



Section 1. Applied Linguistics

DOI:10.29013/EJLL-26-1.2-3-5



FRAME AS A COGNITIVE BASIS FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

*Aftab Hajiyeveva*¹

¹ Azerbaijan University of Languages Baku, Azerbaijan

Cite: Hajiyeveva A. (2026). *Frame as a Cognitive Basis for Intercultural Communication*. *European Journal of Literature and Linguistics* 2026, No 1–2. <https://doi.org/10.29013/EJLL-26-1.2-3-5>

Abstract

This article examines frames from the perspective of modern cognitive linguistics as applied to intercultural communication. Research findings demonstrate that intercultural communication requires consideration of possible mismatches in the cognitive spaces of interlocutors and differences in their worldviews and cultural codes, which are essential for successful communication. A distinction is made between the following concepts: cognitive environment, cognitive space, and cognitive base. A full understanding of a frame requires knowledge of extralinguistic factors, which, in turn, are part of its structure. Frame components have indexical meaning and correspond to the value system of a particular culture. The article explores the problem of the existence of similar but non-identical frames and its impact on intercultural communication. Cases of communication breakdowns and ways to overcome them are presented.

Keywords: *cognitive base, cognitive space, similar frames, identical frames, communication breakdowns*

Introduction

Frame semantics theory is one of the most popular semantic theories at the beginning of the 21st century due to its interdisciplinary nature, integrating various branches of linguistic science (currently, frame theory is studied in such disciplines as cognitive linguistics, cognitive psychology, and anthropology) and serving as a research methodology. “Frames not only describe the most essential aspects of the ontology of the reality being studied, or even of all existence, but

also provide science with certain building blocks, scaffolds, and blocks for constructing the whole, i.e., theoretical knowledge, or the edifice of science...” (Razumovsky, O.S., 2013, p. 38).

The use of frames as a research method is associated with the postulation of a certain dependence of linguistic meaning on human cognitive experience. Accordingly, this is a method for studying the interaction between the semantic space of language and the knowledge structures of thought space, that is, a method

of cognitive-semantic modeling of language. The frame model of knowledge representation is based on M. Minsky's frame theory and represents a cognitive model of human memory. It is based on the proposition that humans perceive reality through the comparison of frames held in memory, each of which is associated with a specific conceptual object of memory and information obtained from the world of reality (Maslennikova, E. M. 2000, p. 114).

Communication is possible only when each speaker's consciousness, in their worldview, contains certain semantic "informational judgments" that are modeled as frames. The concept of a frame is one of the most well-known cognitive categories. According to L. M. Vasiliev, "cognitive categories are categories of mental content, constructs of consciousness that model our knowledge of the world and correlate it with knowledge models fixed in the structure of language" (Vasiliev, .M., 1997, p. 163). A person, "trying to understand a new situation or to take a fresh look at familiar things, selects from their memory a certain data structure (image), called a frame, with the intention of making it suitable for understanding a broader class of phenomena or processes by changing individual details" (Minsky, M., 1979, p. 8).

Aims and Objectives

To investigate the role of the frame as a cognitive basis in intercultural communication, and to determine its impact on the perception and understanding of information across cultures. To explain the theoretical essence of the concept of framing, to analyze the characteristics of intercultural communication, and to determine the cognitive role of frames in the communication process are the objectives of the article.

Methods and materials

The research material consists of scientific sources, articles and examples on cognitive linguistics, intercultural communication and framework theory. Descriptive, comparative and analytical methods were used during the research.

Main part

Frames belong to the cognitive base, that is, they are universal for the entire linguistic

community speaking a particular language. However, in the process of intercultural communication, it is necessary to take into account the possibility of a mismatch in the cognitive spaces of the interlocutors and the differences in their pictures of the world and cultural codes. A cultural code is a certain system of images that functions as a system of signs. Any part of the real world with concrete, sensory clarity can serve as a cognitive foundation for the creation of a cultural code. Frames are critical to the success of intercultural communication. By a frame, we mean the core component and all the associations associated with it (Kubryakova, E. S., 1991). These associations, in turn, are arranged hierarchically, representing slots or levels: the core, the central (basic) level, and the periphery. It is undeniable that frames are an important link and an integral part of the cultural code, as they enable the lexical meaning of a word to be represented not as a simple set of semantic features, but as an ideal picture of any object, phenomenon, or situation. A full understanding of a particular frame requires knowledge of the extralinguistic factors that comprise its structure. Frame components have indexical meaning and refer to the value system of a particular culture. Sometimes, intercultural communication can fail because frames that are similar in two different languages – that is, frames whose core components coincide – are not identical. This means that the structure of these frames does not match, and there are cases where the size of a frame in English is not equal to the size of a similar frame in Russian. For example: *When I left the skating rink, I felt sort of hungry, so I went into this drugstore and had a Swiss cheese sandwich and a malted* (Maslennikova, E. M., 2000, p. 45).

