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Bachelor's thesis

**CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AT THE WORKPLACE
(Based on TV series)**

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Могула М. Р. Міжкультурна комунікація на робочому місці (на матеріалі телевізійних серіалів) – Кваліфікаційна робота освітнього ступеня «бакалавр».

Дослідження присвячено аналізу міжкультурної комунікації на робочому місці на матеріалі серіалів «Офіс», «Парки та зони відпочинку» й «Бруклін 9-9». Актуальність теми зумовлено процесами глобалізації, внаслідок яких значна кількість людей опиняється в мультикультурних професійних колективах, де ефективне спілкування стає ключовим чинником досягнення спільних цілей.

Об'єктом дослідження є комунікативна взаємодія в обраних для аналізу серіалах, що репрезентують робочі ситуації в мультикультурному середовищі. Предметом дослідження виступають лексичні, синтаксичні та стилістичні засоби, характерні для типових моделей міжкультурної комунікації та конфліктів у професійному контексті.

Мета роботи полягає у вивченні найпоширеніших типів конфліктів на робочому місці та визначенні мовних особливостей реплік їхніх учасників. Дослідження проведено на матеріалі діалогів у серіалах, що віддзеркалюють спілкування у реальному офісному середовищі.

Результати дослідження демонструють, що мовний бар'єр, відмінності в комунікативних стратегіях, застосовуваних стилістичних засобах (наприклад, вживання ідіом, сленгу, жаргону, скорочень) та у культурних цінностях часто стають джерелом комунікативних труднощів. У роботі проаналізовано, як сценарісти серіалів через мовні особливості реплік героїв моделюють реальні ситуації міжкультурного професійного спілкування.

Важливість дослідження полягає у можливості ознайомлення з найпоширенішими типами конфліктних ситуацій на робочому місці та їхніми особливостями. Результати проведеного дослідження можуть у подальшому бути застосовані у підготовці фахівців, які працюють у багатонаціональних колективах, з метою підвищення їхньої міжкультурної компетенції.

Ключові слова: корпоративна культура, міжкультурна комунікація, конфлікт, стратегія, культурна обізнаність.

ABSTRACT

Mohula M. R. Cross-Cultural Communication at the Workplace (Based on TV Series) – Bachelor’s degree qualification paper.

The study analyzes cross-cultural communication at the workplace in the series “Office”, “Parks and Recreation” and “Brooklyn Nine-Nine”. The relevance of the topic is driven by the processes of globalization, as a result of which a significant number of people find themselves in multicultural professional teams, where effective communication becomes a key factor in achieving common goals.

The object of the study is the communicative interaction in the TV series under analysis which represent work situations in a multicultural environment. The subject of the study is lexical, syntactic and stylistic means that characterize typical models of cross-cultural communication and conflicts in a professional context.

The purpose of the study is to establish the most common types of conflicts at the workplace and to study their linguistic features on the basis of dialogues in TV series that reflect real office behaviour.

The results of the study demonstrate that language barriers, differences in communication strategies, preferable stylistic means (e.g. the use of idioms, slang, jargon, abbreviations) and cultural values often constitute the source of communication breakdowns. The paper examines how TV series model real-life situations of cross-cultural professional communication through linguistic features.

The importance of the study lies in the possibility of exploring the most common conflicts at the workplace and their features. The results of the study can be further applied in the training of specialists working in multinational teams in order to increase their intercultural competence.

Keywords: *corporate culture, cross-cultural communication, conflict, strategy, cultural awareness.*

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INTRODUCTION

Studying intercultural communication at the workplace is not only socially or culturally useful, but also linguistically valuable. Language is the primary means of expressing identity and forming relationships, all of which are central to professional interactions. When people from different cultural backgrounds collaborate, their unique language models, speech styles, and pragmatic norms intersect, creating both opportunities and challenges for communication. One of the key linguistic aspects is the study of how context affects meaning. In a multicultural work environment, the same phrase can have radically different interpretations depending on the speaker's cultural background. English-speaking countries are among the world's wealthiest and therefore attract people from across the globe in search of better opportunities. As a result, these societies have become some of the most culturally diverse, making English-language workplaces especially compelling sites for examining intercultural interaction. Migrants who settled in these countries enter organizations where communication with both locals and other foreigners becomes crucial for achieving shared goals. Consequently, intercultural communication extends beyond everyday conversation into the realm of professional and task-oriented discourse, where differences in values – such as attitudes toward punctuality, thoroughness, and responsibility – can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts.

This topic has been at the focus of attention of such Western researchers as H. Lukesch [21], Y. Yano [41], E. Hall [36], C. Gains [16]. The problem has also drawn the attention of Ukrainian scholars. For instance, I. Alyekseeva [6] analyzed conflict in interpersonal and corporate communication, O. Yashenkova [42] analyzed communicative strategies in English workplace conversations, while S. Kuprikova [2] emphasized intercultural business communication as a factor in professional identity formation. M. Bessonova [1], in turn, explored Canadian-American intercultural communication highlighting its linguistic and cultural dimensions.

The **relevance** of this research is determined by the fact that due to globalization many people have faced the necessity to work in cross-cultural environments and therefore must navigate linguistic and pragmatic differences in professional

communication to avoid conflicts. Therefore, the **aim** of this research is to establish the most common types of conflictual situations at the workplace and study their linguistic dimensions in TV series that function as a prism of a real workplace. In order to achieve this aim, a number of **tasks** have to be accomplished:

- to consider the history of cross-cultural communication research and the notion of corporate culture;
- to define strategies in cross-cultural communication and common types of conflicts;
- to examine linguistic and stylistic features of cross-cultural communication in the series in question.

The **subject** of the present research is lexical, syntactic and stylistic features of conflictual fictional dialogues, while the **object** of the paper is episodes from famous American comedy series. **Materials** of this research include the following episodes from the series selected for analysis: “the Office” – season 1 episode 2 [43]; season 2 episode 10 [44]; season 3 episode 20 [45]; season 5 episodes 8 [46], 20 [47]; season 6 episodes 8 [48], 10 [49] that were filmed between 2005 and 2009; “Parks and Recreation” (2009–2013) – season 2 episode 5 [50]; season 4 episode 4 [51]; season 6 episodes 1 [52], 2 [53], 4 [54], 8 [55]; “Brooklyn 99” (2013, 2019) – season 1 episode 1 [56], season 6 episode 4 [57].

The theoretical value of the research lies in contributing to the broader field of cross-cultural communication and linguistic analysis by exploring the peculiarities of communication at the workplace in TV series. **The practical value** of the study consists in providing insights for professionals working in multicultural environments. By identifying common sources of miscommunication and highlighting specific linguistic and cultural patterns that influence workplace dynamics, the study offers actionable recommendations for improving intercultural competence.

The present paper consists of the introduction, two chapters, conclusions to each chapter, general conclusion, references and a list of sources.

1. THE CONCEPTS OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND CORPORATE CULTURE

1.1. The history of cross-cultural communication research

Cross-cultural communication has grown in scope and become an essential component of contemporary society, which has become multicultural due to interactions between various ethnic groups, as a result of the development and popularity of transportation methods as well as the creation and dissemination of communication media. A linguist Yasukata Yano, engaged in research on ELF, claims that “our daily life, especially that in urban metropolitan areas, has increasingly become multinational and multicultural, producing multicultural individuals who belong to various discourse communities and affiliating and identifying with many different cultures and ways of communication” [41]. Language plays a pivotal role in expressing our identities, it can be a marker of cultural affiliation. Before we proceed to the history of cross-cultural communication itself, it is necessary to outline the definition of communication, which, according to J. R. Baldwin, is “the process of creating and sending symbolic behaviour, and the interpretation of behaviour between people” [36].

Communication between different cultures has become such a common phenomenon due to globalization, that we are now able to share our beliefs and customs easier than before. In addition to speaking and writing, we now connect beyond national boundaries via email, blogging, chatting, video calls with friends and colleagues, and online surfing. “It has been estimated that 70 percent of business communication occurs electronically. It would therefore be interesting to see whether e-mail is just another alternative medium or if it constitutes a new genre of English communication. This question was raised by C. Gains (1999) who based his study on e-mail messages used within businesses” [16]. We are thrust into a world of deterritorialized, hybrid, shifting, and clashing cultures in these days of global networking anticipated to develop into multi-cultural people.

The spark of interest in communication between different cultures and its research is widely credited to the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall, who coined the term “intercultural communication’ in his influential 1959 book *The Silent Language*, often considered the founding document of the field. The author states that “intercultural communication can be considered an interdisciplinary science that draws from cultural anthropology, psychology, sociology, social psychology, social interaction as well as linguistics, despite the complexity of concepts and the dependency on other scientific fields” [36], and this assertion refers to the complexity of comprehending human interactions between cultures, since this process involves identifying cultural norms, values that require deep knowledge to fully comprehend and address. From a linguistic perspective, Hall’s observation accentuates the role of language, as linguistics provides the opportunity to study how languages transmit cultural nuances and how misunderstanding and conflicts can occur when people from different cultural backgrounds encounter. By exploring how culture influences behavior and communication patterns, cultural anthropology, which is mentioned by Hall, enhances this. A more complete knowledge of the reasons for people's communication habits within their cultural settings may be gained via anthropological studies of rituals, social conventions, and values. And it is also undeniable that psychology and social psychology provide additional aspects by investigating how people perceive and react to cultural differences.

Before publishing his work *The Silent Language*, Hall served at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in the United States from 1951 to 1955, where he and his colleagues developed the first structured framework for understanding and teaching Intercultural Communication. This paradigm focused on several key elements: the systematic study and categorization of nonverbal communication, with an emphasis on exchanges beyond spoken words; the exploration of unconscious levels of communication, particularly in nonverbal interactions; and a shift from earlier studies that centered on single cultures to examining the dynamics of communication between different cultures. Hall's framework also promoted a nonjudgmental approach to cultural differences, advocating for acceptance rather than evaluation,

and relied on participatory, experiential training methods to enhance understanding. Initially, the field was developed for practical rather than theoretical purposes. Its primary aim was to train American diplomats and international development professionals to navigate cross-cultural interactions effectively. From its beginnings at the Foreign Service Institute, the practice and teaching of Intercultural Communication quickly expanded to universities and other educational institutions. By the 1970s, academic courses and textbooks on the subject were widely available in the United States.

The growing interconnectivity of the world has placed pressure on universities to prioritize intercultural and international knowledge in their curricula. Universities play a crucial role in fostering global competence among students, equipping them to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.. Faculty and institutions are tasked with generating and transmitting cross-cultural knowledge to prepare students for active, informed participation in the global community defined by fluid borders, complex relationships, and shared challenges. In the 1980s Europe joined the movement of introducing cross-cultural studies, with institutions such as the University of Jyväskylä playing a pioneering role in establishing Intercultural Communication as an academic discipline [24]. While the field initially centered on practical training, it has since grown into a well-defined academic area with its own theoretical frameworks, reflecting decades of development.

