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**ЩО ТАКЕ РІДНА ДОМІВКА ДЛЯ ДИТИНИ ТРЕТЬОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ?***Алексєєва Ірина Олексіївна, i.alekseeva@knu.ua*

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У статті розглядається вербалізація концепту *НОМЕ* у мовленні дітей третьої культури (ДТК), соціальної групи, яка складається з людей, що провели значний період свого дитинства в культурі, яка відрізняється від культури батьків. Актуальність дослідження ґрунтується на тому, що хоча вивчення цієї групи в межах соціології почалося в 1950-х роках, цей феномен до сьогодні залишався поза увагою спеціалістів у галузі когнітивної лінгвістики, лінгвокультурології, соціо- та психолінгвістики. Оскільки глобалізаційні процеси перетворили міграцію робочої сили у типову рису сучасних суспільств, мобільність батьків сприяє тому, що все більше дітей зростають в іншокультурному середовищі. Діти стикаються з культурними відмінностями ще до остаточного формування своєї ідентичності, тому визначення своєї приналежності до певної соціальної групи може перетворитися для них на дилему. Аналіз термінів, які використовуються як синоніми до ДТК, виявив такі компоненти цього концепту: «мобільність» (яка визначається або як періодичне переміщення, або як спосіб життя), «приналежність» (до всього світу, а не до певної країни чи регіону) та орієнтація на майбутнє (тобто очікується, що більшу частину наступних поколінь складатимуть ДТК). Регулярні переїзди змінюють у дітей третьої культури сприйняття найбільш природних концептів. Так, концепт *НОМЕ* починає спантелечувати та здаватися суперечливим, отримуючи кілька значень: від місця фактичного проживання людини – до «всюди» або «ніде». При цьому концепт *НОМЕ* є одним з ключових для самоідентифікації, оскільки він надає відчуття приналежності та емоційно «прив'язує» людину до місцевості та громади. Під час спілкування діти третьої культури, добре обізнані в тому, як прощатися, як правило уникають стратегій, спрямованих на формування близьких стосунків (*bonding*), проте досягають високої компетенції у стратегіях подолання культурних відмінностей (*bridging*). Розуміння культурної та регіональної ідентичності комуніканта допомагає передбачити його поведінку та світогляд, саме тому питання «Звідки ти?» є обов'язковим для першої зустрічі. Саме це питання сприймається дітьми третьої культури як виклик, оскільки вони усвідомлюють невизначеність для себе концепту *НОМЕ* або відмінність свого розуміння цього концепту від розуміння його іншими соціальними групами.

**Ключові слова:** діти третьої культури, концепт *НОМЕ*, лексема, сема, ідентичність, формування ідентичності, комунікація

Актуальні проблеми мовознавства [Актуальные проблемы языкознания]

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Що таке рідна домівка для дитини третьої культури? [Что такое родной дом для детей третьей культуры?] (Англійською / На англ. яз)

