact with a given culture and intensive relations with representatives of this culture, for example, by making friends, can lead to full understanding, acceptance, and crossing the borders of ethnocentricity. Another important aspect is that only positive contacts evoke positive attitudes towards a given culture.

However, a tourist often assumes that he or she is an individual coming from a better world, because he or she can afford to come to a given country and guarantee himself an appropriate standard during his or her stay. Thus one expects that he or she will be treated as someone special. The tourist treats contacts with the native people in the sense of being attended to rather than as an opportunity to get to know and study the culture in which he or she is temporarily staying. The feeling of superiority and behaviuor according to the rule "our client is our master" threatens the natives' self-esteem and humiliates them, which does not help in establishing friendly relationships between the tourists and the natives. In this way the spiral of mutual aversion and growing ethnocentricity winds up spontaneously.

Also prejudices, i.e. negative attitudes towards a distinctive group, based on generalizations made on the basis of false or incomplete information, influence the nature of intercultural interactions. A person prejudiced against, for example, somebody of a different skin colour, will be prone, on the basis of fragmentary information and heard opinions, to attribute some specific features to all the representatives of a given community or a national group. Such attitudes are shaped already in early childhood and that is why it is so difficult to change or eradicate them. "Emotions connected with prejudices are shaped already during childhood, whereas the beliefs which justify them appear later" [10, p. 24]. These beliefs are passed on an individual by the family and the community, being simultaneously an important factor integrating the society, enable us to perceive ourselves as its element different from "others" and "strangers". Individuals, who are prejudiced in any way, think in the categories of a stereotype.

The first to use in 1922 the term "stereotype" was American writer, sociologist and opinion maker Walter Lippmann. According to him, the role of a stereotype is to allow people to order the reality without the necessity of personal experiencing and valuating it [13, p. 21]. The object of the stereotype consists of groups of people and social relations between them; and moreover, it is always connected with emotional assessment.

Cultural stereotypes have accompanied mankind for a very long time. Aristotle thought that people living in a warm climate were intelligent but not very courageous, whereas the inhabitants of cold regions are brave but stupid. European natio-

nal stereotypes are equally old. In 1868 Englishman John Guy wrote a work entitled *Geography* in which he said that, "The Frenchmen are cheerful, lively, nice and gentle people, but they are characterised by unimaginable vanity. The Italians are discreet and kind, but very effeminate. The Spanish are considered to be courageous and proud, with a great sense of humour, but they are also passive and vindictive. The English nation does not have competitors: intelligence, diligence and enterprise of its representatives raised the country to the heights inaccessible for other powers" [13, p. 23].

The shape and strength of stereotypes are conditioned culturally: "they are determined by an individual's membership in a defined social group, and especially by the tradition and culture of this group" [13, p. 22]. Its functioning is possible due to the fact that an individual lives in a group and takes over all its views. In some cases a stereotype is treated as a specific cultural norm, the acceptance of which enables, on the one hand, identification with the group, and on the other hand, is a condition for an individual to become accepted by the group. In this sense, a stereotype becomes an element of a cultural heritage which an individual takes over from the society. This generalization makes the ways of perceiving the world similar; it imposes categorization and enforces placing new information in the context of the data already possessed [13, p. 24]. The functioning of deeply rooted stereotypes, especially ethnic ones, is the reason for many conflicts, antipathy and xenophobia, but, what is most important, it also makes it difficult to break the barriers of dislike and ethnocentricity towards different cultures. P. Boski sees in stereotypes, especially in adjectives, "the observer's ethnocentricity who, not understanding the cultural values of the outer group, evaluates the members of the group from the point of view of their drifting away from the distinctive values of his own group, silently accepted as obvious" [13, p. 24].

Stereotypes are the "epidermis" of a national character, which is the result of the defined set of factors influencing the nation such as geographic conditions, culture, cuisine, family and legal relationships, the language and fashion. In general, we are aware of these national features, although we do not necessarily fully understand them, and we do not know their sources. This knowledge is most often expressed in two ways: by telling traditional jokes on ethnic subjects, and by journalistic texts

mainly seeking justification for stereotypes [7, pp. 18-19].

National stereotypes possess some distinctive features. They are elements of the wholeness linked with the views of the entire society, passed from generation to generation with only very subtle alterations. The occurrence of new stereotypes is rather rare, more often individuals accept the ones which are already obligatory and which may be interpreted differently depending on the circumstances. What is more, stereotypes are a "self-fulfilling prophecy", because accepting a given cultural or national stereotype, we automatically search for the features proving it and we do not notice the ones contradicting it. We perceive the Asian people as excellent computer technicians, a German car as a guarantee of high quality, comfort and reliability, and the French people as attributed with culinary skills, gallantry and excellent taste.