Cross-cultural communication frequently faces obstacles arising from language barriers and cultural differences in behavior. Individuals who are not native English speakers might experience challenges due to limited proficiency, which can result in misunderstandings or incorrect interpretations. As English is the predominant language for international communication, proficiency in it plays a crucial role in facilitating effective cross-cultural interactions. “For the purposes of cross-cultural communication, teaching of the English language has been an issue for a long time at different universities worldwide. Since being introduced from the European continent 1,500 years ago, the English language has evolved from that of a little island off the continent to become a worldwide language. As the language moved around the world,

it turned into Nigerian, Indian, Philippine, and Singaporean English in addition to North American and Australian English. During its unavoidable process of internalisation and localisation, English has adopted and adapted to local languages and cultures at its destinations, creating local variants. In order to meet local needs and preserve identities, English, or rather, "Englishes," has incorporated local cultures and customs and taken ideas and forms from indigenous languages" [41]. Cultural differences in communication styles also present challenges. For example, in Mediterranean and Latin American cultures, people tend to use more expressive gestures, speak at a faster and louder pace, and stand closer to their conversation partners. In contrast, individuals from Scandinavian or Japanese cultures may prefer more reserved gestures, softer speech, and greater personal space, which can sometimes be perceived as distant or unfriendly. Additionally, cultures that value indirect communication, such as those in East Asia, may avoid direct confrontation or criticism, leading to potential misinterpretations by those from cultures that prioritize directness and openness, like the United States or Germany. Content creator from different countries even mock the communication style in their culture, for instance, @jannik.apitz posts on his Instagram satirical videos about German reverent attitude to money and how German men communicate on dates with women from other countries.

The migration across the world more than ever in history has increased the necessity of learning the skills that help to communicate at work. Nowadays the ability to operate in a multicultural workplace is becoming a standard task needed as a result of the shifting demographics of the American workforce, which are making cultural diversity the norm rather than the exception. According to Joi Constance's work "the central principle of cross-cultural communication theory is that everything one does and everything one perceives is filtered through one's cultural knowledge" [10]. We can suggest that culture serves as a lens through which the world can be seen and interpreted; signs, words, and rituals that have certain connotations in one culture could be interpreted very differently in another. This concept calls on people to acknowledge and take responsibility for their own prejudices and presumptions,

highlighting the significance of cultural sensitivity and awareness. When one culture's knowledge is utilized as the foundation for interactions with workers, employees, or customers from absolutely different cultures, miscommunications, hurt feelings, and general ill might occur, of course. Knowing what to anticipate and how to behave when living or working with people with different cultural backgrounds is made possible through cross-cultural communication.

1.2. The peculiarities of communication in corporate culture

In this section, we will explore the basics of corporate culture communication, including what it is and why it is important. We'll look at components of corporate culture, workplace communication peculiarities, the issue of intercultural English communication, the factors that influence it, and the significant effects it has on everything from company strength to employee happiness. According to ASSE foundation research “corporate culture is a collection of uniform and enduring beliefs, customs, traditions and practices shared and continued by employees of a corporation” [23]. Corporate culture is definitely more than a mere slogan; it's the unseen thread that runs through an organization's conduct. Corporate culture is the common mentality that determines how employees think, behave, and work together inside an organization. In the quickly changing business environment of today, corporate culture has become essential to the success of a company. Strong, thriving cultures help businesses recruit in the best employees, encourage creativity, and overcome opponents. For example, the corporate culture of Google places a strong emphasis on openness, innovation, and a flat organizational structure. Google encourages innovation and has created several successful products by letting staff members dedicate a part of their time to personal projects.

There also certain characteristics of corporate culture outlined by ASSE foundation research:

- It represents behaviors that new employees are encouraged to follow;

- Corporate culture reinforces ideas and feelings that are consistent with the corporation's beliefs;
- It creates norms for acceptable behavior;
- Culture can have a powerful effect on individuals and their performance
- It affects worker motivation and goals [23].

It is also worth mentioning that each organization consists of individuals who are forced to work and coexist in the same space. "Understanding communication in the workplace requires an understanding of culture and internal belief systems. While leaders and coworkers can affect culture which ultimately affects communication, employees also bring existing beliefs to work about what is appropriate to say to their coworkers. These beliefs remain fairly stable as they move into different jobs, and they may not match the culture or needs of an organization" [15].

In order to understand corporate culture and communication between the workers better, it is also essential to delve deeper into the motives for interactions at work. Firstly, it is of utmost importance for any employer to hire, train and motivate their new staff. Developing and disseminating excellent communication skills are also vital for all newly hired, as oral communication and listening abilities are among the basic job skills desired by employers. Business effective communication is a must to plan products and services, because the result of this interaction might enhance professional image and persuade clients and shareholders to buy the products of a company. "Moreover, managing diversity in the workplace is a vital competence that business managers are required to possess in the twenty-first century" [36].

Communication is a key factor to make stronger decisions, solve professional problems quicker, and build stronger business relationships, since a bunch of problems in organizations are caused by problems in communication. Due to large-scale globalization business communication with growing emphasis on exchanges between people of different cultures has become an integral component of business school curricula, as well as teaching business communication has extended to environments where English is a second / foreign language. In this regard, English as a foreign language has become increasingly significant as a tool to help businesses

run more efficiently and as a medium necessary for career growth. The knowledge of English at the workplace is vital for effective communication with stakeholders, marketing communication, oral presentations and reports, as well as report writing and direct mailing. Differences in communication styles, conventions, and values can occasionally result in miscommunications or confrontations. This is also confirmed by this statement “In the international workplace, engineers also deal with various communicative situations in both interpersonal and organisational terms, which require a specific set of communication skills among both native and non-native English speakers who are clients, contractors or suppliers, or colleagues, supervisors, and subordinates” [31]. To negotiate and settle these disputes amicably, managers need to be skilled communicators: “Management both creates and controls the environment...” [23, p.19]. The relevance of cross-cultural communication is demonstrated by the difficulties and rewards of working in this globalization as well as the consequences of a company's viewpoint. “The challenges and benefits of working in this global culture and the effects of a business’ worldview all prove the importance of cross-cultural communication” [2]. Maintaining morale and decreasing turnover are influenced by workers` abilities to succeed in diversity communication.

According to the Enterprise League, “for businesses to thrive in the global economy, it’s becoming increasingly vital to be aware of the importance of cross-cultural communication. Those businesses that successfully navigate and harness the differences and similarities between cultures can create more resilient interconnection and interdependence” [17]. The statement correctly emphasizes the need for companies functioning in culturally diverse settings to not only understand but also be skilled at negotiating cultural disparities and similarities. Resilience in an interconnected world depends on greater ties and mutual dependence, which are fostered by this understanding. As linguists, we would confirm that the statement highlights an important fact about the globalized economy: cross-cultural communication is essential to allowing companies to prosper in a variety of settings; and as the scientific study of language, linguistics provides resources and insights that can help explain why this is the case and how companies might overcome these

obstacles. “Language barriers can often pose challenges in cross-cultural communication. However, by adopting strategies such as using simple language, being patient with non-native speakers, or utilizing translation tools when necessary, we can overcome these obstacles and ensure clear understanding” [13].

Communication at the workplace is definitely characterized by its mandatory style, since people enter communication regardless of their wants or preferences. Business Communication is a specific kind of human contact and goal-oriented interaction on the job that involves the exchange of information between people who represent formal organizations and take particular roles. It is often characterized by asymmetry in the distribution of participant rights, obligations, knowledge, and experience. Businesspeople and office workers have access to a range of media, such as fax machines, email, and, more recently, social media platforms like Facebook and the smartphone app Line, which they may use for both internal and external contact. Interpersonal engagement at the workplace usually takes the form of written and spoken communication in such a setting. Communicative situations for different types of employees usually cover tasks such as work-related discussions and negotiation, informal and social conversation. Oral communication at the workplace consists of meetings, phone calls, presentations, voicemails, audio-conferences, teleconferences and just talks which act as essential instruments for team member cooperation, idea sharing, information clarification, resolution of conflicts, and relationship development. In addition to enabling real-time contact and prompt feedback, these communication channels are essential for decision-making, problem-solving, and maintaining team unity.

Communication in corporate culture is also defined by a collaborative style. Nowadays office workers are expected to know how to work in a team in order to launch a new product, brainstorm a logo and a motto, and present a project from a department. It is also crucial to have minimal skills of collaborative writing, since “North American research reports that nine out of ten business professionals produce some of their documents as part of a team. As workplace writers seek to meet the business goals of their employers, and further their own careers, they require

sophisticated skills in joining with other writers to collaboratively produce documents. Taking advantage of the benefits, and meeting the challenges of this demand, requires corporate and academic communities to collaborate” [20]. However, collaborative tasks might also provoke disagreements which may arise from differences in writing preferences, priorities, or viewpoints. One more challenge that employees usually face is team members' differing levels of writing or subject-matter expertise, which can destabilize the whole process of collaborative writing. Working in a team also means sharing your internal beliefs and accepting or adjusting to what your colleagues say or perform. “Problems can occur when people follow beliefs that may be appropriate for one boss or organization but not another organization. For example, if your first boss told you never to bring up a problem without a proposed solution, you might carry that belief to your next job where your boss will be upset that you failed to bring up a problem sooner” [15]. This claim brings emphasis to a crucial communication problem in work environments: The norms that work well in one workplace are unable to satisfy those in another.

1.3. Communication strategies in cross-cultural communication

Issues with communication can get more complicated in today's diversified workplace. When it comes to face-to-face contacts, every culture has its own set of behaviour including subconscious actions and habits, making it occasionally challenging to succeed in mutual understanding with an interlocutor. Even if there is no language barrier, cross-cultural communication might be difficult, that is why employees with experience in communicating with people from different cultures are so valued in the global labor market. “The importance of this skill set cannot be overstated. Miscommunications in a cross-cultural context can lead to lost opportunities, damaged relationships, and at times, costly misunderstandings” [18]. Creating a baseline where there is mutual comprehension and simplifying communication are important. Therefore there exist certain tactics and tips. In

general the key to effective cross-cultural communication is knowledge: “it is essential that people understand the potential problems of intercultural communication and consciously make efforts to overcome them. Secondly, it is important to realise that the efforts themselves will not always be successful and to adjust their behaviour accordingly” [4]. Indeed, even before diving into strategies that might enhance the understanding between different cultures, one should accept that they might fail or face with a lot hurdles such as differences in accents, intonation, different perception of body language, thus, one needs to be patient rather than hostile and aggressive when problems arise. Thus, it has to be claimed that “At the heart of effective cross-cultural communication lies cultural awareness, the foundation upon which all other strategies are built. Cultural awareness goes beyond mere acknowledgment of cultural differences; it involves a deep understanding and respect for these differences, recognizing how they influence perceptions, behaviors, and communication styles” [18].

It is worth mentioning that one of the most effective strategies in cross-cultural environments is practising **active listening**. According to Tim Vaughan, “Active listening is a vital step in developing successful cross-cultural communication in the workplace. By actively listening to the speaker you can establish trust and build a relationship as they know you are really listening to what they are saying” [37]. The importance of active listening was also particularly highlighted by Anurag Jain: “Active listening is more than a skill; it’s a demonstration of respect and a powerful tool in overcoming the complexities of cross-cultural communication. By fully engaging with and seeking to understand the speaker within their cultural context, you pave the way for more meaningful and effective interactions” [18]. It is highly crucial to listen to your interlocutor attentively, since there might be some elements that are not known to a listener and reasking the speaker instantly for clarification is crucial for better understanding. According to the Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, “When things seem to be going badly, you need to stop or slow down and think. What could be going on here? Did I misinterpret what they said or did they misunderstand me? Misinterpretation is often the source of the problem.

Active listening can sometimes be used to verify this position, by repeating what one thinks he or she heard, one can assure that one accurately understands the communication. If words are used differently between languages or cultural groups, however, even active listening can ignore misunderstandings” [3].

At the same time both, a speaker and a listener, have to **maintain etiquette** while it can foster a positive and professional interaction. It is highly recommended “Before you meet, research the target culture, or if time allows, do some cross cultural training. For example, many cultures expect a degree of formality at the beginning of communication between individuals. Every culture has its own specific way of indicating this formality” [35]. Researching the target culture or engaging in cross-cultural training is a practical and necessary strategy. This kind of preparation reduces the possibility of miscommunications or unintentional offenses by helping people in understanding cultural norms. Additionally, it deals with formality, as setting the correct tone for greetings, introductions, and first encounters requires knowing when and how formal to be.

