

THE PHENOMENON OF CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION IN THE MODERN WORLD

1. The term *globalization* means ‘the process of international economic, political and cultural integration and unification’. *Cultural globalization* refers to the growth in the exchange of cultural practices between nations and peoples. Although, this is a process that has undoubtedly occurred for thousands of years, in recent times economic and political globalization has enhanced it enormously. At the heart of its rise has been the massive expansion of the entertainment and communications industry, fuelled by the spread of television, commercial air travel, mass telecommunications and the internet. These have created a world where billions of people consume identical cultural products – such as pop music, soap opera and sporting events and employ cultural practices they would not have encountered otherwise – such as foreign food preparations and foreign words and phrases.

2. The process of cultural globalization has both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, it enables intercultural communication which brings people of different nationalities together, helps them unite and understand each other better, which in its turn contributes to the prevention of international conflicts. On the other hand, in case of excessive communication and adoption it may lead to the loss of cultural identity and assimilation, internationalization of values, the spread of mass culture.

3. In the second half of the XXth century the world witnessed an unprecedented cultural expansion of the USA which had influenced a lot of countries. The spread of the English language, the popularity of Hollywood films, the emergence of transnational companies such as Microsoft, Intel, Coca-Cola, Procter&Gamble are all the features of this expansion.

In order to prevent the penetration of the American culture the Governments of some countries introduced cultural policies which aimed at preserving the national cultural heritage and restricting the amount of American production on their markets.

What concerns our country, for a long time it had remained in cultural isolation from the rest of the world and therefore had not experienced any cultural globalization. However, the fall of the iron curtain and the opening of the borders led to the predominance of the American mass culture in the country. The American films, books, music, advertising and fashion conquered the market for a certain time. In recent years, however, our Government has been trying to limit this penetration by introducing cultural policies and developing the national Belarusian culture.

In conclusion it must be said that globalization is a natural process and it will be developing as the world is getting more integrated. The important thing is not to lose the unique features of every culture, not to get absorbed.