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PROBLEMS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN CURRENT UKRAINE

Summary. The article reveals the difference between the cross-cultural and intercultural communication, provides an overview of intercultural communication problems that Ukrainians face and their solutions. The importance of developing communication skills with people of different cultural environments is stated. The introduction of discipline "cross-cultural communication" into the Ukrainian curricula of educational institutions aimed at a comparative analysis of communication in different cultures is proposed for the successful entry into the European cultural space.

Key words: cross-cultural communication, intercultural communication, styles of communication, stereotypes, cultural diversity, linguistic differences, intercultural conflict communication technologies.

Formulation of the problem in general. The era of global communication suggests that we can no longer expect to communicate only with people belonging to our environments. The skills of effective communicating with individuals from variety of cultures are a great advantage for career prospects. On the other hand, many of us have not been instructed to communicate with people whose backgrounds are different from our own, including differences in place of living, religion, culture, history, language, etc. Is proclaiming the year of 2016 to be a year of English language in Ukraine enough to provide Ukrainians with successful entering the European community? What sorts of additional actions are to be made to transform the situation for the better? To answer these questions a thorough identification of existing difficulties of intercultural communication and possible ways of their eliminating are needed.

The problems of intercultural communication have been studied by many theorists, among them are William Gudykunst, Guo-Ming Chen and William Starosta who contributed to creation of intercultural communication theory [1], [2]. Intercultural communication competence was researched by Young-Yun Kim, Myron W. Lustig and Jolene Koester [3], [4]. Fred Casmir viewed connections between culture, communication, and education that led him to the idea of the third-culture building in the result of shift for international and intercultural communication [5]. Danielle Cliche and Andreas Wiesand examined the ways of improving cross-cultural communication through the Arts and Culture [6]. The analysis of recent research and publications on the subject showed great interest in the problem, but also proved that a great number of scholars confuse the terms of intercultural and cross-cultural communication, frequently applying for both of them the same meaning.

The aim of the article is to identify the difference between cross-cultural and intercultural communication, to review challenges that occur within intercultural communication and suggest solutions for these challenges in general and for Ukrainians in particular. Theoretical methods have been used to achieve these goals.

A number of scholars' works devoted to this problem have been examined.

The main part of the research. Before viewing the notions of intercultural and cross-cultural communication it is necessary to start with the meaning of culture. We accept the definition of Milton J. Bennet, cited by Mari D. González. According to González, he considers culture to be "learned and shared values, beliefs, and behavior of a group of interacting people[7, p.1]". Regarding the notion of intercultural communication, as a substantial number of reviewed works show, it is frequently understood as cross-cultural one. For example, Gutareva N.Y. defines cross-cultural communication as connection and communication between different cultures, which suggests a direct contact between people and their communities, as well as indirect forms of communication (including language, speech, writing, electronic communication)»[8]. In fact, this is the definition of intercultural communication. Lustig M. and Koester J. define intercultural communication as "a symbolic, interpretative, transactional, contextual process," which implies the engagement of culturally-different people [4]. In other worlds, intercultural communication involves interactions among people from different cultures. Mari D. González points at their definition of cross-cultural communication as "the study of a particular idea or concept within many cultures…in order to compare one culture to another…[7]. So, cross-cultural communication involves a comparison of interactions among people from the same culture to those from another culture, intercultural communication is a set of interactions itself. This allows us to assume that cross-cultural communication is a field of study of intercultural behaviors (practices) of individuals.

Viewing communication as a process of coding and decoding of messages, one can notice that there are many points in the process where the communication can break down. Some of the researches point out the vital role of cultures (subcultures) we were raised in, saying that "we communicate the way we do because we are raised in a particular culture and learn its language, rules, and norms" [9, p. 430].

Gudykunst and Kim believe that intercultural communication can be understood via the same basic variables and processes used to describe other forms of communication. They introduce their concept of the stranger as the key factor in understanding intercultural communication. According to them, strangeness and familiarity make up a continuum. The authors use the term "stranger" to refer to those people at the most unfamiliar end of the continuum [9, p. 429-442].

Thus anyone could be considered a stranger, given a sufficiently foreign context. A stranger has limited knowledge of their new environment - of its norms and values. And in turn, the locals have little knowledge of the stranger - of their beliefs, interests and habits. It is

obvious that communication with others involves predicting or anticipating their responses. When communicating with someone who we know we are usually confident in our anticipation, and may not even notice that we are making such predictions. In contrast, when we communicate with strangers we are more aware of the range of their possible responses, and of the uncertainty of our predictions.