In order to guarantee understanding amongst team members and avoid future problems that lead to missed deadlines and slowed project development, it is essential to ask questions. “Periodically summarizing what you’ve heard and asking clarifying questions ensures you’ve understood the message as intended” [18]. However, our next tip is **avoiding closed questions**. Whenever you communicate with somebody your main goal is to get the information that you need. In case of asking ‘yes’ or ‘no’ question, you may not succeed in it due to some reasons, for example “ In many cultures it is difficult or embarrassing to answer in the negative, so you will always get a ‘yes’ even if the real answer is ‘no’ ”[35]. A speaker also should **avoid asking double questions**, since they can confuse the audience, making it unclear which question to address first or how to prioritize their response, potentially leading to incomplete or irrelevant answers. In case of confusion, listeners should not be frustrated to ask a speaker for the clarification, since it is stated in Forbes that “Asking a combination of closed and open-ended questions to clarify is a key practice

in active listening, and ensures smooth business relationships and more efficient solutions” [39].

It is also important **to take turns** while speaking. “Turn-taking as a communicative strategy pertains to the process by which speakers – both the encoder and the decoder, decide who takes the conversational floor” [8, p. 118]. After you've made your argument, hear what the other person has to say. It's preferable to have short discussions with people who speak English as a second language rather than giving them a lengthy monologue that they can find hard to follow. Although O.I. Chaika states that “it is worth mentioning that across cultures people may keep to some accepted behaviours that may envelope into social attributes and thought patterns” [8]. None would contest that they have an idea of what national conduct looks like, but since each person is different and it is illogical to evaluate someone based just on their nationality or culture, individuals must be willing to set aside these simplistic views. “While applying “taking turns” strategies, one should also keep in mind the length of their speech act and the **appropriate moment to interrupt**. **Timing** refers to knowing how long it is appropriate to talk in a certain setting and how to start talking when it is their turn. The **appropriate moment to interrupt** states that all speakers, both encoders and decoders, must adhere to all other communicants” [8, p 118].

The next effective strategy to communicate effectively in cross-cultural settings is “**keeping it simple**”. “In a cross cultural conversation there’s no need to make it harder for both of you by using big words. Just keep it simple. Two syllable words are much easier to understand than three syllable words, and one syllable words are better than two syllable words. Say “Please do this quickly” rather than “Please do this in an efficacious manner” [35]. Indeed, using less lengthy, more commonly understood vocabulary helps minimize the chance of misunderstandings, particularly when one or both speakers are not speaking in their native tongue. “Phrases that are commonplace in one culture can be perplexing or meaningless in another. Stick to universal expressions that are more likely to be understood by everyone” [8]. Managers in particular have to be clear with instructions, while

employees should be able to ask them to repeat in case of miscommunication. Therefore, all staff have to be open, friendly and straightforward at the workplace, and this statement is supported by Tim Vaughan “Make it clear to employees that they can come to you with any questions or concerns they might have. This will be even more important in some cultures that might be reluctant to raise their heads above the parapets for fear of reprisal” [37]. One more thing that has to be mentioned while focusing on “keeping it simple” is **avoiding slang**. Since, at this juncture, English is not a native language for many workers in big corporations, the utilization of idiomatic expressions might cause confusion and struggle with understanding, preventing correct decoding of the message transmitted by a speaker. “Not even the most educated non-native English speaker will have a comprehensive understanding of English slang, idioms and sayings. They may understand the individual words you have said, but not the context or the meaning. As a result you could end up confusing them or at worst, offending them” [35]. Even if the interlocutor is fluent in English, they could have trouble with nuances like wordplay, comedy, or cultural allusions, which frequently depend more on common cultural understanding than language ability. This may result in miscommunications or wrong interpretations, especially in social or professional contexts when proper communication is crucial. Thus, Rachel Wells from Forbes recommends us to “rephrase to avoid slangs and to be clearer in your conversation style, bearing in mind any possible language barriers” [39].

Slow speaking is an equally important strategy in intercultural communication. Speaking at your typical conversational pace when you are a native speaker is not a good idea in a cross-cultural environment, even if English is the common language. It is recommended to “Break your sentences into short, definable sections and give your listener time to translate and digest your words as you go. But don’t slow down too much as it might seem patronising. If the person you’re speaking to is talking too quickly or their accent is making it difficult for you to understand them, don’t be afraid to politely ask them to slow down too” [35]. This strategy is particularly beneficial for non-native speakers who could be decoding syntax, vocabulary, and meaning all at once. While speaking too fast might overwhelm the interlocutor,

speaking too slowly might sound patronizing or break the flow of the discussion. Effective pace achieves a balance between these two extremes. It is also stated by Anurag Jain that we should “Recognize and respect the influence of cultural backgrounds on communication styles, including **preferences for directness, formality, and pacing**” [18].

The usage of “feedback loop” strategy might also come in handy at cross-cultural workplace. What does “**feedback loop**” stand for? “A feedback loop, in communication terms, refers to the process of sharing and receiving information about whether a message has been received as intended and understood correctly” [18]. It is of paramount importance for businesses to establish a secure environment where people may freely express their ideas and ask questions, and, moreover, emphasize that feedback is not a criticism but a tool for growth and development. Employees should feel free to repeat any statement, paraphrase it, or summarize in this way showing the confirmation that a message was understood. Paying attention to how various cultures offer and accept feedback is also crucial.

In a lot of cases, language barrier can be a problem for effective cross-cultural communication: “In the intricate mosaic of global communication, language acts as both a bridge and a barrier. Proficiency in the language of your interlocutors can significantly enhance mutual understanding, trust, and collaboration. While English often serves as a lingua franca in international business, even a basic grasp of your counterpart’s language can go a long way in showing respect and fostering goodwill” [18]. Understanding and empathy at the workplace can be improved by training programs that integrate cultural knowledge with learning a language. Therefore, business owners are motivated to “Invest in language learning courses, whether online or in-person. Many programs are tailored for business professionals and focus on practical vocabulary and cultural nuances” [18]. Indeed, even a lot of recruiters in Ukraine now try to provide their workers with English courses if their business has departments around Europe or even around the globe. This helps them to enhance their employees` communication skills and make them more competitive in the global job market. For instance, logistic company UTS offers free English courses

and customer service courses in their office in Kyiv and also the company pays 50% of the cost of professional courses that take place out of the workplace, which demonstrates the company's interest in developing the language skills of its employees.

1.4. Models, strategies and causes of conflicts at the workplace

Our primary task in this chapter is to define types of conflicts because awareness of the existing models of conflict and what provokes each of them can become the basis for resolving misunderstandings. There are many views on the classification of conflicts, so we will briefly consider a few of them. However, before delving into types of conflicts we would like to discuss what is conflict and why conflicts take place at the cross-cultural workplace. Firstly, as it is stated by Iryna Alyeksyeyeva “the term “conflict” comes from the Latin verb *configere* that means “hit each other”. Conflict is a multilevel, multidimensional and dynamic social phenomenon studied by a number of disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, political and cultural studies, philosophy, history, management, public relations, etc.” [6]. Secondly, there are several reasons why conflicts may occur and according to Ambika Sur and Neha Anand from Christ University, India, “Cross culture conflict arises because of the differences in values and norms of behaviour of people from different cultures. A person behaves according to the norms and values of her or his culture, another person holding a different worldview might interrupt with her or his sets of cultural norms. This situation might create misunderstanding and can lead to conflict.” Misunderstandings and opinions that are particular for significantly diverse cultural origins can lead to disputes between colleagues. “Given the amount of time that employees and managers spend communicating with each other, misunderstandings are inevitable. Conflict often occurs when two people receive the same instructions but do different things” [5]. Sometimes even strategies for effective cross-cultural communication might not help to establish a meaningful

conversation, since “there are a lot of situations in which the recipient of the message / the decoder fails to read the symbols well and s/he happens to understand a message in a completely different way from what the encoder was trying to convey” [8, p.3].

Let us return to the main topic of this section, namely types and models of conflict. Firstly, according to Jeremy Pollack, there are seven types of conflicts in organizations [30]. The first type is called “Interpersonal Conflict” and refers to disputes or disagreements that arise between individuals due to differences in personality, values, communication styles, or competing needs. These conflicts often occur when people with different perspectives struggle to find common ground or effectively collaborate. The next kind is referred to as "Individual versus the Group," and it arises when a person's ideals, aims, or actions come into conflict with the group's norms, expectations, or objectives. These two types of conflicts are also mentioned by Iryna Alyeksyeyeva in her study, where the scholar classified conflicts using participants as criterion [6].

The third type of conflict defined by J. Pollack is called “Interdepartmental disputes”. It occurs in larger organizations between different work groups who might work on different projects, have different managers and even style of communication and values. It is also stated that “Conflicts are inherent in group, namely corporate communication, since working for a company often involves intense collaborating with colleagues and much teamwork” [6].

The fourth type conflict described by J. Pollack is “Inter-organizational”, and the name itself hints that this model of conflict involves two or more organizations. The author claims that such conflicts occur since “there may be an issue of conflicting cultures and group work styles, which can impact expectations, work ethic, quantity, and quality.” It also has to be mentioned that “This type of workplace conflict can also include an organization in dispute with a union that represents its employees”[30].

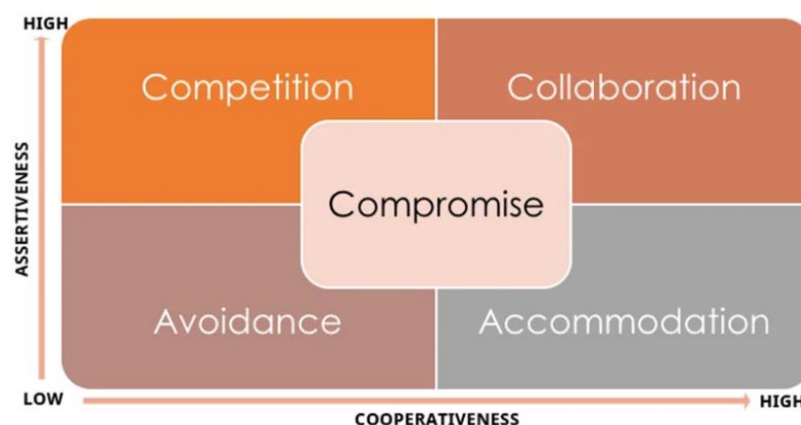
One of the most common workplace conflicts arises when people disagree on how to approach specific job responsibilities, referred to as ”Task Conflict”. Task Conflict also frequently arises in cross-cultural environments due to differences in

understanding corporate policies, processes, and instructions; these misunderstandings often stem from variations in how individuals interpret key terms or concepts. All of this confusion about instructions from superiors, or the inability to establish clear communication with colleagues, can lead to the following type of conflict, called “Relationship conflict”. Such conflicts usually arise from personal disagreements between colleagues.

The last type of conflict mentioned by J. Pollack is “Value Conflict” and it occurs when individuals or groups have differing beliefs, priorities, or principles that lead to disagreements or tension in decision-making, behavior, or interactions. It is also stated by I. Alyeksyeyeva that it happens because “Ethnic cultures often prioritize different values and instill different, quite often opposing assumptions”[6].