## ЧТО ТАКОЕ РОДНОЙ ДОМ ДЛЯ ДЕТЕЙ ТРЕТЬЕЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ?

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*В статье рассматривается вербализация концепта НОМЕ в речи детей третьей культуры (ДТК), социальной группы, состоящей из людей, которые провели значительный период своего детства в культуре, отличной от культуры родителей. Актуальность исследования обусловлена тем, что хотя изучение этой группы в рамках социологии началось в 1950-х годах, феномен еще мало изучался специалистами в области когнитивной лингвистики, лингвокультурологии, социо- и психолингвистики. Поскольку глобализационные процессы превратили миграцию рабочей силы в характерную черту современных обществ, мобильность родителей благоприятствует тому, что все больше и больше детей растет в инокультурной среде. Дети сталкиваются с культурными различиями до окончательного формирования своей идентичности, поэтому определение своей принадлежности к конкретной социальной группе может стать для них проблематичным. Анализ терминов, употребляющихся в качестве синонимов ДТК, выявил такие компоненты этого концепта: «мобильность» (понимаемая или как периодическое перемещение, или как образ жизни), «принадлежность» (всему миру, а не отдельной стране или региону, ориентация на будущее (т.е. ожидается, что большую часть следующих поколений будут составлять ДТК)). Регулярные переезды трансформируют у детей третьей культуры восприятие наиболее естественных концептов. Так, концепт НОМЕ начинает озадачивать и казаться противоречивым, приобретая несколько значений: от места фактического проживания – до «везде» и «нигде». При этом концепт НОМЕ является одним из ключевых для самоидентификации, поскольку он дает ощущение принадлежности и эмоционально «привязывает» человека к местности и общине. Во время коммуникации дети третьей культуры, хорошо знакомые с расставаниями, как правило избегают стратегий, направленных на формирование близких отношений (bonding), однако приобретают высокую компетенцию в стратегиях преодоления культурных отличий (bridging). Понимание культурной и региональной идентичности коммуниканта помогает предвидеть его поведение и мировоззрение, именно поэтому вопрос «Откуда ты?» является обязательным при первом знакомстве. Именно этот вопрос воспринимается детьми третьей культуры как вызов, поскольку они осознают неопределенность концепта НОМЕ или же различия между своим пониманием этого концепта и пониманием его другими социальными группами.*

***Ключевые слова:** дети третьей культуры, концепт НОМЕ, лексема, сема, идентичность, формирование идентичности, коммуникация.*

## WHAT IS HOME FOR A THIRD CULTURE KID?

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*The article looks into the HOME concept as it is verbalized in discourse of Third Culture Kids (TCKs), a social group defined as people who have spent a considerable period of their developmental years in a culture different from that of their parents'. The topicality of the study rests on the fact that though the sociological research into the TCK phenomenon started in the 1950s, yet it is only in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, socio- and psycholinguistics start to examine this social group. Since current globalization processes have turned workforce migration into a typical feature of modern societies, parents' mobility exposes more and more children to two or more cultures. As long as children face cultural differences before their identity has been constructed, they have difficulty affiliating with any social group. The analysis of the terms used as synonyms for TCK has revealed that the components of this concept are 'mobility' (interpreted either as occasional relocation or as a lifestyle feature), 'belonging' (to the whole world rather than a country or region) and future orientation (next generations are expected to be made up largely by TCKs). Regular moves change TCKs' perception of the most natural human concepts. Thus, the concept HOME becomes quite puzzling and controversial and may be interpreted in a number of ways: from a place where one is currently living to everywhere or nowhere. The HOME concept is vital for one's self-identification: it gives one a sense of belonging and anchors one emotionally to a place and a community. However, TCKs, well-versed in saying goodbyes, tend to avoid bonding, i.e. strategies aimed at forming close relations, though they acquire a high competence in bridging, i.e. in strategies that deal with overcoming cultural dissimilarities. Understanding a partner's place identity helps to make their behaviour and their worldview predictable, which turns the 'Where are you from?' question into a typical one at the first encounter. It is this very question that is inevitably perceived by TCKs as a challenge, since they are conscious of their vague or peculiar conceptualization of the HOME concept.*

**Key words:** *Third Culture Kid, concept HOME, lexeme, seme, identity, identity construction, communication*

### **Introduction to the problem**

The first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have revealed that exposure to new technologies in communication coupled with globalization leads to the gradual re-shaping of human cognition and psychological makeup. Some modern phenomena may be a mere reproduction of centuries-old processes, yet they are marked with new features, may take on new forms, have greater impact and develop extremely fast. One

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*Актуальні проблеми мовознавства [Актуальные проблемы языкознания]*

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**Що таке рідна домівка для дитини третьої культури? [Что такое родной дом для детей третьей культуры?]** (Англійською / На англ. яз)

of these phenomena is the issue of generation change.

