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COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

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Комунікація та культура

Статтю присвячено характеристиці основних компонентів комунікації. Проаналізовано зв'язок між язиком та культурою, а також вплив культурних особливостей на процес міжкультурної комунікації.

Ключові слова: комунікація, культура, міжкультурна комунікація, культурні особливості.

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Коммуникация и культура

Статья посвящена характеристике основных компонентов коммуникации. Проанализирована связь между языком и культурой, а также влияние культурных особенностей на процесс межкультурной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: коммуникация, культура, межкультурная коммуникация, культурные особенности.

The development of the new international, global economic, political and cultural connections creates a world in which an increasing number of people are moving between countries for overseas work or studies. A major challenge that expatriate workers and international students face is how to function successfully in a new cultural environment. The word culture refers to the lifestyle of a group of people; their values, beliefs, sociocultural rules, ways of behaving, and ways of communicating.

The goal of the article is to examine the main components of communication and culture, analyze the connection between language and culture.

The cross-cultural comparison of nonverbal communication has been paid considerable attention in the past decade. Such scholars as A. Cohen, A. Giannini, C. Knott, and R. Miller made a great contribution to the empirical

studies concerning the nature of such nonverbal behaviors and acts as agreements, refusals, sorrows, and happiness.

Communication is a multidimensional process. It is dynamic as everything in communication is in a state of constant change. Sometimes these changes go unnoticed; sometimes they intrude in obvious ways.

Communication is systematic as all its elements work together interdependently to produce meaningful interaction. Each element affects every other element, and each affects the outcome of communication.

The process of communication is also adaptive. Good communicators are flexible to various situations.

Communication is a continuous activity with no fixed start or determinable end. Talk between people is based on their past experiences, and it has future implications, influencing their later talk together. Thus, the communication process is ongoing, never-ending.

The communication process is irreversible. It becomes a part of the speaker's and the listener's experience. When we say something we realize we should not have said, we may try to deny that we meant what we said, or claim that we were misinterpreted. Such attempts, however, do little except provide new information for the listener to consider.

Some early theories saw the communication process as linear. In this linear view of communication, the speaker spoke and the listener listened. Communication was seen as proceeding in a relatively straight line. This linear model, or representation of the process, was soon replaced by an interactional view in which the speaker and the listener were seen as exchanging turns at speaking and listening.

A more satisfying, and the one currently held, sees communication as a transactional process in which each person serves simultaneously as speaker and listener. According to the transactional view, at the same time that you send messages, you also receive messages from your own communications and the reactions of the other person [1, p. 45]. Also, in a transactional view the elements of

communication are seen as interdependent. Each exists in relation to the others. A change in any one element of this process produces changes in the other elements.

The act of communication includes the following components: source – receiver, messages, sending or encoding processes, receiving or decoding processes, channel, noise, feedback, context, effect [2]. These elements are what might be called the universals of communication, as they present in every communication encounter.

Source – Receiver. The speaker, sometimes called the source or the message sender, is the individual doing the talking at a given moment. The message is directed to a listener, or message receiver. Each individual in communication process performs two functions – sending and receiving; each person is both a sender of messages and a receiver of them.

There are many factors that influence what we say and how we say something, what messages we receive and how we receive them. These factors might include who we are, what we know and feel, what we value and believe in, how intelligent and experienced we are, what we want and what we are told, how confident and positive we are, and what our age, gender, ethnic background, status, education are. As human beings we are very different and diverse. Each of us derives a unique meaning from any message.

Messages. Message is a communication term used in the strict sense to mean any stimulus that can be perceived by the nerve endings in any of our sensory receptors. The stimuli by themselves have no meaning. People attribute meaning to the stimuli, thereby transforming them into messages. Thus we may say that messages consist of the information, meanings and feelings we transmit to other persons. The messages may be sent and received through any one or a combination of sensory organs (sight/eyes, sound/ears, smell/nose, taste/tongue, touch/hands). We also communicate nonverbally. The way we talk or the way we shake hands, the way we nod our heads or the way we comb our hair, the way we sit or the way we smile or frown, in fact, everything about us communicates. All these bits of information constitute communication messages. Some of the messages we send are conscious, but many others go subconsciously.

Encoding – Decoding. In communicology the processes of speaking or writing and understanding or comprehending are referred to as encoding and decoding. By putting our ideas into sound waves we are putting these ideas into a code, and the act of producing messages is termed encoding.

As a rule, we form verbal messages with no real problems and say certain things without any difficulty. Similarly, when we listen to the words of others, we usually have no difficulty understanding them. All these are done without any problems because we have what is called language competence. We know the rules of the language (competence) and therefore can formulate and understand verbal utterances (performance). We are able to produce and understand messages because we have a set of linguistic rules to tell us that these sounds structured together in this way mean something specific. This set of linguistic rules is our language competence. Language competence and performance are very important for our total communication ability. Communicative competence refers to our knowledge of the more social aspects of communication. We learn communication competence by observing others, by explicit instruction, by trial and error, and so on.

Channel. The medium through which messages pass is termed communication channel. Without channel there is no way for a message to travel. In the case of one person talking to another, the channel is the air through which the sound travels. In the case of a broadcast the channel is the airways. In a written communication the channel might be the postal system. Telephone, mail, television, radio, internet, movie, computer, touch, scent are all channels.

Communication rarely takes place over only one channel; rather several channels are used simultaneously. It works best in face-to-face interactions, because all of the channels are available for each of the messages to travel through. But even if the channels between sender and receiver are adequate to the messages being sent, there are still difficulties to be overcome. One of these difficulties is noise.