Even though conflicts in cross-cultural environments can be hard to resolve, there are certain patterns of people's behaviour in which they usually come to compromise. Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann, two researchers, examined employees and their frequent disagreements at work in 1974 and the result of their research is presented in Figure 1:

Figure 1. Conflict resolution model



The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Resolution Model identifies five ways people handle conflict based on two factors:

- 1) Assertiveness. This can be useful in the following situations:
 - Results are needed fast
 - Ethics or morality is in question
 - You know you are correct and need to push forward

- Other attempts to resolve conflict are fruitless
 - Your power and influence are significant.
- 2) Cooperativeness has other benefits to be utilized in certain cases:
- There is no clear-cut best way to handle the situation
 - Your way may not be the right way.
 - Your opponent/rival is not very disagreeable or is cooperative.
 - Helps lower threat levels in the workplace and minimize your number of enemies. [22]

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Resolution Model model helps individuals and organizations understand different ways to handle conflicts and choose the best approach for each situation. Each conflict mode has strengths and weaknesses, making it suitable for different situations. Several factors influence the best approach, including personality traits—some people handle disagreement well, while others struggle with assertiveness or prefer avoidance. Hierarchical position also plays a role, as more power often means greater influence and responsiveness to assertiveness. The urgency of the problem matters too; pressing issues may require assertiveness, while minor ones might not be worth addressing. Interpersonal relationships are another key factor—cooperation may be better for maintaining strong relationships, while competition might be necessary with a disagreeable rival.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 1

In an increasingly interconnected world shaped by globalization, urbanization, and digital communication, cross-cultural communication has become a vital skill for navigating both personal and professional spheres. This chapter has outlined the historical emergence and theoretical foundations of intercultural communication, and its modern-day applications in academia and the workplace. It has emphasized that effective communication across cultures involves more than linguistic competence; it demands cultural awareness, empathy, and adaptability.

As businesses navigate increasing globalization, fostering clear, culturally sensitive, and collaborative communication becomes not only a strategic necessity but also a vital part of long-term organizational success. Miscommunication rooted in cultural assumptions can hinder collaboration and progress at the workplace. Only through sustained effort, openness, and an understanding that not every attempt will succeed immediately can truly effective cross-cultural communication be achieved. Both employees and employers can use different strategies to improve their communication, for instance, active listening, maintaining etiquette, asking clarifying questions or turn-taking.

Cross-cultural communication is not only about exchanging messages, but also about bridging differences, promoting mutual respect, and enabling meaningful cooperation in a complex, multicultural world. Additionally, understanding the nature and types of conflicts particularly in cross-cultural settings is also crucial for fostering healthy, productive interactions in today's diverse workplaces. Thus, by recognizing these conflict patterns and applying structured models like those proposed by Jeremy Pollack or the Thomas-Kilmann framework, individuals and organizations can approach conflict not as a threat but as an opportunity for growth and collaboration. In the end, effective conflict management in multicultural settings needs not just strategic thinking but also emotional intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and a willingness to make concessions.

2. CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AT THE WORKPLACE IN AMERICAN SERIES

2.1. Models of conflicts presented in fiction

In the context of cross-cultural communication research, fiction and literature can serve as a powerful lens through which we can examine the complexity of multicultural offices in the context of cross-cultural communication research. Fiction provides more than just entertainment: they allow us to gain a deeper understanding of language, behavior, and cultural norms while reflecting on and discussing real-world issues and stereotypes. Helmut Lukesch states in his work “The Relevance of Culture-Specific Elements of TV Series for the Process of Cross-Cultural Understanding” that “whenever the question about the significance of mass media for processes of cross-cultural understanding is raised, one assumption is taken to be self-evident: that mass media have some effect on people” [33].

By analyzing fictional workplaces, we learn how characters resolve misunderstandings, adapt to cultural differences, and ultimately work together, reflecting the struggles and triumphs of real-life multicultural environments. These stories not only highlight the need for cultural awareness and sensitivity, but also offer users the opportunity to observe their own prejudices and reflect on their consequences.

Artistic depictions of workplace communication often reflect the power dynamics and social hierarchies that arise when different cultural norms clash. Characters may use code-switching (changing languages or dialects) or style shifting (changing formality or tone) to meet social norms. Anna Wierzbicka declares that “The fact that blacks and whites in America share the same basic linguistic code (English) does not detract from the idea that blacks and whites have (partly) different cultural norms and that cultural norms are reflected in ways of speaking”[40]

Analyzing these patterns in a fictional environment provides insight into how real-world workers adapt their language to different workplace settings.

Finally, fictional workplaces are an invaluable source for exploring the role of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). In such an environment, communication is not so much about formal grammatical perfection as it is about mutual understanding. Fiction works that involve diverse teams can show how speakers adapt their language—simplifying vocabulary, modifying syntax, or using non-standard expressions. These adjustments reflect real-world strategies that employees use to collaborate effectively in international workplaces.

In this section, we will examine how various works of fiction represent models of conflict in the workplace, exploring the vocabulary, syntax, and stylistic devices used to convey cross-cultural crisis and its resolution. In order to describe the peculiarities of cross-cultural communication at the workplace in series, we have decided to analyse 32 dialogues from *The Office*, *Parks and Recreations*, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*. All of them are available on Sweet TV (<https://sweet.tv/>) or UAkino websites (<https://uakino.me/>). Dialogues that depict conflicts at the workplace were taken from different seasons, since each season of the sitcoms *The Office*, *Parks and Recreation*, and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* introduced new characters—often of diverse national and cultural backgrounds—which naturally gave rise to fresh and varied interpersonal conflicts. The list of selected episodes can be found in the Appendix to this paper.

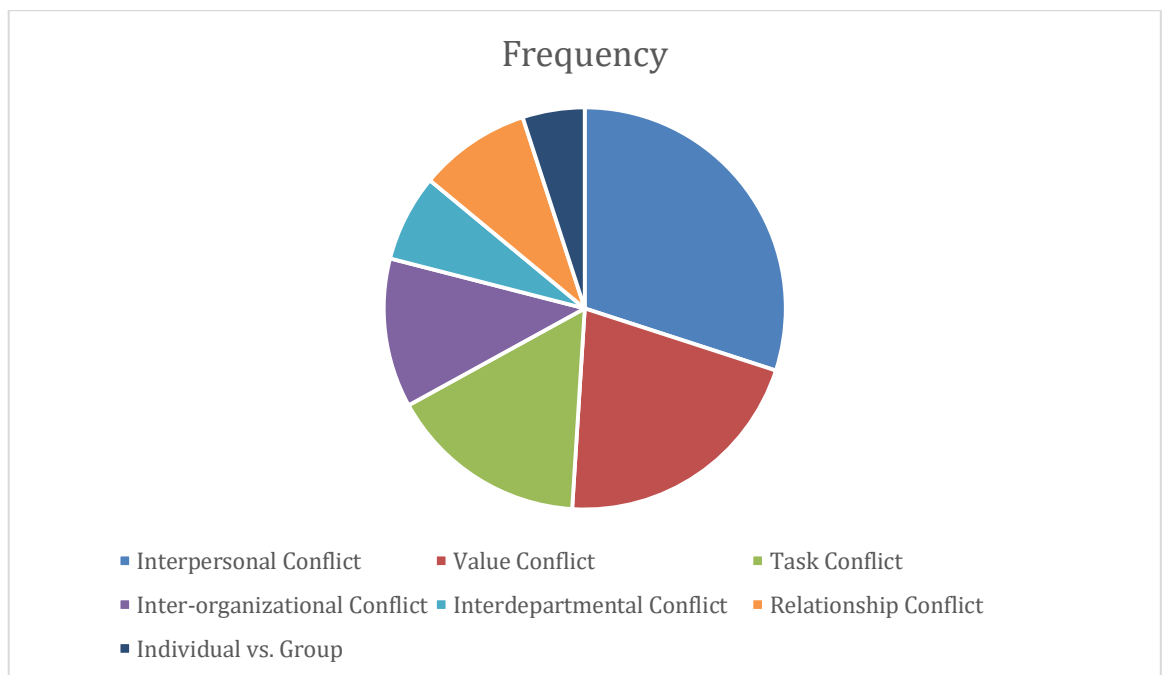
According to Jeremy Pollack [30], there are 7 types of conflicts at the workplace: interpersonal, task, value, individual versus group, interdepartmental, inter-organizational, relationship conflicts, thus we've analysed all dialogues according to this classification:

In our sample, the following percentages correspond to each type of conflict. See Figure 2 below.

- Interpersonal Conflict has the highest frequency, accounting for the largest portion of the pie chart (blue segment).

- Value Conflict follows, representing the second-largest portion (red segment).
- Task Conflict comes next (green segment), making up a significant share.
- Inter-organizational Conflict and Interdepartmental Conflict are also notable but smaller in size (purple and light blue segments respectively).
- Relationship Conflict and Individual vs. Group Conflict have the smallest shares.

Figure 2. Conflict type frequency



This pie chart illustrates the **frequency of different types of conflict**. The chart is divided into seven segments, each representing a specific conflict type with corresponding proportions.

It has been discovered that interpersonal conflict appears most frequently, typically as a clash between individuals due to differences in personality, communication styles, or power dynamics. For instance, Donna vs. April [55]: Donna: *“I’m mad about your reasons. ‘Pretty,’ ‘make up’ — that’s all you know about me?”* April’s superficial view of Donna creates hurt feelings, exposing a lack of meaningful connection. It reflects differences in how identity is perceived and expressed — Donna, a Black woman, feels stereotyped and reduced to surface traits,

whereas April, a younger white woman, operates with a more detached and ironic tone that overlooks deeper cultural sensitivities around representation and self-image. Gina vs. Captain Holt [57]: Gina: *“I don’t want stability in a paycheck. I want to risk.”* Holt: *“When it leaves too soon, it plummets to its death on the concrete below.”* Their conflict reflects a generational and ideological divide: Holt, a disciplined and traditionally-minded gay Black man, emphasizes security and responsibility, while Gina, a free-spirited millennial woman, champions self-expression and nonconformity.

Value Conflicts are also common in cross-cultural interactions that arise from cultural, ethical, or ideological differences. For example, Michael: *“African-Americans have such a rich history of unusual names.”* [47] Charles: *“No. I worked at a company called Saticoy Steel.”* This conflict centers around deeply held assumptions and cultural perceptions, particularly around race and identity. Michael projects a stereotypical and exoticizing view of African-American names, unintentionally implying that Charles’s identity should conform to his biased expectations. The next example is Venezuelan [50]: *“Say: ‘Viva Chavez’”* Leslie: *“I don’t want to viva that guy.”* This is a classic Value Conflict because Leslie is being asked to verbally endorse Hugo Chávez, a controversial political figure, as part of a diplomatic exchange. Her refusal shows a fundamental difference in political values and beliefs between her American democratic ideals and the Venezuelan delegation’s authoritarian loyalty. Interpersonally, there is visible tension and discomfort. The Venezuelan delegates see her resistance as rude or ungrateful, while Leslie feels pressured and manipulated. Some conflicts also arose between delegates due to the fact that English is not the first language for the group from Venezuela. However, cross-cultural miscommunication also happens frequently between coworkers who are both English native speakers, for instance between white and black Americans, which has been described by Anna Wierzbicka “Clearly, one key issue involved in these different communicative modes is that of attitudes to emotion, which white speakers tend to view negatively, as incompatible with clear thinking and rational argumentation, and which black speakers view positively, as a

"natural" and positive force, a sign of sincerity and commitment" [40]. That's when relationship conflicts arise that focus more on emotional tension and personal history. For instance, Michael vs. Charles [47]: Charles: "*This isn't designed for your vanity.*" Michael: "*News flash: I've been here 15 years. You've been here one day.*" Their conflict is influenced by contrasting communication styles and leadership approaches, especially between a white regional manager and a Black corporate executive. Task conflict arises when individuals or groups disagree about how a job should be done, who should do it, or the methods and procedures to be followed. These conflicts are often driven by differences in roles, priorities, or understanding of task objectives.

