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## **‘Sense of privacy’ and ‘sense of elbow’: English vs Russian values and communicative styles**

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### **1. Introduction**

As Anna Wierzbicka repeatedly pointed out, in different societies people not only speak different languages, they use them in different ways (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1997; Wierzbicka 2003). These differences have the potential to cause many problems in mutual comprehension, and create breaks and even conflicts in intercultural communication. To understand and explain these, it is necessary to explore the links between particular ways of speaking and culture.

There are hundreds of possible definitions of culture. Hofstede suggests a metaphorical one, defining it as ‘the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others’ (Hofstede et al. 2010: 6). Every person carries within him/herself patterns of thinking, feeling and acting that are acquired through socialisation. These patterns are encoded in language, which is the most concrete constituent of culture, and made manifest in communication.

To see the logic of culture-specific modes of linguistic interaction and the systematic interconnectedness of language, culture, cognition and communication, it is important to look deeper at semantics, which contains rich information about culture and its values. Vocabulary is a very sensitive index of a culture. As Sapir stated, ‘no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same reality’ (Sapir 1929: 214). Goddard and Wierzbicka (1995) note that ‘there are enormous differences in the semantic structuring of different languages and these linguistic differences greatly influence how people think’ (1995: 37). They call culture-specific words ‘conceptual tools which reflect a society’s past experience of doing, and thinking about things in certain ways; and they help to perpetuate these ways’ (ibid.: 58).

To identify, and account for, differences in cultural logic that are encoded in language, the study of words denoting social categories and types of relationships in a society is particularly important, as through them one can understand how people interact (e.g. Ye 2004, 2013; Gladkova 2013). In this chapter, the focus is on the notions of distance and closeness in Russian and English languages and cultures, and their manifestations in language and communication.

Accepting the fact that neither culture nor language represent a completely homogeneous structure, I believe that in comparative studies it is legitimate, indeed unavoidable, to speak of certain generalised characteristics of a culture, and identify dominant features of the communicative style of its representatives. Following Wierzbicka (2006a), for the English language and culture the term *Anglo* is used, which comprises the main varieties of English, though the data refer mostly to British English and British culture.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how knowledge of cultural values, key words and cultural scripts methodology developed by Goddard and Wierzbicka (Goddard 2006; Goddard and Wierzbicka 1995, 1997, 2004; Wierzbicka 1992, 1996, 1997, 2002, 2003, 2006a, 2006b; see Gladkova and Larina 2018 for a recent discussion of the approach) enables us to observe the systematic interconnectedness of language, culture, cognition and communication, and see the logic of culture-specific modes of linguistic interaction. The focus is limited to *Anglo* values of distance and privacy (Paxman 1999; Fox 2003; Wierzbicka 2006a, 2006b) and Russian values of closeness and solidarity (Larina, Mustajoki et al. 2017; Wierzbicka 1997, 2002, among many others). The chapter gives a brief

overview of manifestations of these values at different linguistic levels, and illustrates their impact on communicative styles. For data collection, both primary and secondary sources were used. The primary data were obtained through observations, questionnaires, interviews and the parallel corpora of the Russian National Corpus (RNC).<sup>1</sup>

Summing up the results of the previous comparative studies of British and Russian politeness and communicative styles (Larina 2009, 2013, 2015), as well as observations of other scholars (Wierzbicka 1997, 1999, 2002, 2006a, 2006b; Paxman 1999; Shmelev 2002; Fox 2003; Belyaeva-Standen 2004; Gladkova 2007, 2010a, 2010b, 2013; Visson 2013; Zalizniak et al. 2012; Zalizniak 2013 among others), the chapter attempts to show that the idea of closeness/unity/association is encoded in the Russian language at different levels, and forms the 'we-identity' of its speakers, while the English language, in contrast to Russian, emphasises the idea of individuality and contributes to shaping 'I-identity' (Larina and Ozyumenko 2016; Larina, Ozyumenko et al. 2017). These preferences in individual- vs group-orientation are observed in communication: they define an understanding of (im)politeness, explain a lot of features of the modes of interaction and shape communicative ethnostyles (Larina 2009, 2015).