Technologies have allowed quick transportation and instant communication, which in the long run makes the world shrink and become accessible to ever more people. Starting from the 1950 s, Western states, especially the USA, have been expanding economically and politically, which has resulted in ever increasing mobility of workforce from the so-called “West” to “the Rest”: diplomats, military, business and media people, educators, religious missionaries to name just a few have left their countries to work elsewhere. At present, the flow in the opposite direction (i.e. from “the Rest” to “the West”) has turned into a turbulent torrent. But in either case, adults, born and raised in one society, bring their children along into a culturally new environment, and may change this environment more than once some time later, since the parents may get regularly relocated. These children, called ‘third culture kids’, or ‘TCKs’, seem to develop a worldview and perception, remarkably different from those their parents’. Since the TCK social group is steadily increasing in number, it draws attention of experts in various fields, e.g. psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and linguists.

To start with, the term ‘third culture kids’ was coined by sociologists Ruth Hill Useem and John Useem after they had spent a year in India with their three children in the 1950 s. Initially, ‘third culture’ was used to refer to the process of learning how to relate to another culture and Useem suggested the term ‘Third Culture Kids’ because TCKs integrate aspects of their first (birth) culture and the new (second) culture, creating a unique ‘third culture’. At present, third culture kids are defined as people who have spent a significant part of their developmental years outside their parents’ culture [Pollock and Van Reken 2009, p. 13]. While living abroad, TCKs form relationships there and may never have visited their passport country, so it does not come as surprise that they find it challenging to affiliate with their ‘native’ country, formally their ‘own’ ethnic group, their ‘own’ culture or region.

With the development of identity politics and the ideology of multiculturalism, the notion of identity has been attracting ever more attention. However, TCKs as a social group grow in number exponentially and show a very controversial national, political and cultural affiliations, posing a challenge to sociologists and political experts.

Meanwhile, modern societies and media give everyone a voice, so TCKs do not

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**What is Home for a Third Culture Kid? [Shho take ridna domivka dlja dytyny tret'oi' kul'tury?]** (in English)

hesitate to make public speeches on their ‘confused’ selves, which provides invaluable information for scholars involved in the field of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics as well as cultural and anthropological linguistics (for example, see [Benjamin 2017; Colomer 2018; Curro 2017; Iskandar 2017; McNeil 2017; Sanchez 2015]). Therefore, the **topicality** of linguistic research into this social group and its discursive and cognitive peculiarities is based on TCKs’ becoming ever more numerous and gaining ever more influence in the developed world.

While this social group has been studied within sociology for some time, the **novelty** of linguistic research lies in that TCKs’ features expressed linguistically have not received due attention.

### **Purpose of the study and data collection**

The **problems** to be covered in this study are (1) the concept of ‘THIRD CULTURE KID’ (TCK) as essential component for TCKs’ identity construction, (2) the concept HOME that inevitably comes up in TCKs’ discourse, and (3) the implications, marked by the concepts and resulting from TCKs’ self-identification.

The **purpose** of the research determines the source and the nature of the data: the **sample** is ten speeches (the total duration is one hour and 54 minutes) delivered on the TED platform by speakers that define themselves as TCKs and that talk about their self-perception and identity.

### **Research findings**

Firstly, it should be noted that the term ‘Third Culture Kid’ occurs in eight out of ten talk titles. It is noteworthy that the speakers do not expect their audience to be quite familiar with the term, so they begin their talk with the definition. Some titles lack any imagery and are almost identical (compare, for example, *Third Culture Kids* by Diego Meneses, *Third Culture Kid* by Scout Ash-Dale, *Being a Third Culture Kid* by Cristine Chen).

In addition, to further our understanding of the concept, the content analysis of the speeches has revealed a number of other nominations used to refer to TCKs: *displaced kids*, *global nomads*, *global citizens*, *citizens of the world*, *by-product of globalization*, *prototype citizens of the future*. It is easy to notice that their meaning contains

- (1) the seme ‘mobility’ (a singular move, expressed in *displaced*, or lifestyle

mobility in *nomad* (for more details see [Cohen, Duncan and Thulemark 2015]),

(2) the seme ‘belonging’ and ‘membership’ (inherent in *citizen*) combined with

(3) the locative ‘entire world’ (this meaning is part of the lexemes *global*, *world*, *globalization*) and the temporal marker (in this case, *future*).