In *The Office* [45], a clear instance of task conflict unfolds between Darryl and Michael, for instance, Darryl: "*You should not drive the forklift.*" Michael: "*I can and I have.*" Darryl, representing the warehouse staff, emphasizes the necessity of proper training and licensing for operating heavy machinery. His approach is pragmatic, safety-focused, and rooted in institutional protocol. Michael, on the other hand, asserts his authority with personal anecdote and entitlement, dismissing the procedural norms. In another example from *Parks and Rec* [55], Leslie and Tom disagree on public communication strategy during a local government initiative: Leslie: "*I distribute binders... bright yellow!*" Tom: "*No one cared about Calvin Broadus until he started calling himself Snoop...*" Here, Leslie adheres to traditional bureaucratic methods—binders, facts, and structured meetings—whereas Tom advocates for rebranding and marketing psychology. This episode exemplifies a clash between conventional civic engagement and modern branding strategies, reflecting a broader cultural shift in public administration. It also highlights generational differences in communication, with Leslie representing earnest policy work and Tom embodying millennial-style innovation.

Interdepartmental conflict occurs when distinct units within an organization experience friction due to differences in communication style, priorities, or organizational culture. In *The Office* [43], this conflict is personified in the dynamic between Mr. Brown, an external diversity trainer, and Michael Scott: *Mr. Brown:*

“This is what I’m talking about. We don’t have to pretend we’re color-blind.” Michael: *“And tolerance.”* Mr. Brown represents external professional norms, emphasizing authenticity and structured dialogue. Michael responds with defensiveness and an oversimplified view of racial equity, revealing his discomfort and lack of cultural competence. The tension here is not only interdepartmental but cross-cultural, as Mr. Brown, a Black professional, confronts Michael’s ignorance wrapped in good intentions. Another example of interdepartmental friction appears in *Parks and Rec* [54] between Craig and Donna: Craig: *“I did everything! I carried Eagleton on my shoulders!”* Craig, newly merged into the Pawnee Parks Department, exhibits frustration and a need for validation. Donna, a long-standing member of Pawnee, responds with skepticism. This conflict highlights territorialism and the difficulties in integrating teams post-merger.

Inter-organizational conflict arises is one of the most hard to resolve and occurs between representatives from different organizations or institutions. In *Parks and Rec* [50], the cultural and ideological divide between Leslie and the Venezuelan diplomats is immediately evident: Venezuelan: *“In our country, government officials drink only bottled water.”* Leslie: *“I can assure you that water is very safe to drink.”* The Venezuelan expectation of luxury and hierarchy contrasts sharply with Leslie’s egalitarian and modest approach to public service. This difference in values triggers repeated misunderstandings throughout their visit, exposing not just bureaucratic dissonance, but deep cultural divides concerning governance, class, and entitlement. Another inter-organizational conflict appears in *Parks and Rec* [52], when Tom confronts a store owner who has blatantly copied his business model: Tom: *“This looks exactly like my store!”* Owner: *“When he rips someone off, he goes all the way.”* This interaction, while comedic, reflects real-world tensions between originality and imitation in entrepreneurial settings. Tom’s frustration stems from intellectual theft and brand dilution, while the owner’s unapologetic stance exemplifies cutthroat business practices. Here, organizational values regarding creativity, ethics, and competition come into sharp conflict, representing larger economic and moral debates.

Conflicts Individual vs Group were found in 2 episodes and they emerge when an individual's actions, values, or behaviors clash with the collective expectations of a group. In *The Office* [44], Michael unilaterally decides to alter the traditional holiday game: Michael: *"We're turning Secret Santa into Yankee Swap... I call it fun!"* Jim: *What is Yankee Swap?* Michael: *One person chooses a gift. The next person can either choose a gift or steal that person's gift. If your gift gets stolen, then you can steal someone else's gift or choose the next gift. Nasty!* Jim: *I thought that was called Nasty Christmas.* Pam: *Yeah, we call it White Elephant.* Michael: *Well, I call it fun!(agressively)* Michael's assertion of personal preference over group tradition triggers confusion and dissatisfaction among the employees. His need to control and redefine the event reflects a desire for personal impact at the expense of communal harmony. Similarly, in *Parks and Rec* [50], a Venezuelan diplomat openly criticizes the democratic process he observes in Pawnee: Venezuelan: *"We are like kings! This meeting of ugly people yelling? It is like torture."* The diplomat's comment reveals disdain for participatory governance and public forums, elements cherished in American civic culture. The resulting conflict is both ideological and procedural, grounded in fundamentally different worldviews about power and participation.

We can conclude that each conflict reflects different dimensions of how misunderstandings and structural tensions manifest themselves in daily work life. These conflicts are further complicated by layers of cross-cultural communication, generational divides, and contrasting leadership styles.

2.2. Vocabulary features of conflictual interactions in cross-cultural communication

In contemporary television series, language not only serves as entertainment, but also reflects broader cultural, professional, and interpersonal dynamics. Through the use of jargon, idiomatic expressions, register changes, slang, and stylistic devices such as exaggeration and metaphor, writers create realistic models of communication. This chapter will analyze the vocabulary of selected TV series (*The Office, Parks and*

Recreation, Brooklyn Nine-Nine) as a reflection of workplace dynamics, interpersonal conflicts, cultural misunderstandings, and humor. Special attention will be paid to the functional and stylistic role of different types of vocabulary in conflict and humorous interactions.

Jargon is a common feature of workplace-based TV shows, bringing a specific professional context to dialogues. In stories “these terms are used to indicate the technical peculiarities of the subject dealt with, or to make some reference to the occupation of a character whose language would naturally contain terminological words and expressions” [28, p 28] In *The Office*, business and warehouse jargon (“*license to operate this machine,*” “*baler,*” “*trash compactor*”) signifies safety norms and operational protocols. Conflicts, such as Darryl's reprimanding of Michael for trying to operate dangerous equipment without a license, highlight how technical language also enforces authority structures. Corporate culture vocabulary related to diversity (“*honesty,*” “*positive expectations,*” “*ignorance,*” “*tolerance*”) emerges during diversity training sessions (Season 1, Episode 2), where miscommunication between Mr. Brown and Michael Scott reveal how jargon, when misunderstood, can provoke awkwardness or even reinforce prejudices. Similarly, *Parks and Recreation* uses bureaucratic terminology, such as “*budget deficit*” and “*Department of Riding,*” and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* uses investigative jargon “*informant*” and “*electronic sources*”. Jargon is used to establish authenticity in specialized areas and to strengthen group membership. However, it can also cause communication barriers, especially when characters from outside the field misinterpret or misuse such specialized vocabulary, thus creating misunderstandings or humor.

The next vocabulary feature that we have come across quite often while analysing dialogues from the series is the use of **idioms**. In *The Office*, Michael frequently uses idioms such as “*color-free zone*” and “*fight fire with fire,*” which ironically display his ignorance rather than promote inclusivity. *Parks and Recreation* heavily relies on cultural references: for instance, Tom Haverford's discussion of celebrity name changes (“*Snoop Doggy Dogg,*” “*Snoop Dogg,*” “*Snoop Lion*”) in the context of rebranding fluoride reflects the intersection of pop culture and public

administration. Leslie on the other hand uses idioms: “*loose cannon*,” “*loose as a goose*” to highlight how frustrated she is. *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* satirizes professionalism with playful references like “*Fuzzy Cuddle Bear*” (a hidden camera), mocking traditional notions of police informants.

Slang and **colloquial language** contribute significantly to self expression of characters and humor of the series, “serving to create fresh names for some things that are frequent topics of conversation” [28, p. 29]. *The Office* features slang such as “*screwed*,” “*fat butt disease*,” and “*contraption*,” the latter humorously portraying outdated Southern dialect stereotypes during Michael’s imitations. *Parks and Recreation* sees Tom refer to Donna as “*My Nubian princess*”, blending affectionate slang with cultural overtones during discussions about personal relaxation rituals. Additionally, Tom uses slang quite often to show disapproval or anger, for instance, “*What the hell, man?*” and “*Hydrox, Oreo*” analogy are informal and slang-like. He also coined new terms on the spot to distinguish himself from others, for instance, “*Ben-to-box*” (nickname for Ben) — neologism, slangy play on words. “*Treat yourself day*” — informal coinage, became iconic slang inside the show. By inventing expressions, Tom builds a personal brand — he’s not just another boring government worker; he’s Tom Haverford, stylish and original. Working in government is supposed to be serious — rules, forms, boring meetings. Tom uses playful language as a form of soft rebellion against the dull, bureaucratic system. In *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, Gina’s phrases “*Gina Coin*,” “*pamper yourself*” and exaggerated metaphors illustrate a free-spirited, anti-authoritarian communication style. Slang often refers to insider status, or peculiarities of character, but it additionally introduces peculiarities of culture that could worsen miscommunication-based conflicts.

A large portion of the verbal conflict shown in the series is characterized by the dynamic interaction between formal and informal language. Formal register prevails during safety briefings (“*You are not allowed to drive the forklift.*”) or professional settings (“*We do not accept American currency, sir.*”) in *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*. Conversely, informal exchanges such as “*What the hell, man?*” (*Parks and Recreation*) and “*Come on, Mike*” (*The Office*) are prevalent in casual or

emotionally charged moments. Captain Holt's consistent formalism (*"Quote: When it leaves too soon, it plummets to its death."*) sharply contrasts with Gina's informal bravado (*"Nothing bad ever happens to me."*). A clear example of register shift occurs during the diversity training session in *The Office* [43] Mr. Brown employs formal, professional language, stating, *"At Diversity Today, our philosophy is about honesty and positive expectations,"* which reflects the serious tone appropriate for a corporate diversity workshop. In sharp contrast, Michael Scott immediately responds with casual and inappropriate phrasing: *"You know what? This is a color-free zone here."* Another illustrative instance of register shift is found in *The Office* [45] during a warehouse safety training session. Darryl adopts a formal, rule-based tone, warning, *"You're not allowed to drive the forklift. It's not safe and you don't have a license,"* emphasizing official regulations and workplace safety. Michael Scott, however, responds with childish informality: *"I can and I have!"* His casual, defiant tone dismisses the seriousness of Darryl's warning. The stark contrast between Darryl's professional register and Michael's immature humor generates interpersonal conflict, revealing a deeper clash between responsibility and recklessness. Formal and informal register changes frequently represent changes in authority, the seriousness of the circumstance, or the level of conflict escalation.

Additionally, miscommunication arising from **linguistic errors**, **accent differences**, or cultural misunderstandings was noticed across the television series analyzed. In *The Office*, Michael Scott frequently becomes the source of linguistic confusion and unintended humor. His mispronunciation of "Canada" as /'kʌnʌdə/ rather than the standard /'kænədə/ during a conversation with his colleagues leads to a humorous misunderstanding that highlights both his lack of attention to linguistic accuracy and his general ignorance of cultural knowledge. Similarly, Michael's incorrect use of *"sedimentary lifestyle"* instead of *"sedentary lifestyle"* during a workplace health presentation exemplifies how lexical errors can result not only in embarrassment but also in a loss of credibility among colleagues. In *Parks and Recreation* there are some examples of linguistic errors during the cultural exchange between the town of Pawnee and a delegation of Venezuelan government officials.

Throughout their visit, the two groups frequently misinterpret each other's words and intentions. One striking example occurs when Leslie refers to organizing a "party," intending a casual social gathering. Venezuelan: *Do you have some kind of book with photos of the women available to us at the party? If not, I will also take the sexy black one.* Leslie: *I think there might've been a translation problem. When I said party, I meant one that didn't include sex for pay. But one that had food and drink, and dancing, that sort of thing.* So, visitors interpret the term in a drastically different way, assuming it involves the provision of sex workers — a misunderstanding that sharply highlights their divergent cultural frames of reference. Another moment of tension arises when the Venezuelans address Tom as a "servant," a word that, while perhaps more neutral in their cultural background, carries highly negative and demeaning implications in the American context. These small misunderstandings quickly escalate into deeper value and interpersonal conflicts, as the Pawnee officials attempt to maintain diplomatic hospitality. In these situations, *Parks and Recreation* implicitly criticizes cultural arrogance, ethnocentrism, and the fragile nature of intercultural connection by using linguistic gaps, not just for humorous effect.

