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**The problem of language barriers in cross-cultural communication between  
Russians and Japanese**

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The interactions between people from different linguistic cultures are full of complexities. We can find them not only in the cooperation between people who speak two different languages, but also between speakers of the same language. One of these problems is the language barriers. The reason for the language barriers can be not only linguistically-determined, but also culturally-determined and psychologically-determined. In this study, we will focus on the potential problems which the Russians may encounter in the process of communication with the Japanese.

Japan has traditionally had their own system of subordination, which is not only expressed in the social structure, but also in the linguistic structure [6]. In the Japanese language there are several levels of politeness, which reflect their social order hierarchy: teineigo - polite language (e.g., masu, desu); sonkeigo - honorific language; kenjougo - humble language (e.g., itadaki). And there are several styles: teineitai - polite style; and futsuutai - direct style. Every Japanese has to use different words and grammatical forms to convey the very same meaning in any conversation, according to the person with whom they are talking [4]. Foreigners may often be miscommunicated without this knowledge when speaking to Japanese. For instance, Russian politicians frequently face polite speech problems when communicating with Japanese politicians.

There is also a widespread tendency among Japanese to have special languages for «strangers» and «acquaintances», or, more simply, for «outsiders» and «insiders», switching from one language to another depending on the situation. It can be different languages in the usual sense if the «outsider» is a foreigner, but it can also be different variants of Japanese. This tendency is also closely related to the linguistic identity theory [5].

Communication strategies in Japanese are always strongly related to etiquette. Accordingly, the opposition «acquaintance and stranger» is superimposed on another important opposition «superior - equal - inferior», reflecting the hierarchical relationships in society. In this way, there are horizontal as well as vertical relationships between people at the same time. The other reason for the language barrier is the dialects in Japan, which serve as a family communication tool [1]. Dialectal features are more pronounced in the countryside and in small towns, but in large cities dialectal and regional features may take place too. It is noted that there is a fashion for the use of dialect words and sometimes grammatical forms in the speech of young people, especially girls [2]. At the same time, grammatical forms are borrowed from various dialects, including those that have never been used in this area. These dialectal features have no territorial character. In a big city, for example, this is just a way to separate the language for «insiders» from the language for «outsiders». The opposition between «insiders and outsiders» is manifested in the Japanese language at various levels. Japanese experts consider it stable, also because modern life increasingly divides people, and stable communication is maintained only within the group of «insiders».

Therefore, if foreigners are not well informed, they can get into uncomfortable situations and risk being misunderstood. And in order to eliminate difficulties and barriers in communication, it is necessary to create conditions for optimal dialogue, which are most consistent with certain, specific activity conditions [3].

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#### **Источники и литература**

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