Interestingly, the primary component ‘culture’, dominant in the original term ‘third culture kid’, yields to the political and economic constructs, namely *citizen* and *globalization*.

Most of the speeches, however, have more specific titles that point out a relation between a TCK and identity issues. The ‘TCK – identity’ correlation is verbalized in a number of ways: either directly with the help of the lexeme *identity* (*National Identity and Third Culture Kids* by Thomas Davids, *Building Identity as Third Culture Kid* by Erik Vyhmeister) or in a less overt way through referring to

(1) the concept HOME (*A Third Culture Kid’s Hometown* by Chantae Park, *What is home? Growing between cultures* by Abeer Yusuf, *Being culturally homeless* by Crystal Singh),

(2) the concept of ROOTS (*Being a rootless third culture kid* by Benjamin Self),

(3) the concept of GLOBALIZATION (*Third Culture Kids: the Impact of Growing in a Globalized World* by Ruth van Reken).

The content of speeches develops the TCKs’ identity issue, yet the speakers explicate it in a variety of ways. Identity is a self-image shaped in social interactions, so it is communication that reveals and directs the identification process. It is remarkable that in all the ten speeches of the sample the speakers cite their social encounters as remarkable and the recurring theme of these stories lies in the TCKs’ inability to answer the simple ‘*Where are you from?*’ question. This regularly asked question typically occurs as part of an introductory small talk at first encounters, yet it turns into a ‘nightmare’, since it implies the key word to the entire discourse. This word comes from the ‘naïve world picture’ and is *home*. As it appears, *home* allows for multiple definitions and for TCKs answering the ‘*Where are you from?*’ question is challenging because they can think of at least three possible meanings of *home*:

- 1) a place where one is born;
- 2) a place where one’s parents are from;
- 3) a place where one lives.

(1) and (2) correspond to the dictionary definitions that claim *home* is a ‘*place of*

*origin*’ or ‘*a place where one lives permanently*’. Humans, however, are designed in a more complicated way and tend to develop emotional attachment to physical environments, which results in another meaning of *home*, namely ‘*a house, town, or country where a person feels they belong*’ [Cambridge Dictionary]. This attachment is based on the feeling of affiliation with the environment, on finding in the environment certain important meanings, recognizing them and quite often accepting them (or at least feeling comfortable about them). The feeling of being *at home* grows not so much out of the physical properties of a place but rather out of its cultural familiarity and psychological, emotional attachment. And it is this that surfaces in some of the speeches where HOME is defined as

- 1) second culture (because that’s where a TCK has grown up);
- 2) first culture (because the second culture doesn’t want to keep a TCK);
- 3) nowhere (because a TCK does not feel affiliation and acceptance anywhere);
- 4) everywhere (because they feel they belong to the entire world rather than a particular place);
- 5) within themselves (because TCKs choose to be self-sufficient);
- 6) a place where parents are (because TCKs choose to see their parents as anchor of their selves).

As we see, (1) and (2) contain the word *culture*, whereas (4), (5) and (6) deal with emotional attachment. A lack of the attachment is verbalized by the lexemes *nomad*, *rootless*, *homeless* (it should also be noted that all speakers mention the answer *I don’t know* as one of the alternatives. Yet, we believe it may be equaled to (3) or (4)).

Our sample confirms the results obtained by Abeer Yusuf, a TCK who has researched other TCKs as her university project and who claims that there is no single pattern that could be applied to all her subjects. Having difficulty answering the question that poses no challenge for the majority of people is a confusing discovery (*I am stuck emotionally* [Yusuf 2015]) because this points out the discontinuous, episodic, and incoherent nature of TCKs’ identities.

Yet, human mind is prone to develop an accommodating strategy and TCKs stand up for ‘*the right to shape our own identity in whichever we as individuals see fit*’ [Davidst 2016] and declare their determination not to ‘*live a 20 kilometer life but a 20 country life*’ [Singh], i.e. their aspiration is to ‘*feel at home all round the world*’ [Ash-

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Dale 2016].