## 2. Distance vs closeness in Russian and English languages

In different cultures, the notions of 'distance' and 'closeness' vary. As Wierzbicka notes, 'in Anglo-Saxon culture distance is a positive cultural value, associated with respect for autonomy of the individual. By contrast, in Polish it is associated with hostility and alienation' (Wierzbicka 1985: 156). The same could be said about Russian culture, where distance is often perceived as indifference. The value of distance in Anglo cultures, and the value of closeness in Russian culture, can be observed in English and Russian languages at all levels.

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1 The Russian National Corpus is available at: [www.ruscorpora.ru/en/](http://www.ruscorpora.ru/en/).

## 2.1. Lexicophraseological level

At the lexical level, the English word *privacy* is a vivid example. Privacy is a quintessentially English notion that Paxman (1999) calls ‘one of the defining characteristics of the English, one of the country’s informing principles’ (1999: 117–18). A truly comparable word for ‘privacy’ doesn’t exist in other European languages such as French, Italian or Polish (Paxman 1999: 118; Wierzbicka 2003: 47), nor does Russian have one. Nowadays, young people have started using the expression *lichnoye prostranstvo* (‘personal space’). However, what the size of this space is, who can enter it and who cannot, differ a lot in Russian and Anglo cultures.

In the Russian language and culture, where proximity, solidarity and interdependence are traditionally valued, *privacy* is a lexical and ideological lacuna that creates difficulties in translation. Depending on the context it can be translated in different ways. The adjective *private*, in many contexts, also lacks absolute equivalents. Even when there might appear to be a similar word in Russian, the words can differ in connotative meaning. Consider, for example, the phrase *private person*. While in English, this is a neutral expression that denotes a person who ‘likes being alone, and does not talk much about his thoughts or feelings although he spends a lot of time in the public eye’ (as per *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*), its Russian translation equivalents—*zamknutyi*, *zakrytyi*, *skrytnyy*, *nelyudimyy*, *neobshchitel’nyy*—carry a negative connotation, which indicates that Russians prefer openness, company, interaction and contact.

The notice *Private (No admittance)* on doors is translated into Russian as *Postoronnim vkhod vospreschion* (according to the *New English–Russian Dictionary*) ‘Strangers are forbidden to enter’.<sup>2</sup> As a cultural concept, *Privacy* can be viewed as *lichnoye prostranstvo* ‘personal space’—a personal zone where nobody is allowed to intrude, but in other contexts *privacy* and *private* are translated into Russian descriptively. The fact that there is no equivalent for *privacy* in Russian and other languages is significant. As Triandis (1994) claimed:

For important values all cultures have one word. When you see that many words are needed to express an idea in one language while only one word is used in another, you can bet that the idea is indigenous to the one-word culture. (Triandis 1994: 6)

2 Nowadays it has been gradually replaced by *Tol’ko dlia personala* ‘Staff only’.

Wierzbicka, who in many of her works calls privacy the most important feature of modern Anglo society (Wierzbicka 2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c), emphasises that, in modern usage, *privacy* is not 'a descriptive but an ideological term' (2006c: 26). Indeed, it is symptomatic of an ideology, a world view, a way of life or type of relationship; it establishes norms and rules of behaviour, shows how people relate to each other and how they interact.

A memorable example, which shows that communication between members of Anglo culture is based on the observance of distance and demonstration of respect to privacy, is the expression 'sense of privacy':

- (1) *He was conscious of her in every respect, yet she was not an intrusion on him or his inbred **sense of privacy**, and there was no awkwardness between them.* (B. Bradford)<sup>3</sup>

Russians would normally struggle to understand what *sense of privacy* might be. It is difficult to translate it into Russian, and that is not surprising as instead of *sense of privacy*, Russians have a *sense of elbow*, which means that there is always someone by your side eager to support.<sup>4</sup> Examples (2–3) illustrate its importance in Russian culture:

- (2) ... *postoyannoye **chuvstvo loktya**—blizost' vernogo tovarishcha, krepkiy družhnyy kollektiv.*  
... *a constant **sense of elbow**—the closeness of a faithful companion, a strong friendly team.* (RNC)
- (3) ... *yey nuzhno **chuvstvo loktya**, oshchushcheniye, chto ona ne odinoka, chto ryadom yest' podderzhka i pomoshch', togda ona gory svernet i nichego boyat'sya ne budet*  
... *she needs **a sense of elbow**, the feeling that she is not alone, that there is support and help next, then she will turn mountains and nothing she will not be afraid of.* (RNC)

These two opposite senses—*sense of privacy* and *sense of elbow*—manifest differences in the distance characteristic of the cultures in question, different types of social relations and modes of interaction.