Communicative predictions are based on data from the three levels: cultural (information about the other's culture, its dominant values and norms), sociocultural (data about the other's group membership, or the groups to which they seek to belong), psycho-cultural (information about the individual's characteristics) [9]. We understand such data by the process of social cognition. Social cognition is a dialectical process which involves both grouping particulars into categories based on their similar features, and of distinguishing individuals from their categories based on their different characteristics. In the process of a new environment cognition we climb higher and higher from the first level – cultural, to sociocultural and end with the last one, psycho-cultural. Communication with strangers often relies too much on categorization (stereotyping). Such stereotypes may not be accurate, or may not apply to the present person. To improve communication with strangers it is necessary to pay attention to their unique, individual features.

Gudykunst and Kim also mention that generally, in communication, we seek to reduce uncertainty. We experience uncertainty with regard to the stranger's attitudes, feelings and beliefs. We are also uncertain of how to explain the stranger's behavior. Motivation to reduce this uncertainty is more acute when we expect to have further interactions with the stranger, or when they are a potential source of benefit. The authors recommend to gain more information about the stranger in order to reduce our uncertainty and increase the accuracy of our predictions. They describe three basic strategies for gathering such information: passive observation of the stranger, gathering information from different resources, and seeking information directly from the stranger by interacting with them and asking questions.

The increased uncertainty in interactions with strangers is accompanied by higher levels of anxiety, as we anticipate a wider array of possible negative outcomes. The list of possible anxieties may include worry about damage to our self-esteem from feeling confused and out of control, fear of the possibility of being incompetent, or being exploited, worry about being perceived negatively by the stranger, or worry that interacting with a stranger will bring disapproval from members of our own group. Generally these anxieties can be eliminated by paying more conscious attention to the communication process, and by gathering more information on the stranger. We would add that acquiring presentation skills in Ukrainian schools and higher educational institutions may assist even more efficiently to resolving this problem.

The role of stereotypes in perception of others was also examined by R. Fisher, E. Kopelman and A. Kupfer Schneider who claimed that based on their life experiences, people develop different perceptions of things and events. New information often gets filtered through people's established system of views and is used selectively by them to support "partisan perceptions" [10 p. 21-23.].

Globalization processes have not only increased the number of people engaged in intercultural communication due to their work, study, or travel. Great number of individuals often look for intercultural friendships. This phenomenon was researched by Letty Cottin Pogrebin in the work "The Same and Different: Crossing Boundaries of Color, Culture, Sexual Preference Disability and Age".

The author observes a distinctive feature of it, pointing out that intercultural friendships involve a lot of explanation [11, pp. 445-459]. Individuals must examine their own motives in seeking such friendship. Friends must engage in ongoing explanation to each other, clarifying their intentions and reactions. Finally, each must explain the friendship to their own communities of origin. These explanations are often the most difficult, since boundary crossing friendships can threaten the group's identity.

Intercultural friendships are usually formed, like any friendship, around some shared interests or characteristics. Pogrebin cautions that such friendships form around the appearance of sameness, but the individuals are never absolutely the same. Because the other is "the same but different," one needs to maintain a "double-consciousness" which acknowledges "the importance of feeling both the same and different, of acknowledging 'the essence of me,' of understanding that friends need not transcend race or ethnicity but can embrace differences and be enriched by them"[11 p. 450].

According to Pogrebin, language differences greatly increase communication problems, even if the speakers have some knowledge of the others' language. Language is so much more than words; it is also a way of thinking and seeing and defining the world. As a result, accurate translation, especially of abstract ideas, is very difficult. When this problem is added to all the other problems with communication during conflicts, situations can get out of control, and the chances for understanding are extremely low. Even perceptions of accents can block friendship. Americans tend to perceive having an accent as a sign of ignorance. Active listening can sometimes be used to check this out–by repeating what one thinks he or she heard, one can confirm that one understands the communication accurately. If words are used differently between languages or cultural groups, however, even active listening can overlook misunderstandings.

Ethan F. Becker suggests three tips for intercultural communication: 1. Paraphrase. Repeat what others say in your own words to confirm your understanding. 2. Define terms. When it's your turn to speak, invest time in creating common definitions of terms; and its okay to stop the flow of the meeting to do so. Taking time upfront to define terms and meaning saves time and energy later on. Be patient, and plan for extra time for this. 3. Never assume. Don't take it for granted that everyone uses terms in the same way. Tone of voice may suggest understanding, but that isn't proof that both of you are on the same page. Always double-check [12].

The key to effective intercultural communication is knowledge. First, it is essential that people understand the potential problems of intercultural communication, and make a conscious effort to overcome these problems. Second, it is important to assume that one's efforts will not always be successful, and adjust one's behavior appropriately [12]. Ignorance may lead to conflicts. A. Williams identifies three dimensions of cultural conflict. To the two dimensions that every conflict has (content and relational), cultural conflict adds the third one - "a clash of cultural values." [13, p. 3] This third dimension constitutes the foundation of the conflict since it determines personal identity. According to A. Williams, cultural conflict can be identified by the following signs: it usually has complicated dynamics; if addressing content and relational issues does not resolve the conflict, it can be rooted in cultural differences; conflict reoccurs or raises strong emotions even though the issue of disagreement is insignificant.