During the first contact with the representative of some other culture about which we have stereotypical knowledge, we react in the way determined by that stereotype, moreover, we will not be willing to know the person closer. On the other hand, if for some reasons we get to know this person better, we will probably find out that the stereotype does not match him or her. Finally, we will come to the conclusion that actually the cultural group which a given stereotype concerns does not possess the features indicated by it.

Specialists in intercultural communication claim that the "struggle" with stereotypes should be taken up individually, i.e. it is *us* who decide whether we consider the stereotype obligatory or whether we will verify it. People who care about intercultural contacts should avoid classifying others on the basis of stereotypes. People of high cultural competence use stereotypes as tools of limited function: when we get to know foreign cultures, we verify our knowledge, and due to that fact our assessment is more accurate and closer to reality. One of the "means" allowing questioning stereotypes is cultural relativism [13].

CULTURAL RELATIVISM AS AN ATTITUDE MAKING CONTACTS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF DIFFERENT CULTURES EASIER

More frequent intercultural contacts in the modern world require tolerance towards broadly understood different character and strangeness from people entering interactions. We are required to perceive the multitude and variety of cultures, and to understand that the ways of acting and thinking in different societies can be understood only with reference to their own very specific cultural context consisting of their own symbols, meanings or values. Such an attitude is called cultural relativism. As an anthropological doctrine, relativism stipulates that, "each cultural phenomenon should be understood and assessed from the point of view of culture a part of which it constitutes. Instead of considering a particular element of culture an odd one, a follower of cultural relativism will analyse it in the holistic aspect of a given culture [13]. For example, to many tourists visiting India, worshipping cows seems to be strange and irrational, especially when they see cows walk in the streets and roads making traffic difficult and even posing a danger to it, not to mention that hunger and poverty are visible everywhere. For a European raised in a culture of quite different values, e.g. eating steaks and hamburgers every day, the attitude of the Hindu people seems to be illogical. But in the light of broader information about the Hindu culture, it becomes sensible: Hinduism considers a cow to be a past or future incarnation of a man. Besides, cow milk provides many proteins necessary for vegetarians.

Cultural relativism means that we understand culture "from the inside" and perceive the patterns of behaviour of its representatives from their point of view; moreover, we respect the differences between that culture and our own. The awareness of these differences is equivalent to the awareness of the state of our own minds and those of people we meet. The true awareness of our *ego* is accepting the fact that as representatives of a given culture, we follow its "mental cultural programme", and that members of other cultures have different programmes. The first step on the way to build the attitude of respect towards cultural differences is looking for situations in our own life, when we would behave identically towards a person from some other culture. Referring to the events from our own life can help us to understand that patterns of behavious which, at first sight, seem to be different, differ only by the situation in which they are observed, but their function is the same. This will help us to refrain from hasty negative assessment of other people's behaviour and, what is most important, it will enable us to understand what another person is actually trying to communicate. Understanding other people's intentions and

signalling that we understand them, is the first step on the way to reaching agreement. The easiest way to start showing respect to others is to realise that most cultural differences are inside us, even if we have never been aware of them before. Both, the knowledge of culture and the respect shown towards it, are necessary conditions for achieving friendly relationships between cultures. Once we understand the model of our mentality and cultural predispositions, and accept the fact that other cultures have the right to differ from ours, it becomes possible to reconcile the cultural differences.

THE ROLE AND MEANING
OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
IN TOURISM

The 20th century witnessed a multitude of scientific discoveries as well as civilisational and technological developments, which have significantly made human existence easier and simpler. The use of inventions in everyday life resulted in a greater amount of free time and disposable income. The improvement of the means of transport, making travel faster and more comfortable, additionally encouraged people to visit close and distant corners of the world. Tourism has ceased to be a domain of the wealthy and the world has become open for nearly everybody.

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) defines tourism as "all activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited." The notion of tourism has been modified many times, mainly due to the changes which have taken place in the nature and structure of tourism. Nowadays tourism constitutes an element of modern culture and that is why it is considered not only in the economic aspect, but also social and cultural [6, pp. 22-23].

According to definitions formulated on the grounds of humanistic sciences, tourism is treated as a social process, considered in the psychological and cultural dimension. It is perceived as an expression of human activity connected with a change of the social, natural or cultural environment; change in the rhythm of everyday life, and also referring to the contacts with natural and cultural values of the visited places.