3 It is worth noting that example (1), taken from the novel by B. Bradford *To Be the Best*, describes the relations between husband and wife.

4 In English 'a sense of elbow' has a different connotation. It would refer to using one's elbows to create a space around oneself.

These expressions testify to the importance of observing distance in Anglo culture and the admissibility, even the desirability of closeness and contact in Russian culture (see section 3, below).

The idea of closeness and community in Russian can be observed in the semantics of the words *obscheniye* ‘communication’, *iskrennost’* ‘sincerity’, *sochuvstviye* ‘sympathy’, *sostradaniye* ‘compassion’, *dusha* ‘soul’, *gosti* ‘guests’ and *zastolye* and their derivatives that do not have absolute equivalents in English (Wierzbicka 1992, 2002; Shmelev 2002; Gladkova 2010a, 2010b; Zalizniak et al. 2012; Zalizniak 2013).

Gladkova (2007) gives some interesting examples, pointing out:

Russian seems to be able to conceptualise the idea of common activity much more readily than English. One needs just one word to say how many people are doing something together as a whole. (2007: 142)

Hence, it is possible to do something *vdvoem* ‘two people together’, *vtroem* ‘three people together’, etc. On the other hand, the typical Russian expression *delat’ chto-to za kompaniyu* (lit. ‘to do something for the sake of the company’) can be perceived by the English-speaking world as a lack of initiative and overdependence (cf. Gladkova 2007: 142).

It is interesting to note that different types of relations between friends and different expectations in Russian and Anglo cultures can be explained through the semantics of the words *friend* and *drug* and their derivatives (see e.g. Wierzbicka 1992; Richmond 2009; Zalizniak et al. 2012; Gladkova 2013; Visson 2013; Ponton 2014; Ozyumenko and Larina 2018). Evidence supports Wierzbicka’s semantic model for the explication of *drug* ‘friend’ in the Russian language (1999: 350), which shows that *druzya* (friends) are people who know each other very well, spend (or want to spend) a lot of time together, talk a lot with each other, can say anything to each other, share their thoughts and feelings, trust and help each other if needed. In English only the phrases ‘true friend’ or ‘best friend’ carry these connotations.

Numerous proverbs also testify to differences in the conceptualisation of friendship in Russian and Anglo cultures and different levels of closeness between friends (e.g. Ozyumenko and Larina 2018).

## 2.2. Morphosyntactic level

The morphosyntactic level also provides numerous instances of how language can either 'associate' or 'dissociate' people. For reasons of space, these must be limited to a few examples.

The prefix *so-* (*co-*) serves for the formation of nouns and verbs, denoting a common or joint participation in something. Not many of them have English equivalents: *sozhitel'* 'room-mate', *souchastvovat'* 'participate', *sochuvstvovat'* 'sympathise', *sostradaniye* 'compassion', *sozhalet'* 'feel sorrow'. The prefix *obshche* is another example. It carries the general meaning of association and collectivity: *obshcheizvestniy fakt* 'a well-known fact', *obshcheprinyatyie normy* 'generally accepted norms' (for more details see Larina 2009: 84–85; Larina, Ozyumenko et al. 2017: 116).

The pronoun *everybody* is an example showing that the English language, in contrast to Russian, tends to emphasise individuality. In English it is singular, while in Russian *everybody* has two equivalents: *kazhdiy* (singular), while most often it is *vse*, which is plural and corresponds to the English pronoun *all*:

- (4) *Everybody is here* –  
*Vse zdes'* (lit.: All are here)
- (5) *Hello everybody*  
*Vsem privet* (lit.: Hello to all)

There is a number of set phrases commonly used in daily interaction that demonstrate the preference for the use of *we* in Russian phrases and *I* in their English equivalents, although this is not exclusively the case (see Larina, Ozyumenko et al. 2017).