2.3. Syntactic features of cross-cultural conflictual conversations

Imperative sentences frequently appear in cross-cultural dialogues in sitcoms as a syntactic strategy to issue commands, assert authority, or convey urgency. For example, in *Parks and Recreation*, a Venezuelan official uses the abrupt command "*Send the boy,*" devoid of any mitigating politeness, creating a moment of interpersonal tension rooted in cultural differences. Similarly, another Venezuelan command, "*Say 'Viva Venezuela,'*" puts Leslie in an uncomfortable position, as the imperious tone contradicts American norms of independence and freedom of expression. In the TV series *The Office*, Daryl gives a firm "*Don't touch it!*" when he warns Michael about the dangers of operating warehouse equipment. This use of the imperative mood highlights conflicts in hierarchy and communication style. According to O. Fadeeva and T. Pastushenko [3, p.9] the purpose of an imperative

sentence is to urge the addressee to take action or change their mood or state of mind, e.g. to obey a command, to take advice, to do a favor, to accept an invitation, etc. In a monolingual context, such use may be perceived as effective or assertive; however, in intercultural interactions, imperatives that omit polite modal forms (which choice depends on the formality of the situation and how tentative or unsure the speaker is about the response [35, p 156]) may be perceived as rude or overly authoritarian, contributing to conflicts in relationships or value orientations. Other examples include “*You peel*” from *Parks and Recreation*, in which a Venezuelan guest instructs Tom to peel a banana using a grammatically simple but socially harsh imperative. These instances show how firm orders run the danger of being perceived as patronizing or disrespectful, particularly when they are given in the cultural and power barriers. This reinforces both syntactic difference and cultural tension.

Ellipsis is a common feature in spoken English, often used to reduce redundancy and maintain conversational flow. In sitcoms like *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*, ellipsis serves to create a sense of naturalism and informality, which, while realistic, can lead to communication breakdowns in cross-cultural exchanges. For instance, Donna’s elliptical remark “*Wasn’t gonna*” (*Parks and Recreation*) omits the subject and auxiliary verb (“I was not going to”), relying on shared context to fill in the meaning. Similarly, Michael’s clipped “*Got it*” (*The Office*) omits the subject entirely, signaling quick understanding while maintaining an informal tone. One more example is “*Michael? Should not go anywhere near them*”. Darryl omits the subject on purpose, since his main intention is to teach only Michael because other colleagues seem to understand him. In “*Park and Recs*” the Venezuelan official’s directive “*You peel,*” may reflect either a linguistic limitation or a cultural norm where indirectness is less valued. However, according to O. Fadeeva and T. Pastushenko “The missing elements may be regarded as implicit, as the complete structure can be easily restored due to the context” [3, p.10]. However, in intercultural communication, reliance on elliptical forms can cause confusion, especially for non-native speakers or listeners unfamiliar with implicit meanings. In

such contexts, elliptical structures risk being misinterpreted as abrupt, vague, or even dismissive, thus exacerbating interpersonal or value-based conflicts.

Two commonly employed syntactic features in spoken cross-cultural exchanges are **repetition** and **contractions**. Repetition is frequently used to emphasize emotions, assert dominance, or mock others. For example, Michael Scott's emphatic line "*End of story. End of story.*" (*The Office*), uses repetition to signal his refusal to engage further in debate, reinforcing emotional finality. Then Michael says: "*you`re, you`re not from paper?*" highlighting how shocking this piece of information is for him. Likewise, he repeated "*I do declare!*" in a parody of Southern dialect, functions not only as humorous imitation but also as a way to ridicule cultural stereotypes. In *Parks and Recreation*, the Venezuelan official's statement "*Really, really sad stuff*" employs repetition to amplify disappointment and dramatize critique, exaggerating his disapproval of the host city. According to Fadeeva and Pastushenko [34, p. 238], repetition in English syntax often reflects emotional escalation or communicative insistence. Repetition can serve stylistic purposes, such as adding emphasis, or expressing intensity, particularly in informal or confrontational settings.

Similarly, contractions—such as "*I`m,*" "*you`re,*" and "*don`t*"—play a key role in shaping tone. These contracted forms appear regularly in casual, character-driven exchanges, such as "*I`m going to New York!*" (Michael, *The Office*), "*You don`t touch it!*" (Lonny), and "*It`s very dangerous, okay.*" (Michael). While contractions contribute to the authenticity and ease of spoken English, they also emphasize informality and familiarity, which can be problematic in a formal or intercultural context, and they can also indicate a relaxed register of speech. MyGrammarLab [26] also emphasizes that contractions, while common in everyday English, are usually avoided in formal or written communication. Therefore, when Charles says: "*I don`t care if I`ve hurt your feelings or you don`t agree with me but it`s over.*" It is obvious that he can not maintain a professional demeanor anymore. During the interaction between American hosts and Venezuelan officials in parks and recreation areas - the overuse of contractions can inadvertently reduce the perception of the speaker's

seriousness or professionalism. For instance: *Leslie* “*I think there might’ve been a translation problem. When I said party, I meant one that didn’t include sex for pay. But one that had food and drink, and dancing, that sort of thing.*” Thus, both repetition and contractions, while perfectly natural in informal English, should be interpreted in a culturally and contextually sensitive manner to avoid misunderstandings.

Next syntactic feature that we encountered quite often in the series is frequent use of **rhetorical questions**. In cross-cultural sitcom dialogues, they are frequently employed to challenge authority, mock others, or reinforce superiority in moments of conflict. For instance, in *The Office*, Darryl confronts Michael’s childish behavior with the pointed rhetorical question, “*Should you drive the forklift?*”, which is less a request for information and more to double check if his colleague understood everything. Michael’s own line, “*Have you ever seen Santa?*”, directed at Darryl in the context of a racially charged conversation, similarly serves not to elicit an answer but to invalidate Darryl’s position by invoking a cultural stereotype. In *Parks and Recreation*, the Venezuelan official’s blunt “*Are you kidding me?*” in response to democratic public forums expresses disbelief and superiority, while simultaneously belittling American civic procedures. Another example appears when Donna confronts April: “*That’s all you know about me?*”—a question intended to expose shallow assumptions, not to invite clarification.

We have also noticed that asking **double questions** is one of the reasons of provoking cross-cultural conflicts at the workplace. For instance, in *The Office* [47]:
 Michael: *Come on! Tell me something you’ve never told before. What’s your wife’s name? Where did you work before you came here?*

Black manager Charles: *Saticoy Steel*

Michael: *Beautiful. See, african-americans have such a rich history of unusual names.*

Black manager Charles: *No. I worked at a company called Saticoy Steel!*

Thus as it was mentioned in the theoretical part: Asking double questions might confuse the audience and make it difficult to prioritize their response or

determine which question to respond first, which could result in replies that are either irrelevant or incomplete [39].

Modal verbs such as *can*, *should*, *would*, and *must* play a central role in expressing possibility, obligation, necessity, and advice across spoken discourse. In the context of cross-cultural dialogues, modal verbs often reflect not only syntactic modality but also interpersonal positioning, especially in hierarchically sensitive or emotionally charged exchanges. For example, in *The Office*, Darryl's firm assertion "*You should not drive the forklift*" uses *should* to express both obligation and implied authority, marking a boundary between expertise and irresponsibility. The use of this modal indirectly signals a warning while still maintaining professional tone. In *Parks and Recreation*, Tom's aspirational statement "*We must give people something to get excited about*" employs *must* to create a sense of collective urgency and moral imperative, reframing a bureaucratic decision as a call to action. Similarly, in *Brooklyn 99*, Captain Holt states, "*You can't pursue dreams while employed here,*" using *can't* to draw a rigid institutional line, reinforcing the reality of professional sacrifice. According to MyGrammarLab C1 [26, p. 146], modals express nuanced interpersonal meanings, frequently changing the impact of a sentence according on the situation. The modal verb used in cross-cultural relationships might influence how someone perceives someone's level of authority, aggressiveness, or politeness. Although *must* and *can't* enforce stricter boundaries, *should* and *would* tend to soften commands, which may be viewed as dictatorial or insensitive in societies where indirectness is the norm. Modal verbs are therefore essential instruments for negotiating meaning across cultural barriers since they not only serve grammatical purposes but also embody cultural values related to authority, accountability, and communication style.

Furthermore, it has been noted that the characters use a lot of phrasal verbs in their speech. Frequent appearance of phrasal verbs in such sitcoms as *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation*, *Brooklyn 9-9* adds authenticity to character interactions, often reinforcing social closeness or emotional spontaneity. For instance, Michael Scott's exclamation "*Come on!*" (*The Office*) is more than a simple prompt; it expresses

frustration, disbelief, and urgency in a compact, colloquial form. Similarly, in *Parks and Recreation* [52] the phrase “*rip off*,” used by a shop owner accusing Eagleton of selling overpriced goods, conveys emotional intensity and directness, while Tom Haverford’s enthusiastic use of “*crank up*” in reference to his leisure ritual infuses the scene with energy and personal attitude. According to Renuga Mariappan, “phrasal verb formations are very unique and do not fit into any rule governed behaviour” [29, p. 1127]. Moreover, *MyGrammarLab C1* emphasizes that phrasal verbs dominate informal speech and carry pragmatic meanings tied to speaker identity and intent [26, p. 195]. In cross-cultural communication, their overuse or misuse can lead to confusion, misinterpretation, or even unintended offense, particularly when the listener lacks the cultural background needed to decode their figurative meanings. Thus, while phrasal verbs enhance expressive range, they also introduce a layer of linguistic complexity that can hinder understanding in intercultural settings, making them a crucial feature in syntactic-pragmatic analysis of spoken interaction.

Conditional sentences are frequently utilized in sitcom dialogue to express indirect critique, or exaggerated consequences. These constructions are syntactically significant as they establish logical relationships between actions, often dramatizing what could, would, or might have happened under different circumstances. In *The Office*, Michael Scott’s humorous instruction, “*If your gift gets stolen, you can steal someone else’s*,” uses a real conditional form to normalize ethically questionable behavior during a holiday gift exchange. In *Brooklyn 9-9*, Captain Holt’s line, “*If it leaves too soon, it plummets to its death*,” uses a conditional metaphor about a bird to comically underscore the dangers of premature action. Meanwhile, in *Parks and Recreation*, characters frequently rely on implied conditional logic to critique others without being overtly confrontational—for example, when Tom implies that Ben’s poor fashion choices would be different “*if he had any taste*.” Such uses of conditionals blend serious grammatical structure with humor, irony, or passive criticism. In a cross-cultural context, conditionals can function as a face-saving

strategy, allowing speakers to soften negative statements or disagreement in less confrontational terms.

2.4. Stylistic means used in cross-cultural conflictual interactions

Screenwriters in Sitcoms use a variety of stylistic devices to reflect real-life communication problems and enhance the comical effect. These conversations are filled with expressive-emotional elements, demonstrating the tension between personal identity and professional etiquette across cultural boundaries.