It is interesting that the sample does not contain any evidence that language may be any source of identity or a barrier to construct it, though it would be natural to expect language to be a problem. Some speakers do talk occasionally about the use of several languages in everyday life, or their bi- or multilingualism, yet even if they do, they view it just as TCKs' peculiar competence rather than a challenge to TCKs' identity. This may be explained, first of all, by the speakers' age (they come to foreign countries in childhood when one only learns one's mother tongue and easily picks up a second language). Also, most of the TCKs are the product of omnipresent Western-style international schools where the language of instruction is English.

It appears essential for partners in a smooth interpersonal interaction to locate each other geographically and culturally and this information is provided by the answer to the '*Where are you from?*' question. TCKs seem to have problems to anchor themselves to any place or people simply because lifestyle mobility teaches them '*the idea of impermanence*' ('*people are constantly coming and going*' [Davids 2016]) early in their lives: TCKs '*are good at saying goodbyes*', since '*we've done it so many different times to so many different people*' [Davids 2016]. This inability to form deep emotional attachment to a place and call it *home* becomes a weakness of multilingual TCKs: their ability to speak different languages and their extensive cross-cultural experience enhance their bridging skills (i.e. the ability to overcome the partner's dissimilarities), yet to communicate effectively and feel at ease, one also needs to be good at bonding (i.e. the ability to form a community and belong, to develop so-called social connectivity, which is immediately related to identity), and it is bonding that TCKs see as a challenge.

### **Conclusion and further research**

The analysis of lexemes used as (contextual) synonyms to the term Third Culture Kid has uncovered the following components of the concept: first of all, this social group is characterized by mobility, it is ascribed a sense of belonging, yet interpreted in a peculiar way, since it is belonging to the world and not to a particular region or country. The third component conveys the meaning of futurity based on the belief that this social group, which makes up a minority in modern societies, will gradually turn into the majority.

The HOME concept is reconsidered by TCKs in a peculiar way: it may be

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interpreted simplistically as a place where one is currently living. However, HOME normally implies emotional attachment to a place and people. Regular travel and relocation make it difficult and traumatic for TCKs to affiliate with their environment, so they may go to extremes and refer to themselves either as “rootless” and belonging to nowhere (or vice versa everywhere) or they have to choose between their birth and second cultures and/or countries.

As soon as the ‘*Where are you from?*’ question is a casual way to find out partners’ deep self-affiliation – to map them geographically, culturally, ethnically, politically, socially, the question brings up to the surface multiple dimensions of human identity together with the idea of its continuity and coherence [Jaspal 2013]; the question also implies the interpretation of identity as a whole. This interpretation used to be natural for humans: until recently, the majority lived all their life in their birth country and followed, by and large, in their parents’ footsteps. As a result, their ethnic, national and cultural identities merged into one and none of them contradicted the others. The ‘*Where are you from?*’ question exposes to TCKs the complexity of their life experience that leads to multiple, sometimes even contradictory ethnic, national, cultural, regional, etc. affiliations.

The TCK identity may be viewed as something exotic and unique but it is expected to become more widespread in the near future, as Abeer Yusuf puts it, ‘*soon you’re going to date a TCK, you’re going to get married to a TCK and you’re very likely to be a parent to a TCK*’ [Yusuf 2015]. So the focus of **further research** may be mechanisms of TCKs’ perception and cognitive system, bi- and multilingualism, their acculturation strategies and tactics that might be applied universally or show limitations due to specific cultures and languages.

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Що таке рідна домівка для дитини третьої культури? [Что такое родной дом для детей третьей культуры?] (Англійською / На англ. яз)

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*Actual Problems of Linguistics [Aktual'ni problemy movoznavstva]*

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What is Home for a Third Culture Kid? [Shho take ridna domivka dlja dytyny tret'oi' kul'tury?] (in English)