Some examples:

- (6) *My znakomy?* ('Are **we** acquainted?')  
*Do I know you?* (personal observation)
- (7) *Uvidimsia* ('**We** will see each other')  
*(I shall) See you.* (personal observation)
- (8) *My s drugom khodili vchera v teatr*  
 (lit.: '**We** with a friend went to the theatre yesterday')

As one can see in (6–8), the Russian ‘I’ and the other (you or s/he) can be transformed into ‘we’, while the English language emphasises a person’s individuality, and the ‘I’ and ‘you’ or s/he do not turn into ‘we’.

The same idea of unification can be seen in the expression *u nas* (preposition *u* + pronoun *we* in Genitive case):

- (9) *My brother and I have similar tastes.*

*U nas s bratom pokhozhiye vkusy.* (RNC)

It has also the meaning of place (lit. ‘at us’), and lacks a literal equivalent in English. Depending on the context, it can mean ‘in our family/flat/school/university/workplace/city/country’ and even ‘on our planet’. The analysis of the Parallel Corpus shows that *u nas* ‘at us’ correlates with English *here/in this place/in this country*:

- (10) *Do you think you’ll like it here?*

*Vy uvereniy, chto vam ponravitsya u nas?*

- (11) *It was long ago, very long ago, but the tale is still remembered, and not only in this place.*

*Eto bylo davno, ochen’ davno, no istoriyu etu pomnyat, i ne tol’ko u nas.*

Referring to what is happening in Russia, the Russians would say *u nas* ‘at our place’ or *v nashey strane* ‘in our country’ associating themselves with it. In English, in a similar situation, the expression *in this country* would be used, which construes some distance. Recently, some Russian politicians and public figures have also started using *in this country*, referring to Russia. However, this is not just a borrowing from the English language, but an ideological expression marking those who oppose themselves to their country. Wierzbicka observed an identical peculiarity in the Polish language, saying that the Polish expression *ten kraj* ‘this country’ used with reference to one’s own country ‘would mark the speaker as a psychological émigré’ (Wierzbicka 2003: 49).

The examples given in this section, among many others (e.g. Larina and Ozyumenko 2016; Larina, Ozyumenko et al. 2017), show that manifestations of the values of closeness in Russian and distance in English can be observed at different linguistic levels.

### 3. Distance and closeness in communication

To shift the focus to communication I shall now provide some illustrations of how the values, discussed above, impact modes of interaction and shape communicative ethno-styles. Before we consider the manifestation of distance and closeness in communication, it is worth noting that there is a clear relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication; cultural values, as has been said, manifest themselves in a variety of ways. Richmond (2009), among others, observes that closeness and physical contact with other people are much more common in Russia than in the West. Russians stand very close when conversing, 'they do not hesitate to make physical contact—touching another person and invading another person's space' (Richmond 2009: 118). As argued by Brosnahan (1998), Russians are closer in all of the four parameters of distance suggested by Hall (1959)—intimate, personal, casual and public. Too much contact or proximity, typical of Russian culture, is viewed by Americans as intruding on a person's privacy or even as a threat (Visson 2013).

Given the insignificant spatial distance maintained by Russians, the absence of a zone of personal autonomy—privacy (or its minimal, in comparison with the English counterpart)—largely determines the Russian style of verbal communication. In many contexts, Russians put pressure on their interlocutor, give advice even when this is not asked for, defend their opinions, argue, ask private questions, feel free to interrupt, interfere with the conversation, and so on (cf. Larina 2009, 2013; Visson 2013). In other words, they demonstrate a significant degree of closeness in verbal contact. In many contexts, such behaviour is completely permissible and is considered not as a violation of the rules of politeness, but rather as demonstration of involvement and interest. In Anglo culture, the most influential social and communicative rules are those concerned with the maintenance of distance—that is, privacy. The value of privacy encourages people to follow strict norms to protect their right to autonomy, and demonstrate respect for the independence and personal space of every individual.