The conflict of functional styles is a fundamental aspect of style in series that have been analysed. Speech that is informal or even sarcastic is sometimes contrasted with formal, business-like language. For example, Mr. Brown from *The Office* [43] uses phrases like “*positive expectations*” and “*celebrate our diversity,*” echoing the official style of HR communication. In contrast, Michael Scott abruptly interrupts with informal idioms and slang, such as “*color-free zone*” and “*go around and say a race you’re attracted to*”. Further example of **juxtaposition of different styles** at the workplace is the scene from *Park and Recreation* [52] where American delegates meet British sponsors to discuss the sponsorship of new projects. As it is stated by O. Yashenkova “in Anglo-American workplace discourse people often prefer informal forms of greetings”[42, p.4] but in this episode we can see that initially a British host starts the conversation in a formal way:

Ben: Lord Convington, I`m Ben Wyatt. This is Andy Dwyer, and it is an honor to meet you sir

British: Well, it`s nice to meet you too. However, the proper mode of address would be “Your royal excellency, Lord Edgar Darby Convington, 14th Earl of Cornwall-upon-Thames, 29th Baron of Hertfordshire

Ben: Oh we`re so sorry

British: Ah I`m kidding, I`m kidding. Please call me Eddie.

This shift not only creates humor but also exposes cultural norms and expectations in cross-cultural communication. In the exchange between a British aristocratic character and Ben (*Parks and Recreation*), the humor arises from a deliberate stylistic shift that contrasts hyper-formality with casual American speech.

Additionally, **colloquial style**, as defined by N. Neborsina it is characterized by communicative function [28, p.58], is central to creating a sense of realism, intimacy, and character voice in sitcoms like *The Office*, *Parks and Recreation*, and *Brooklyn 9-9*, since the characters use many **low-colloquial words** (*rip off, crank up, kidding*), **jargon words** (*league, fork lift, diversity*), **occasional words** (*Ben-to-box, Snoop Laser Snake*) or **ellipsis** like “*wasn’t gonna*”. These features can build character authenticity and signal familiarity, however, in cross-cultural communication, colloquial style can become a barrier. Idiomatic phrases and slang may not translate well culturally or linguistically, leading to confusion or unintended offense. For example, the Venezuelan delegates in *Parks and Recreation* misread the American use of “*party*” or fail to understand sarcastic humor delivered in a relaxed tone.

While analyzing the dialogues we have also quite often noticed such a **discourse marker** as “Well”. According to Richard Hirsch [32, p.4] “the functions that many of DMs supposedly carry out in the discourse have also originated from various theoretical approaches. Their functions cover expressions as vague as e.g. fillers or attitude markers and as specific as e.g. topic changers or repair markers” Many sitcom characters use “well” while talking to their colleagues from different cultures to soften the tone of their response, signal hesitation or adjustment in stance, or ease into potentially face-threatening acts. For instance, in *Parks and Recreation*, “*Well, my job is to see your every need*” functions as a polite framing of service expectations, while “*Well, you know, I’m a relaxation novice. Give me some guidance,*” serves as a self-deprecating preface to a request for help, promoting relational harmony. Similarly, in *The Office*, characters use “*Well, I’m sorry. It just doesn’t work,*” or “*Well, it was a bit tough going but it was lively,*” to mitigate criticism or disagreement, displaying intercultural sensitivity and a preference for

indirectness. In such contexts, “*well*” operates not just as a linguistic filler but as a strategic interpersonal tool—marking the speaker's awareness of conversational dynamics and cultural nuances.

Undoubtedly, most often we have come across **irony**, that is defined by N. Neborsina [28, p. 15] the opposite of what is said and what is meant, while analyzing the episodes of *The Office*, *Parks and Recreation*, and *Brooklyn 9-9*. For instance, In *Parks and Recreation*(season 6, episode1), Ron Swanson responds to being refused service in Britain by referring to the U.S. dollar as “*the most wonderful piece of paper in the world*,” an example of sarcastic overstatement used to mock national pride and highlight cultural differences in economic perception. Similarly, Leslie Knope ironically responds to the Venezuelan delegate’s elitist behavior with, “*Yes. We will get our servant, pathetic servant boy, to fetch your luggage*,” using mock deference to expose the visitor’s outdated class assumptions. Captain Holt in *Brooklyn 99* uses harsh irony when he says: “*Quote: When it leaves too soon, it plummets to its death on a concrete below*” contrasting to Gina's idea of personal growth “*Quote: A bird can never learn to fly if it doesn’t leave the nest.*”. By using pop culture as a rhetorical weapon, Tom responds to his business opponent “*He must be one heck of a transporter*” (*Parks and Recreation*), emphasizing the absurd speed and precision with which his rival replicated his store’s design, while simultaneously mocking the lack of originality through a sarcastic reference to the action film *The Transporter*. One more example from this series is Leslie saying “*Welcome to the Department of Infinity Pool Design*,” to mock formality, politics, or authority. Leslie’s line satirizes bureaucratic inflation and elitist government structures by creating absurdly specific yet meaningless job titles.

Metaphors and **similes** are the tropes that can be quite frequently heard in cross-cultural workplace sitcoms as expressive tools that reveal cultural values, personal biases, and hidden hierarchies. These figurative devices often reflect deeper ideological positions or emotional states, while also contributing to humor and miscommunication. For instance, in *Parks and Recreation*, a Venezuelan delegate shares his experience in his autocratic government by saying it “*moves like a hot*

knife through butter,” using a culinary metaphor to celebrate political efficiency at the expense of democratic deliberation. This image, while vivid, subtly critiques and mocks American bureaucracy. Similarly, the line “*We are like kings!*” exaggerates the sense of power that the Venezuelans bring into just such a small American city as Pawnee, provoking a clash in governance ideology. Another delegate mocks the city’s chaotic public forum by saying, “*This meeting of ugly people yelling? It is like torture,*” this **hyperbolic simile** is used to express disgust, but also it reveals his arrogant attitude through exaggerated metaphor. Metaphorical language is also used to navigate interpersonal dynamics. In *Parks and Recreation* [55] Donna compares her Latino colleague to a “*rare black Siberian husky,*” to emphasize strength and solitude but at the same time her rare and so to say foreign beauty. Further example is when Tom’s business rival says metaphor “*You are Hydrox. We are Oreo.*” to contrast a generic brand with a popular one, using consumer symbolism to assert superiority, while “*skinny little rubber band*” functions as a metaphorical insult, mocking physical weakness of Tom. Further example from *Park and Recreation* is when Tom calls his colleague “*relaxation novice*”, using metaphor to frame leisure as a skill-based hierarchy, positioning himself as an expert and implicitly suggesting that his Indian concept of self-care is superior to more modest or culturally different understandings of relaxation. As outlined in *English Stylistics* [28, p.12], metaphors are “sometimes defined as an implied comparison. Frequently, implied comparison takes the form of poetic identification, which is known as the process of giving the name.” Therefore, whereas figurative language enriches conversation and helps characters develop their identities, it also presents risks in cross-cultural communication since its metaphorical meaning might unintentionally escalate conflict, fuel prejudices, or alienate people.

We have also come across many **hyperboles** that serve as powerful stylistic devices in cross-cultural sitcom communication. Hyperbole— “the deliberate use of exaggeration” [28, p. 15]—amplifies emotional tone and reveals characters’ inflated self-perceptions or cultural stereotypes. For example, in *Brooklyn 9-9*, Gina declares: “*I can come up with a new form of cryptocurrency called Gina Coin... write a*

novel... or maybe I'll discover a new type of melon," describes her implausible achievements in a *stream-of-consciousness* manner that mocks the modern obsession with self-branding and limitless ambition. In the same scene, her claim “*Nothing bad ever happens to me*” immediately follows Holt's mention of her being hit by a bus, showcasing absurd denial as comedic overstatement. Similarly, Craig in *Parks and Recreation* shouts, “*I did everything! Everything! I carried the department on my shoulders for years!*”—a theatrical, exaggerated performance at the workplace. These hyperboles do more than entertain—they reflect characters’ emotional extremes and cultural communication norms, especially in high-context, expressive cultures. Also Tom uses religious metaphor and hyperbole “*this is our holy day. It's the only day a year I allow myself to be selfish*” [51] to elevate a casual self-care ritual (*Treat Yo' Self Day*) to the level of sacred tradition. This exaggeration dramatizes the emotional and cultural value he places on consumerism and self-indulgence, framing what is essentially a day of luxury shopping and pampering as something spiritually essential. Thus, the stylistic exaggeration enhances characterization while simultaneously highlighting cultural values around consumption and individualism.

We have also noticed such figures of speech as **repetition**, and specifically **anaphora** (“the repetition of words or phrases in the beginning of successive clauses, sentences or lines” [28, p. 18]) which is a prominent stylistic device used in cross-cultural workplace sitcoms to emphasize emotion, reinforce authority, or just to dramatize. In *The Office*, Michael Scott often relies on repetition to assert control or to avoid deeper engagement with uncomfortable topics. His passionate assertion, “*End of story. End of story*”, serves as both a linguistic shutdown and a self-supporting argument, demonstrating his uneasiness with resistance and his inclination for using words performatively rather than logically. In *Parks and Recreation*, Craig’s outburst—“*I did everything! Everything!*”—illustrates repetition as an emotional amplifier. This repetition highlights his sense of responsibility, dramatizing a workplace conflict through exaggerated speech. Similarly, in *Parks and Recreation*, the Venezuelan delegate’s critique of Pawnee’s governance “*Really, really sad stuff*” uses repetition to deliver sarcastic disdain while also underscoring cultural

superiority. It is stated that “The main stylistic function of anaphora is to create a background for nonrepeated units of the utterance or the text, to give it logical and/or emotional emphasis and to underline its novelty.” [37, p.3] In cross-cultural communication, however, such repetition can be misread and seen as aggressive, overly emotional, or lacking professionalism especially when spoken across differing norms of verbal restraint.

2.5. Consequences of conflicts and reconciliation at the workplace

Reconciliation at the workplace is essential for maintaining a healthy, productive environment where collaboration and trust can thrive. Without it, unresolved conflicts can escalate, damage team cohesion, and hinder organizational effectiveness. Rami Kamak states that “At the societal level, cross-cultural reconciliation serves as a catalyst for social cohesion and stability” [19, p.2].

Conflict is regularly used not simply as an argument engine in *The Office*, *Parks and Recreation*, and *Brooklyn 9-9*, but also as a source of stylistic richness and critique of culture. When seen through the lens of intercultural communication, these disagreements become more complex, frequently reflecting larger socio-cultural beliefs, expectations, and communication norms. According to Merk Vincent [38, p.5], “it is necessary to first apply a three-step approach, known as the 3 R’s: Recognition, Respect, Reconciliation” to dispute resolutions. These are clearly dramatized in series *The Office*, *Park and Recreation*, *Brooklyn 9-9*. Recognition occurs when characters acknowledge cultural gaps, for instance, when Leslie realizes that “party” was misinterpreted by the Venezuelans: “*When I said party, I meant one that didn’t include sex for pay. But one that had food and drink, and dancing, that sort of thing.*” As it is stated by Merk Vincent Respect means “showing tolerance and respect for the other party and the other culture, i.e. developing empathy and being able to do what is commonly known as putting yourself in the other person’s shoes to fully understand his/her attitude, know the norms and values, etc.” [38, p. 5]

And respect follows recognition as characters attempt to engage without immediate judgment, as seen when Leslie says, *"It's a different culture, okay? Just be a good host."*

Language style plays a crucial role in both escalating and resolving conflict. The characters in the series frequently use sarcasm, hyperbole, and repetition as stylistic intensifiers. The sitcoms also use metaphor, and register shifting as tools for reconciliation. A striking example of register shift leading to reconciliation occurs in *Parks and Recreation* [50], when Leslie, after being insulted by a foreign official, responds with composure: *"That's fine, that's my job. I am a diplomat. I'm not supposed to take it personally."* Here, Leslie transitions from informal confrontation to a formal, self-controlled tone, reframing the interaction in institutional rather than personal terms. This change in register helps shift the tension of the scene, allowing diplomacy and professionalism to redirect the tone toward reconciliation. We have also noticed that a lot of characters in the series use the word *"Fine"* to finish conflicts and deflect tension. *"Fine,"* which is frequently used in a neutral or frustrated tone, serves as a discourse marker that signifies reluctant acceptance or the end of a dispute without a complete conclusion. Additionally, the usage of metaphors can also help resolve cross-cultural conflicts. For instance, interpersonal conflicts, such as Donna confronting April for reducing her identity to beauty and makeup, show deeper emotional tensions. The metaphorical resolution comparing April to a *"rare black Siberian husky"* marks a stylistic shift from confrontation to poetic reconciliation, using metaphor to reframe and dignify the other's identity.