The resolution of intercultural conflict begins with identifying whether cultural issues are involved. There are three ways of intercultural conflict resolution: probing for the cultural dimension,

learning about other cultures, and altering organizational practices and procedures. The resolution process should start from the parties' acknowledgment that their conflict contains a cultural dimension. Next, there should be willingness on all sides to deal with all conflict dimensions including the cultural one. Also systematic phased work on the conflict is needed. Williams identified four phases:

1. The parties describe what they find offensive in each other's behavior;

2. The parties get an understanding of the other party's cultural perceptions;

3. The parties learn how the problem would be handled in the culture of the opponent;

4. The parties develop conflict solutions [13, p. 6].

Resolution of the conflict is particularly complicated if the conflict arose not just out of misunderstanding of the other's behavior, but because of incompatible values. That is why education is vitally needed. People can prevent intercultural conflicts by learning about cultures that they come in contact with. This knowledge can be obtained through training programs, general reading, talking to people from different cultures, and learning from past experiences. Important aspects of cultural education are understanding your own culture and developing cultural awareness by acquiring a broad knowledge of values and beliefs of other cultures, rather than looking at them through the prism of cultural stereotypes [13]. Very frequently the organizational structure reflects the norms of just one culture and inherits the cultural conflict. In such cases, structural change becomes necessary to make the system more sensitive to cultural norms of other people.

We suggest to pilot cross-cultural communication as a separate discipline in the curriculum, though tightly integrated into other subjects. It should be based on studying cultural patterns of people's intercultural behavior. As a result, finished models of communication styles might be introduced, where dialogue should be used as an efficient tool of teaching. Like a constructed national culture or company culture, it could have deep tacit assumptions which are critical to maintaining the style. It can help us frame and reframe cross-cultural communication style as well as other communication styles for pragmatic purposes and therefore help Ukrainians move towards Western European culture.

Research findings and recommendations for further studies in this scientific area. To sum up, intercultural and cross-cultural communication have different meanings: the first one suggests different forms of communication between people of different cultures, the second one involves a comparison of interactions among people from the same culture to those from another culture. The concept of a stranger, introduced by William Gudykunst and Young Yun Kim, helps better understand process of a new environment cognition during intercultural communication and identify its levels (cultural, sociocultural, psycho-cultural) and specific features (uncertainty, anxiety, stereotyping). The role of stereotypes leading to «partizan perceptions» is hard to underestimate. Among other obstacles of successful intercultural communication are: being "the same but different," too much explanations involved, linguistic difficulties, all of which are caused by individuals' ignorance. Thus, cross-cultural communication education which would deal with variety of intercultural patterns of behavior and provide with comparison of these practices is vitally needed. It is viewed by us as a discipline in the curriculum of all types of schools in Ukraine that might be an essential tool for maintaining healthy relations in organizations and Ukrainian society in general. It should comprise effective techniques of eliminating conflict situations, like active listening, dialogues, creating finished models of communication styles. Integration of cross-cultural communication discipline with other disciplines might be the topic for further research..

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Шапаренко О. В. Проблеми міжкультурної комунікації в сучасній Україні

Анотація. У статті з'ясовується різниця між крос-культурною та міжкультурною комунікацією, надається огляд проблем міжкультурної комунікації, що виникають під час спілкування у українців та шляхи їх вирішення. Обгрунтовується значення навичок спілкування з представниками різних культурних середовищ. Пропонується введення дисципліни «крос-культурна комунікація», яка спрямована на порівняльний аналіз спілкування в різних культурах, у навчальні плани українських закладів освіти з метою успішного входження в європейський культурний простір.

Ключові слова: крос-культурна комунікація, міжкультурна комунікація, стилі комунікації, стереотипи, різноманітність культур, мовні відмінності, міжкультурний конфлікт, комунікативні технології.

Шапаренко Е. В. Проблемы межкультурной коммуникации в современной Украине

Аннотация. В статье выясняется разница между кросс-культурной и межкультурной коммуникацией, предоставляется обзор проблем межкультурной коммуникации, возникающих при общении у украинцев, и пути их решения. Обосновывается значение навыков общения с представителями разных культурных сред. Предлагается введение дисциплины «кросс-культурная коммуникация», которая направлена на сравнительный анализ общения в разных культурах, в учебные планы украинских учебных заведений с целью успешного вхождения в европейское пространство.

Ключевые слова: кросс-культурная коммуникация, межкультурная коммуникация, стили коммуникации, стереотипы, разнообразие культур, языковые отличия, межкультурный конфликт, коммуникативные технологии.