The norms involved in these processes have been described in terms of maxims (Leech 1983) and politeness strategies with the claim of their universality (Brown and Levinson 1987). Wierzbicka and Goddard propose a new methodology—cultural scripts—for articulating cultural

norms, values and practices. They do so in terms which are 'clear, precise, and accessible to cultural insiders and to cultural outsiders alike' (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004: 153). The scripts are formulated in simple language and, as my teaching experience confirms, are extremely useful in cross-cultural education and intercultural communication.

Here I will confine discussion to the script that refers to privacy and personal autonomy in English, and demonstrate its importance in explaining English vs Russian communicative differences.

[people think like this:]  
 when a person is doing something  
 it is good if this person can think about it like this:  
 'I am doing this because I want to do it  
 not because someone else wants me to do it'. (Goddard and  
 Wierzbicka 1997: 156)

These four lines express the essence of Anglo communicative culture, and explain many culture-specific characteristics and dominant communicative features. The script shows that Anglo emphasis on personal autonomy prevents anyone saying, directly, what another person should do. Instead of direct imperatives, addressee-oriented whimperatives *Could you/would you/would you like*, etc. are used to avoid putting pressure on others (Wierzbicka 2006b). These restrictions not only apply to requests but to all speech acts with the meaning 'I want you to do this'. Even when the speaker urges the addressee to act in his own interest (in invitation or advice), the indirect expression of motivation is preferable in English communication.

In the next section, I provide a brief comparative analysis of the speech acts of invitation and advice based on the results of the previous study of English and Russian politeness and communicative styles using the Discourse-Completion Task (DCT) method (Larina 2009, 2013), and thus contextualise the above discussion.

### 3.1. Invitation

The speech act of invitation exhibits clear tendencies towards either group orientation (in a Russian context) or individuality (in Anglo) that cause serious misunderstandings in intercultural interaction. A typical invitation in the Anglo culture tends to be expressed in the form of a question

focused on the willingness of the addressee to accept it. This shows respect to the addressee's personal autonomy and his/her right to make a choice independently.

Some examples (from personal observation):

- (12) *Why don't **you** join **me** for lunch?*  
 (13) *I'm just going to the cinema. Would **you** like to come along?*  
 (14) *I was wondering if **you'd** like to come over for dinner next Sunday. If you have other plans, please don't worry.*

We can observe here, once more, the emphasis on the individuality of both parties in the interaction: inviter and invitee.

However, in the Russian linguacultural context such invitations would not be appreciated, for two reasons: (a) they lack any evidence that the inviter sincerely wishes the invited to accept the invitation, especially when an option is given (see example (14)); (b) there is no real evidence of the desire to 'do something together'.

The appropriate formula for (12–13) in Russian would be a direct invitation with the imperative form and an emphasis on common activity (15–16):

- (15) *Davay poobedayem vmeste* ('Let's have lunch together')  
 (16) *Davay skhodim v kino.* ('Let's go to the cinema')

Interrogative invitations are also possible, though they may sound more like a suggestion and, in the case of rejection, another option would be suggested:

- (17) *Mozhet, skhodim v kino?* (lit. 'Perhaps, we shall go to the cinema?')

In the comparative study (Larina 2009) in the situation 'inviting a friend for a birthday', none of the English informants (out of 70) used the imperative, while among Russians (of the same number), imperative statements amounted to 24 per cent:

- (18) *Prikhodi ko mne na den' rozhdeniya* ('Come to my birthday party')

The results of the study showed that the most frequent conventional invitation in English (60 per cent) features the willingness of the addressee to accept the invitation:

(19) *Would you like to come to my birthday party?*

(20) *How do you fancy coming out on Saturday night for my birthday?*

Russian speakers preferred declarative utterances (56 per cent) with a performative verb *ptiglashayu* 'I invite' (21), or expression of positive attitude towards the expected acceptance of the invitation (22):

(21) *U menia v subbotu den' rozhdeniya. Ya tebia priglasayu.* ('I have a birthday on Saturday. I'm inviting you.')