It is also important to mention that sometimes cross-cultural conflicts at the workplace can not be fully solved due to highly polarized opinions of colleagues. In this case speakers might choose abandoning strategy which is "adopt a "when in Rome, do as Romans do" approach" [38, p.10]. This approach is quite often used by Michael Schott in *The Office* when he communicates with his black colleagues from the warehouse, thus, the frequent collisions between Darryl and Michael end not in full resolution but in a functional working relationship. Michael never completely conforms, but his eventual willingness to listen: *"All right! I got it, I got it."* signals

movement toward compromise. We have also noticed that Micheal quite often uses rhetorical question: “*You know what?*” to achieve resolution. This phrase functions not as a genuine query but as a discourse marker that signals a shift in conversational control and initiates a declarative turn. For instance, in moments of escalating tension or confusion, Michael redirects the dialogue with utterances like “*You know what? This is a color-free zone here!*”. These expressions allow him to assert authority and impose a resolution, however, by recentering the conversation around his decision. In a cross-cultural setting, this formulaic use represents American workplace norms of confidence and independence, which, based on the cultural standards of the other person, could be seen as either authoritative or bossy.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2

Through the analysis of workplace conflicts in fictional series such as *The Office*, *Parks and Recreation*, and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* we have revealed most frequent communication patterns in cross-cultural environments. By categorizing conflicts into interpersonal, task-based, interdepartmental, and others we gain a structured lens through which to understand the nuanced dimensions of workplace discord. Through the prism of fiction, we witness how cultural norms, linguistic practices such as code-switching and style-shifting, and value systems intersect, often with comedic but meaningful outcomes. The vocabulary features analyzed in *The Office*, *Parks and Recreation*, and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* reveal how language both reflects and drives conflict in cross-cultural and workplace communication. Jargon makes professional environments authentic but can also become a source of confusion or power imbalance when misused or misunderstood. Idioms and slang enrich character identity and humor but often reinforce cultural misunderstandings or highlight social ignorance. The syntactic features found in cross-cultural sitcom dialogue—such as imperatives, ellipsis, repetition, contractions, rhetorical questions, modal verbs, phrasal verbs, and conditional structures—play a crucial role in shaping communication dynamics and revealing cultural tensions. As demonstrated through examples from *The Office*, *Parks and Recreation*, and *Brooklyn 9-9*, syntactic choices can unintentionally provoke misunderstandings or escalate interpersonal conflicts when interpreted through differing cultural lenses. Additionally, stylistic devices highlight cultural differences, power dynamics, and the complexity of human interaction. From irony and hyperbole to metaphor, colloquial language, and discourse markers like "well," these stylistic elements shape both character identity and narrative tone. The juxtaposition of formal and informal speech, the use of idioms and slang, and the strategic repetition of phrases expose both the absurdities and intricacies of multicultural communication. Stylistic elements often reflect real-world communicative challenges where misunderstanding and humor intersect, particularly across cultural and professional boundaries.

CONCLUSION

In an era marked by rapid globalization and increasingly multicultural workplaces, the significance of cross-cultural communication has become paramount. This study has linguistic features of communication across cultures within professional environments, shedding light on both the challenges and opportunities such diversity presents. Drawing on interviews, case studies, and theoretical frameworks, it has become evident that while cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings and conflict, they also hold the potential to enrich collaboration, innovation, and organizational growth when effectively managed.

To begin with, the spark that started the study of cross-cultural communication at work and the profound role of language is widely credited to Edward T. Hall's foundational work on intercultural communication. His recognition of the interdisciplinary nature of communication, drawing from fields such as linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and sociology, highlights the complexity of understanding and navigating interactions across cultures. We have also discovered that many universities such as the University of Jyväskylä and institutions play a critical role in preparing students and professionals to engage with cultural diversity.

Communication stands at the heart of corporate culture, shaping not only how individuals interact but also how organizations function, innovate, and thrive in a globalized world. As this study has shown, effective workplace communication is far more than the exchange of information, it is a dynamic, goal-oriented process that reflects underlying cultural values, individual beliefs, and organizational norms. From onboarding new employees to managing diverse teams and collaborating on shared projects, communication influences every layer of corporate life. The rise of multicultural and multilingual workplaces has made cross-cultural competence a necessity, highlighting the importance of language awareness, clarity, and adaptability. Differences in communication styles and expectations can lead to misunderstandings, yet when managed with sensitivity and skill, these same differences can drive creativity and stronger business outcomes.

Respecting cultural differences and embracing diverse perspectives are essential foundations for minimizing misunderstandings and fostering cooperation. However, when conflicts arise, there are cross-cultural communication strategies such as active listening, maintaining etiquette, asking open-ended questions, taking conversational turns, simplifying language, avoiding slang, speaking at an appropriate pace, using feedback loops, and supporting language development. These approaches not only enhance mutual understanding but also contribute to more inclusive, respectful, and productive work environments in today's globalized world.

While analysing 32 dialogues from popular fictional workplaces portrayed in *The Office*, *Parks and Recreation*, and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, we have discovered how these series offer valuable insight into recurring patterns of communication in multicultural professional settings. By organizing conflicts into categories like interpersonal tensions, task-related issues, and departmental clashes, a clearer framework emerges for interpreting the underlying causes of workplace friction. These shows use humor to depict the intersections of cultural norms, shifting speech styles, and value systems, showing how these elements complicate day-to-day interactions. Language emerges as both a tool and a trigger—technical jargon can lend credibility but also alienate, while idioms and slang add personality but risk miscommunication. The syntax used in these sitcoms—such as commands, incomplete sentences, rhetorical devices, and modal expressions—reflects real-world communicative patterns that may fuel or resolve tensions depending on context and cultural background. Stylistic choices further emphasize power dynamics and cultural contrasts; irony, informal phrasing, metaphors, slang and jargons reveal subtle shifts in tone and perspective.

In general, the present study underscores the crucial role of cultural awareness, linguistic adaptability, and strategic communication practices in fostering effective cross-cultural communication within the workplace.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Представлене дослідження присвячено вивченню особливостей міжкультурної комунікації у професійному середовищі на матеріалі діалогів із популярних американських телевізійних серіалів. Актуальність теми зумовлено глобалізаційними процесами, які призвели до зростання кількості мультикультурних колективів, у яких ключовою умовою досягнення спільних цілей є ефективна комунікація. З огляду на те, що телевізійні серіали моделюють комунікативні ситуації, максимально наближені до реальних, аналіз спілкування героїв у таких ситуаціях дозволяє дослідити типові моделі міжкультурної взаємодії в офісному середовищі.

Об'єктом дослідження виступає комунікативна взаємодія в обраних для аналізу американських серіалах («Офіс», «Парки та зони відпочинку», «Бруклін 9-9»), у яких змодельовано робочі ситуації у мультикультурному середовищі. Предметом дослідження є лексичні, синтаксичні та стилістичні засоби, властиві мовленню героїв у типових моделях міжкультурної комунікації та конфліктних ситуаціях на робочому місці.

Мета роботи полягає у виявленні найбільш поширених типів конфліктів у міжкультурному робочому середовищі та вивченні їхніх мовних особливостей конфліктного спілкування на прикладі діалогів героїв телевізійних серіалів. Для досягнення цієї мети було поставлено такі завдання:

- розглянути історію дослідження міжкультурної комунікації та розкрити поняття корпоративної культури;
- визначити основні стратегії комунікації та типи конфліктів на робочому місці;
- проаналізувати лексичні, синтаксичні та стилістичні особливості зразків конфліктної взаємодії у серіалах.

У ході дослідження було виявлено, що найбільш поширеними типами конфліктів у мультикультурному робочому середовищі є міжособистісні і ціннісні конфлікти, конфлікти, пов'язані з виконанням робочих завдань, а також організаційні та міжгрупові конфлікти. Найчастіше конфлікти виникають через розбіжності у стилях комунікації та очікуваннях щодо поведінки в професійному контексті. Епізоди з серіалів «Офіс», «Парки та зони відпочинку» та «Бруклін 9-9» демонструють мовну реалізацію різноманітних конфліктних ситуацій, вивчення якої на лексичному та синтаксичному рівнях, а також на рівні стилістичних прийомів дозволяє усвідомити причини викликів у сфері міжкультурного професійного спілкування.

На основі проведеного дослідження можна зробити висновок, що міжкультурна комунікація в професійному контексті передбачає відмінності у культурних цінностях мовців, у комунікативних стратегіях, способах вираження емоцій та вживаних лексико-стилістичних засобах, що й спричиняє непорозуміння та конфлікти. Мовними джерелами конфліктних ситуацій є використання мовцями відповідних ідіом (*"color-free zone" and "fight fire with fire," "loose cannon," "loose as a goose," "Hydrox, Oreo"*), сленгу (*"screwed," "fat butt disease," and "contraption," "pamper yourself"*), жаргону (*"license to operate this machine," "baler," "trash compactor", "budget deficit", "Department of Riding", "informant" and "electronic sources"*).

Проведене дослідження дозволило також виявити синтаксичні особливості мовлення учасників конфліктного спілкування у міжкультурному робочому середовищі. До найхарактерніших властивостей конфліктних діалогів на синтаксичному рівні належить широке уживання:

- спонукальних речень з наказовими формами дієслів, які вживаються для вираження наказу, заборони або критики.

- риторичних запитань, що використовуються не для отримання відповіді, а для підсилення емоційного ефекту або вираження роздратування. Наприклад: *“Are you kidding me?”*, *“That’s all you know about me?”*
- еліптичних речень, які є абсолютно природними для розмовного мовлення, проте у міжкультурному спілкуванні можуть викликати непорозуміння через незрозумілість для носіїв мови. Наприклад: *“Wasn’t gonna”*, *“Got it”*.
- анафоричних та епіфоричних повторів, що використовуються для досягнення емоційної напруги, акцентування або іронії: *“End of story. End of story.”*, *“Really, really sad stuff.”*

У роботі було також проаналізовано стилістичні засоби лексичного рівня, вживання яких характерне для конфліктів у міжкультурному професійному спілкуванні. Основними виявленими нпми прийомами є метафори, епітети, гіперболи, сарказм, та культурні алюзії.

Таким чином, проведене дослідження доводить, що міжкультурна комунікація у професійному середовищі є складним, багаторівневим явищем, у якому мовні та культурні чинники тісно переплетені. Аналіз лексичних і синтаксичних особливостей мовлення героїв телевізійних серіалів, а також вживаних ними тропів та інших стилістичних засобів у діалогах георів засвідчив, що конфлікти найчастіше виникають на тлі відмінностей у мовній поведінці та ціннісних установках учасників. Сценарії телевізійних серіалів, будучи відображенням реальних ситуацій, виступають репрезентативним матеріалом для вивчення мовних проявів конфлікту та способів його подолання. Отримані результати можуть бути корисними для підвищення міжкультурної компетентності фахівців, які працюють у багатонаціональних колективах, а також для подальших лінгвістичних досліджень у сфері професійного спілкування.

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