Noise. In the early development of communication theory, noise was viewed as a disturbance in the channel. Later on a more extended understanding of the notion was introduced defining noise as anything that distorts or interferes with the message

and that may enter into any communication system. Noise also presents in written communication. Such noise would include poor handwriting, blurred type, creases in paper, poor grammar – anything that prevents a reader from getting the message sent by the writer.

Feedback. When we send messages while, for instance, speaking to another person, we also hear ourselves. We get feedback from our own messages – we hear what we say, we feel the way we move, we see what we write, and so on. In speaking with another individual, we are constantly sending messages as well as we are constantly receiving them. The receiver's messages that are sent in response to source's messages are also termed feedback. This feedback, like other messages, can be in many forms both verbal and nonverbal.

Feedback may be positive and negative. Positive feedback tells the source that everything is fine and that one should continue as one has been going. Negative feedback tells the source that all is not well and that a reassessment of one's communication behavior is necessary. Effectiveness of communication depends largely on the ability of the communicator to respond appropriately to feedback.

Context. A setting in which communication takes place is termed context. The context of communication has three dimensions: physical, social-psychological, and temporal. The physical context is the environment in which communication takes place; it may be a room, a hallway, a street or a park. The physical context, whatever it is, influences the content as well as the form of messages we produce.

The social-psychological dimension of context includes the status relationships among the participants, the roles they play, the norms of the society in which they are communicating, the friendliness or unfriendliness of the situation, the seriousness or humorousness of the situation.

The temporal dimension includes the time of day as well as the time in history in which the communication act takes place. The three dimensions of context interact with one another; each influences and is influenced by the other.

Effect. Communication always has some effect on one or more persons. For every communication act, there is some consequence. The effect may be on either

one of the participants or on both. The three general classes of communication effects are cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

Cognitive effects include the so-called intellectual consequences of communication. The acquisition of information or new knowledge is cognitive by nature.

Affective effects include emotional or psychological consequences of communication. This class comprises a large number of specific types of effects, such as feelings of love, affection, passion, hate, hostility, indifference, enjoyment, interest.

Psychomotor effects are our bodily movements and verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors. Through communication we learn the skills of social behavior; we learn how to behave in various situations; what to talk about, how to talk, and when to talk.

One of the major purposes of communication is that of personal discovery. When we communicate with others, we learn a great deal about ourselves as well as about the others. In fact, our self-perceptions are in large part results of what we have learned about ourselves from others during communications, especially, our interpersonal encounters.

By talking about ourselves with another individual we are provided with an excellent source of feedback on our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. We also learn how we appear to others, what our strengths and weaknesses are, who likes and who dislikes us and why.

Communication not only gives us a better understanding of ourselves and the other person with whom we are communicating, it also gives us a better understanding of external world that surrounds us providing feedback about objects, events, other people and cultures.

The notion culture can be defined in many different ways. Some of them are more general: "the ideas, beliefs, and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a society" [3, p. 45] or "the way of life with general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time" [4,

p. 37]. Other definitions are focused more not on the relationships in society but on its products: "the customs, beliefs, art, music and all the other products of human thought made by a particular group of people at a particular time" [5, p. 28]. The last one mentions the points usually associated with manifestation of cultural identity.

Cultural differences exist across the intercultural communication spectrum. The term "intercultural" is used broadly to refer to all forms of communication among persons from different groups as well as to the more narrowly defined area of communication between different cultures.

Differences are usually matters of degree. Intercultural communication takes place between persons of different cultures and is greatly influenced by both enculturation and acculturation process. And the barriers to intercultural communication often exist between persons who have different cultural beliefs, values, or ways of behaving.

The rapid spread of communication technology has brought foreign and sometimes very different cultures into people's life. News from foreign countries is commonplace. Technology has made intercultural communication easy, practical, and inevitable.

In sociolinguistics it is argued that forms of communication in a society depend on the level and type of its cultural development [6]. Study of the forms of communication is possible through the study of language. Names of communicative and speech events are presented in the lexis of a language. Lexical units form a system and within the lexical system of a language we can define a group of names of speech events.

Because culture permeates all forms of communication, it's necessary to understand its influence, how interpersonal communication works and master interpersonal communication skills. The principals for communicating information and for changing listeners' attitudes will vary from one culture to another. If you're to understand communication, you need to know its principles vary and how the principles must be qualified and adjusted on the basis of cultural differences. And of

course people need cultural understanding in order to communicate effectively in a wide variety of intercultural situations.

Edward T. Hall advanced a fundamental idea in understanding the relationship between culture and communication. He claimed that “culture is communication and communication is culture” [7, p. 57]. By this he meant that culture determines the way people communicate. From early age a person learns his/her culture's language, rules and norms, i.e. learns how to speak, when to speak, what to speak about, to whom to speak, and other aspects of communication behavior. Culture and communication are inseparable. The way people communicate reflects the way they live. It is their culture.

Whether people are in Japan, the USA, India Turkey or Ukraine, they are all engaged in the same activity as they communicate. The results may be different, and the practices and norms may not always be similar, yet the process of communication is the same.

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Communication and culture

The main components of communication and culture are examined and the connection between language and culture is analyzed in the article.

Key words: communication, culture, intercultural communication, culture peculiarities.

Відомості про автора

Буніна Лариса Миколаївна – кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент кафедри практики мовлення Луганського національного педагогічного університету імені Тараса Шевченка. Автор понад 25 публікацій. Основні наукові інтереси зосереджені навколо проблематики соціально-педагогічних аспектів культури і комунікації.