(22) *U menia v subbotu den' rozhdeniya. Ya budu rad, yesli ty pridesh'.* ('I have a birthday on Saturday. I'll be glad if you come.')

Interestingly, while English speakers focus on the desire of the invitee, Russian invitees may be faced with a *fait accompli*, or pushed to come, which in Russian sounds quite normal when people are in a close relationship:

(23) *U menya v subbotu den' rozhdeniya. Zhdu. Otkazy ne prinyimayutsya.* ('I have a birthday on Saturday. I expect you to come. Refusals are not accepted.')

Although some of the Russian informants (20 per cent) used the question form for an invitation, it was mostly not a question of the willingness or ability of the addressee to accept the invitation—*Ty smozhesh priyty?* ('Can you come?'), but rather whether s/he would come or not: *Ty pridiosh?* ('Are you coming?')

### 3.2. Advice

Advice is another speech act that demonstrates the importance of keeping distance in Anglo culture and the acceptability of contact and solidarity in Russian communication.

Despite the fact that advice is mostly aimed at the interests of the addressee, in Anglo culture generally it can be regarded as violation of the interlocutor's independence and personal autonomy, and the imposition of the speaker's will. The most 'dangerous' type of advice, in this respect, is unsolicited

advice, which is given by a speaker on his/her own initiative, without any request from the listener. The old English proverbs say: *Give not counsel or salt till you are asked* and *Keep (save) your breath to cool your porridge*.

In Russian culture, advice is traditionally perceived not as an invasion of personal life, but as involvement and desire to help. It is given out of the best of motives, without fear of infringing the interests and freedom of the interlocutor, who normally understands the good intentions of the adviser. This is reflected in Russian proverbs and sayings that urge careful listening to advice and following it: *Vsyakiy sovet k razumu khorosh* ('Every piece of advice is good'), *Lyudey ne slushat' – v dobre ne zhit'* ('If one does not listen to what people say, one will not live well'), *Odin um khorosho, a dva luchshe* ('One mind is good, but two minds are better'). It should be noted that nowadays the attitude of Russians towards advice, especially on the part of young people who want to be more independent, is becoming less tolerant, yet the traditional views still prevail in many cases.

The results of the studies show that attitudes to unsolicited advice in Russian culture are quite positive. As argued by Belyaeva-Standen (2004), who studied this speech act in Russia and the USA, 75 per cent of Russian informants in her study noted that they are ready to listen to unsolicited advice if it is useful, expressed in a friendly manner and offers a convincing solution to the problem (2004: 313). By contrast, the overwhelming majority of Americans believe that 'it is not good to give unsolicited advice', 'this must be avoided under any circumstances' and that it might be acceptable only if it was necessary to warn the listener of a real danger or unpredictable mishap (ibid.: 315). The British also consider unsolicited advice unacceptable particularly when offered to a stranger, while the Russians in some situations give advice willingly and quite directly. In the situation used in our experiment ('It's very cold. A strong wind is blowing. There is a child without a hat at the bus stop.'), 90 per cent of the British informants (out of 70) replied that they would not say anything: *None of my business/It's not acceptable to advise unknown people, even a child*, while 95 per cent of Russian informants considered it permissible to advise a child to put on a hat, raise a hood, and some of them were eager to offer their scarf (Larina 2013: 203).

A few examples of these situations from personal observation:

- (24) *Vy zachem sumki v rukakh derzhite. Postav'te na skameyku. Tyazhelo ved'*. (lit: 'Why are you holding the bags in your hands? Put them on the bench. It's hard to hold them.')

- (25) *Zaydite pod naves. Promoknite.* (lit: ‘Go under the awning. You may get wet.’) (at the bus stop)
- (26) *U vas shnurok razvyazalsya. Zavyazhite. Mozhetе upast’* (lit: ‘Your string is untied. Tie it. You could fall over.’) (in the street).

It is important to note that, though all these instances of advice were given imperatively, they do not sound as imposing as their English translations do, as the speaker used a polite *vy*-form addressing the hearer.

