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Барьеры в межкультурной коммуникации

В статье рассматриваются коммуникативные барьеры, которые возникают в результате межкультурной коммуникации и снижают ее эффективность.

Barriers to intercultural communication

In the modern world there is a tendency of extension and deepening of international contacts in various spheres of economic, political, social and cultural life that makes it necessary to address the problems of intercultural communication.

Infact even speaking the same language people sometimes fail to understand each other and the reason is often the difference of cultures [1].

Different cultures use different patterns of perception of the social reality through symbolic systems, and that affects language structures, styles of oral and written communication [7].

Language is a mirror of culture. It reflects not only the real world surrounding the person, but also public consciousness of people, their mentality and national character, lifestyle, traditions, customs, morals, values, attitude, vision of the world.

Actually "intercultural communication" includes interaction of cultures (not just languages) whena sender and a receiver of a message belong to different cultures, and the parties to the communication are aware of their cultural differences.

At the same time culture is not just some cultural information communicated through language. It is an inherent feature of a language at all its levels and in all its occurrences [6].

Trying to communicate with representatives of different cultures often faces difficulties and obstacles and can result in conflict situations. Usually such difficulties caused by cultural differences of partners cannot be neutralized immediately in the communication process. Such communication difficulties are defined by researchers as "intercultural barriers" [4].
At present, a cultural barrier is meant to include particular elements of culture that make it difficult and, at the worst, prevent from interrelations and social dialogue between people with different cultural backgrounds [5].

The most obvious examples of the clash of cultures can be found in real communication with foreigners both in their country and in countries of other communicators. Contacts between representatives of different cultures can cause many problems due to mismatch of norms, values, worldviews of partners, etc. [3].

In the broader sense, the barriers are defined as problems arising in the process of interaction, preventing from it or reducing its effectiveness. Currently understanding the problems of intercultural communication barriers is limited by the attempts to classify communication barriers. According to one of the points of views, intercultural communication can have six barriers:

• assumption of similarity (people believe that all people are very similar);
• language differences (people think that words and phrases have only the meaning they would like to communicate);
• erroneous interpretation of non-verbal actions;
• the impact of stereotypes and prejudices;
• unconscious desire to evaluate all unfamiliar cultural phenomena;
• anxiety and stress because of the uncertainty of the behavior of partners in intercultural communication [2].

In practice, cross-cultural barriers at the level of relations arise due to the lack of mutual understanding, as well as unfriendly behavior or failure of trust.

There are four major areas within which intercultural communication takes place: language (semantic), ethno-cultural, communicative and psychological. Accordingly, there are four main groups of barriers of intercultural competence: linguistic, ethno-cultural, communicative and psychological. Specific features characterize each of these groups and, thus, there are no common universal ways to overcome them. Each group requires appropriate ways of overcoming them.

One should bear in mind that intercultural communication involves parties with different ethics and the dos and don’ts of polite manners which are largely dependent on their cultures. Consequently, there could be situations of uncertainty related, for example, to the forms of greetings and good-byes, apologies and other common forms of behavior in the
communication process [8]. For example, the Russians often feel suspicious of the famous American smile and it is usually seen as insincere. While for an American, a smile on a person’s face is a demonstration of persistence and viability, in Russia smiling to strangers is considered a deviation from the norm and can be misinterpreted.

The main way to overcome barriers in intercultural communication is to develop intercultural competence of the partners by improving their cultural education and awareness. Development of cultural education of an individual implies a deliberate change of personal attitude, developing necessary knowledge and skills, contributing to its adequate behavior in situations of intercultural communication. Intercultural competence is formed effectively with the help of special programs preparing individuals for intercultural interaction. These are trainings, lectures and workshops on the psychology of cross-cultural and ethnic differences allowing to determine the level and degree of a person’s adaptation to new sociocultural environment, mapping the features of "their" and "foreign" culture and thus preparing to encounter an unfamiliar culture and its media.

Specific types of barriers in intercultural communication are psychological barriers that are a psychological reaction to certain manifestations of other cultures. Interaction with other cultures is accompanied by great psychological stress, anxiety and fear.

The problem of interaction and mutual understanding of cultures is especially important for modern Russia as it has complex processes of modernization of society and deep transformation of the Russian culture. Intercultural development often results in crises and destructive phenomena dealt with by various sciences: philosophy, cultural and social anthropology, cultural studies, etc.

At the same time, scientific and technical progress as well as people’s efforts opens new opportunities, types and forms of communication, mutual understanding, and dialogue of cultures, tolerance and respect for other cultures being the main condition of its effectiveness.

All this taken together caused particularly close attention to the issues of intercultural communication. Thus, the issue of language and culture relationship is a complex and multidimensional.

Practice of intercultural communication shows that effective overcoming of communicative barriers can be achieved by adequate selection of appropriate tactics of interaction. Choosing communication tactics involves conscious or intuitive ways of attracting attention of a
partner, and coming into contact with him or her. First of all, one should choose the best form of communication as the beginning of the communication process can determine the entire outcome.

Improving intercultural literacy has a significant impact on the worldview and values of a person, development of his or her personal qualities, the ways of solving their life's problems, on self-concept. Thus, cultural literacy becomes an indicator of personal competence of an individual, which is evident in his or her ability to communicate with foreign partners and to use his or her knowledge in particular situations of communication effectively, in readiness to move quickly from generalities to consciously reasoned actions.

Список литературы:

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