Tourism is an area in which communication with representatives of different cultures takes place nearly constantly, often in the form of challenges requiring knowledge and effort. In the communication process and in tourism there are elements which determine the correlation between these two areas.

Culture is an important link between communication and tourism, which makes them very closely related disciplines. We travel because we are fascinated by what is foreign and exotic; we are driven by the desire to see and learn everything that is different form our everyday life. The "otherness" is created by the inhabitants of a given country: by the way they dress, live, speak, behave, and by things believe in. A given culture equally strongly shapes communicative patterns of behaviour by showing its plentiful and different manifestations, for example, the diverse architecture of visited countries. The communication process, almost "mechanical" among fellow countrymen, becomes complicated during contacts with the "foreigners". There is a different language, mentality, and expressiveness of the body language. An encounter with the otherness arouses anxiety and uncertainty in us, because not knowing what this otherness depends on, and where it comes from, it is difficult for us to predict the behaviour and reactions of a "stranger."

As E.T. Hall said: "the more culturally different is the environment in which a tourist communicates, the more difficult the communication process is" [4, p. 28]. That is why anybody who engages in a conversation with a representative of a different culture must take into consideration many factors influencing it, but, first of all, the customs and culture of a given country, because the cultural differences are the most difficult obstacle in effective communication. The key to overcome this is the knowledge of intercultural communication. It is useful not only for tourists, but for anyone entering interactions with the representatives of different cultures, for example, employees of international hotel chains, airlines, residents, tour guides, or participants in business tourism. This knowledge allows us to decrease the level of uncertainty and anxiety during the conversation as well as to enhance confidence in contacts with foreigners. It is necessary to make unlimited contacts with everybody, regardless of his or her country of origin and to understand customs and standards of behaviour obligatory in other countries. Only then will it provide us with a guarantee that we avoid faux pas and mistakes.

Table 1. Elements common for the communication process and tourism. Source: self-study

COMMUNICATION	TOURISM	COMMENTS
Communication is a social process and always takes place in a social context; intracultural and intercultural.	Tourism depends on the change of social environment, getting to know other environments, entering interactions with new surroundings.	Each interaction implies the process of communication. In tourism it is inevitable because of a high frequency of making contacts and entering interactions which usually take place on an interpersonal level.
Communication serves the purpose of getting to know the world, and acquiring the knowledge about it; helps to build interactions and group relations being the existential foundation of each society.	One of the main reasons for a tourist trip is the desire to know the world, people and different cultures, to compare one's own culture with a foreign one.	Going abroad is particularly conducive to making contacts with people from different cultural circles. The cognitive nature of such trips is the greater and closer is contact with the culture and inhabitants of the visited country.
Communication uses symbols and signs and depends on the exchange and reading of symbols in the context of the culture known to us.	A tourist visiting a given country first notices the material products of its culture, being a reflection and materialisation of the accepted beliefs, views, ideas and standard symbols.	Each culture has shaped its own system of symbols and meanings, usually comprehensible only to its representatives. Tourism understood as a meeting of representatives of different cultures creates a chance to know and understand other people and their cultures by way of exchanging information, beliefs and views in the content of the culture's announcements.
In order to reach full agreement between the participants in the interaction, a semiotic community is necessary, i.e. using the same signs, symbols and meanings. Total communication between the representatives of different cultures is nearly impossible, so the awareness of the existence of differences between cultures, their acceptance and the attempt to understand them is very important.	Tourists are most often people from outside the cultural circle of a visited country, using a different repertoire of symbols and signs than the natives. The divergence is not, however, a sufficient criterion for assessment of a given culture as better or worse.	Symbols and signs define the ways of thinking specific to a given culture; they define meanings and establish the sense of events and phenomena. The lack of knowledge about symbols, signs and meanings constituting the culture of the visited country contributes to difficulties in communication and to incorrect interpretation of the announcements, leading very often to the lack of agreement, discomfort of interlocutors, and being the grounds for the negative assessment of other cultures.

However significant are the knowledge and ability to make and maintain contacts, in the face of the multitude of cultures they are sometimes insufficient. As it is not possible to gain full knowledge about culture, customs and traditions of the majority of the countries, it is important to be aware of the existence of differences between cultures and to show the attitude respecting the otherness. Equally important is the awareness of the role and significance of communication processes in the context of tourism as a mass phenomenon.

It can be stated that it is not necessary to be a tourist to be able to communicate; however, being a tourist one should possess the ability to communicate with others.

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