Although unsolicited advice to strangers is not a conventional practice in Russia, especially in big cities, it is not uncommon to be a recipient of such advice in everyday situations, which demonstrates that Russians are not very vigilant in guarding personal autonomy and may very easily shorten distance, and which shows their involvement with other people’s affairs and willingness to help. The perception of advice and its appropriateness greatly depend on various contextual factors including the situation, gender, age of the advice-giver and its recipient as well as intonation and other verbal and non-verbal characteristics. Nevertheless, even if they sound intrusive they are normally accepted by Russians with tolerance, if not with gratitude, as the positive motive of the speaker is obvious.

The results of the comparative analysis (Larina 2009) as well as personal observations show that, in conversation with friends and family members, giving advice is also much more typical of Russian culture in comparison with Anglo culture, where there are significant restrictions on this speech act. It is performed rarely, with numerous softeners and mostly in the form of opinions (27–28). The Russians give advice to those whom they know more willingly and in many cases quite directly (29–30).

- (27) *You look tired. I think you should go to bed.*
- (28) *If you’re fed up with your job, perhaps you should change it.*
- (29) *Ty vyglyadish’ ustavshyey. Idi spat’.* (‘You look tired. Go to bed’).
- (30) *Yesli tebe nadoyela tvoya rabota, pomenyay yeyo.* (‘If you’re fed up with your job, change it.’)

These differences are not surprising, and again it is possible to find a semantic explanation. Analysis of the definitions of the words *advice* and *sovet* ‘advice’ reveals their cultural specificities. In English, *advice* is ‘an opinion that someone gives you about the best thing to do in a particular situation’; *advise* is ‘to give your opinion to someone about

the best thing to do' (as per the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*). In Russian, *sovet* 'advice' is defined as '*nastavleniye, ukazaniye, kak postupit*' ('instruction, direction of how to proceed') (in Ozhegov's *Russian Language Dictionary*). Accordingly, *sovetovat* 'to advise' means 'to instruct, direct how to proceed' (*ukazyvat, kak postupat*). Thus, in English, advising means giving opinion, without inducing the interlocutor to follow it; in other words, keeping distance and showing respect to the personal autonomy of the addressee. In the Russian language, advising means giving instructions how to proceed, showing involvement and solidarity.

## 4. Discussion and conclusion

Through a brief analysis of some communicative differences of Anglo and Russian speakers, this chapter has attempted to give some more evidence in support of Wierzbicka's statement that in different cultures people not only speak different languages, but also use them in different ways. These differences are not random but systematic, prescribed by cultural values and corroborated by cultural logic. Cultural values that guide the communicative behaviour of the speakers and shape their communicative styles saturate language, and are manifested at all linguistic levels.

The chapter has shown that the prime Anglo values that impact communicative style—personal autonomy, privacy, independence—are based on keeping distance. They encourage speakers to keep their distance physically, psychologically and verbally. Dominant Russian values—involvement, solidarity, interdependence—in contrast, are based on closeness and make people more available. As a result, the representatives of these cultures have different understandings of politeness and appropriate modes of interaction (for details see Larina 2009, 2015). Anglo politeness (at least a part of it, called Negative politeness) (Brown and Levinson 1987) is distance-oriented. One needs to have a 'sense of privacy', not to intrude on another person's zone of autonomy and demonstrate respect for it. Russian speakers, who prefer closeness to distance, instead of 'sense of privacy' possess a 'sense of elbow' (*chuvstvo loktia*); they are less vigilant in guarding personal autonomy and tend to express their communicative intention in a more direct way, which in many cases does not interfere with politeness. The general closeness of interpersonal relations, in the

Russian context, guards against this possibility. Thus the study shows that politeness is also a culture-specific phenomenon and people interact in accordance with their understanding of politeness shaped by their values.

The chapter has demonstrated that cultural values, which guide communicative behaviour, are embedded in language, and showed that manifestations of closeness in Russian, vs distance in English, are systematic, and can be observed in lexis, phraseology, syntax and communicative styles. This confirms, once again, that language is an ideological phenomenon, which shapes different types of identity.

The chapter has also shown that knowledge of cultural values, key words and cultural scripts enables us to observe the systematic interconnectedness of language, culture, cognition and communication, and to see the logic of culture-specific modes of linguistic interaction.

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