A literal translation of this sentence will cause surprise for any native Russian speaker, and thus, when perceiving this information, a breakdown in communication occurs, since the frame "drugstore" is not identical to the frame "pharmacy". The American word drugstore is a pharmacy store that, along with medicines, also sells toiletries and stationery, coffee, light snacks, cosmetics, and so on. Thus, with the coincidence of the core component (Purpose of Destination) – a store with drugs, the discrepancies are observed at the basic

level (Attributes). Speaking about non-identical frames, we can also give the following example: *She was all angles and bones; she was nearsighted; she 566 O.A. Zharina squinted; her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard* (Maslova, V. A., p. 5). / *All angles and bones, nearsighted and squinted; and her hand was as wide as a shovel, and very heavy* (Fillmore, C., 1988, p. 6). The heroine's hand is literally compared to a bed frame, and it should be acknowledged that a Russian-speaking recipient will find such a comparison difficult to understand, since, firstly, in Russian we would not use such a comparison to fill the structure of the frame "wide", since it is not included in the associative array of a native Russian speaker. Secondly, due to the lack of background knowledge about the original local culture (that is, in this case, about the type of beds in the southern states of America, where the action of the novel takes place). However, it should be noted that sometimes frames in Russian and English can be completely identical, that is, have a completely matching structure. For example: *We got to the Edmont Hotel, and*

I checked in. ...The bellboy that showed me to the room was this very old guy around sixty-five. ...Anyway, what a gorgeous job for a guy around sixty-five years old. Carrying people's suitcases and waiting around for a tip (Maslennikova, E. M., 2000, p. 67). Considering this example, we can assert that the frame "hotel" is identical to the frame "hotel", since their core structure is identical. When perceiving this information, a failure in intercultural communication occurs, since the structure of the frame, in both English and Russian, includes the following concepts: number, bellhop, suitcases, tips, etc. To perceive the frame "hotel", common knowledge is used, and, in both English-speaking and Russian-speaking countries, the situation described in the example is the same. Thus, the frame as the cognitive basis of the utterance is an element that should be given special attention in the process of intercultural communication, since in different languages, similar, at first glance, frames may not be identical, in which case the information may be perceived incorrectly, and communication may be ineffective.

References

- Ezhova, E. A. Simultaneous Taxonomy of Phraseologisms with the 'head' Component in the 2+ System: Monograph. – Moscow: Moscow State University of Philosophy, 2009.
- Fillmore, C. Frames and the semantics of understanding. – New in foreign linguistics. Issue XXIII. – Moscow: Progress, 1988.
- Kubryakova, E. S. The Human Factor in Language. Language and Speech Production. – Moscow: Nauka, 1991. – 239 p.
- Lee, H. To Kill a Mockingbird. – Moscow: AST, 2009.
- Maslova, V. A. Cognitive Linguistics. – Minsk: TetraSystems. – 256 p.
- Maslennikova, E. M. Frame Representation of Text Semantics. Linguistic Bulletin. – Issue. 2. Izhevsk: UMO "Sancta lingua", 2000.
- Minsky, M. Frames for knowledge representation. – Moscow: Energy, 1979.
- Razumovsky, O. S. Invariants and Frames as Objective Phenomena and Cognitive Constructs. Available at: www.philosophy.nsc.ru/journals/philscience/800/05Razum.htm (accessed September 4, 2013).
- Salinger, J. D. The Catcher in the Rye. Little, Brown and Company, 1999. – 242 p.
- Teliya, V. N. Russian Phraseology: Semantic, Pragmatic, and Linguocultural Aspects. – Moscow: Languages of Russian Culture, 1998.
- Vasiliev, L. M. Semantic, grammatical, and cognitive categories of language // Actual problems of modern philology. – Ufa, 1997.

submitted 01.05.2026;

accepted for publication 14.05.2026;

published 30.05.2026

© Hajiyeva A.

Contact: afahajizada@gmail.com