

Intercultural Business Communication: Theory and Practice Implications for Language Trainers and Business People

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Abstract

Intercultural communication is the study of communication between people of various cultures and social groupings, as well as how culture influences communication. It aids in the description of a wide range of communication processes, as well as the issues that arise organically within an organisation or social environment made up of people from various religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. It enables one to comprehend how individuals from various countries and cultures behave, communicate, and see the world. Intercultural communication became an academic subject in Russian language Bachelor's and Master's degrees around twenty years ago. This issue is new to both language trainers, students, and corporate executives, unlike other disciplines of linguistics, English studies, and British and American literature, which have long been part of the curriculum in foreign language departments. Because intercultural communication is such a vast subject of study, it needs collaboration among specialists in linguistics, psychology, cultural anthropology, and other disciplines. The article discusses how intercultural communication is used across the world to assist people break down cultural barriers and improve their self-awareness and communication abilities.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, cultural anthropology, communication skills, foreign language.

Introduction

Intercultural communication has become one of the most important forms of communication in our day, but more and more people are understanding that "soft skills" are no substitute for technological knowledge, and that they would struggle to survive in the global society if they didn't have it. It's one of the most effective ways for people from all walks of life to communicate, especially teachers, language trainers, and business experts. Language is crucial in this situation because it allows people to communicate more easily with people from other professions.

Because IC is communication that mediates 'cultures' and impacts language usage in whatever manner we define 'cultures,' considering language in an intercultural setting warrants a few considerations of the defining characteristics of IC. On the idea that one can differentiate between the cultures of other civilizations, IC is commonly used interchangeably with cross-cultural communication to indicate cross-country communication. Because of its long history of integrating diverse types of immigrants as citizens, comprehending its indigenous, and defending their foreign strategic and military interests, the United States pioneered the early work on IC. These efforts were

aided by the Foreign Service Institute, where Edward Hall, the man who coined the name "IC," spent roughly five years. IC is constrained by contextually dependent and relational conditions as well as by political, geographical, and social limits and barriers. As a result, it encompasses the discourse of minority inside them, whether characterized by locales or by 'other' cultures, or sub-fields within the edges of territories, communities, and disciplines. While the defining metaphor of IC is staying inside borders rather than crossing them, it is also a language of the global, cosmopolitan, and a-cultural, and universal rather than a specific application. In a world of permeable and dissolving borders and boundaries, it encompasses both state and non-state actors. In embracing these dichotomies, IC encompasses not only the interaction space between what is often referred to as separate cultures but also that which exists inside the interstices, i.e. the 'space' within smaller particular cultures and across larger unique cultures. Membership in bigger separate cultures, whether inside or outside of the same civilization, has no bearing on membership in smaller specialized cultures. Academics, for example, will relate better to their counterparts from other cultures than they will to factory workers in their own culture, even though they may share ethnocultural values and customs with the latter. Individuals are otherized and culturally reduced when they are solely considered part of 'national' cultures. Social identities are also negotiated and transmitted in that "space" inside and between "cultures" (see Jenks, Bhatia, & Lou, 2013). Identity behavior is defined as methods of behaving that are characteristic of or are impacted by factors of origin, such as race/ethnicity, religious affiliation, and sexuality. They can also appear as gender disparities (Holmes, 2006; Ladegaard, 2011), age/generation, sexuality, and ability imbalances. If these identities are marked and impact job-related decisions in the workplace, they may have consequences for IC. Thus, understanding what defines culture in the workplace is critical to understanding IC in the workplace, even if identifying "cultural" identity is becoming increasingly challenging, particularly in the globalized workplace.

Business Organization and Culture

More people are coming into touch with individuals from various cultures than at any previous time in human history. This is due to several factors.

- People can now travel longer and quicker than ever before thanks to technological advancements.
- The internet connects people from all around the world.
- The global labor force is becoming more mobile.
- There are more individuals on the move than ever before: global businesspeople are busy, and refugees are fleeing conflicts and natural catastrophes.
- The workforce is growing increasingly diverse in many regions.

Intercultural skills are required by those working in a variety of industries, not just those involved in cross-border acquisitions like Daimler Chrysler. Even a local business that only operates in Germany, for example, is disappearing in the face of an increasingly diverse workforce.

If the firm wishes to grow, it could opt to go outside of the country and export. It will need to modify its products or services for the foreign market and negotiate with possible international partners. As a result, the culture of a company defines how employees should act both within and beyond the company's boundaries. This culture shapes employee perceptions, behaviours, and understanding,

since it comprises common concepts that are then communicated and reinforced through various ways.

Communication Challenges Intercultural Business Relationships

Globalization and the pursuit of new competitive advantages push businesses to grow outside their national borders. They must develop intercultural business partnerships to attain their aims since they lack the requisite resources or managerial skills to operate effectively in numerous nations. The tight collaboration and coordination of the interacting parties' activities result in additional value or resources, as well as an improvement in competitiveness if such connections are successful. However, to get there, the partners must first build trust. As the connection between the partners develops and changes through various stages, such trust emerges (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987). Partners establish confidence by demonstrating their reliability and integrity to the relationship via regular and timely communication. Organizations are more ready to commit to the partnership and work toward agreed long-term goals as communication and trust improve (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). As a result of the interaction, a valuable, distinctive, inimitable, and non-substitutable resource is created. And, as Barney (1991) argued, having a valued, scarce, imperfectly imitable resource with no strategically comparable alternative helps an organization to create and retain competitive advantages. Griffith, Myers, and Harvey (2006) went on to say that inter-organizational links might be a source of competitive advantage in and of themselves. As a result, effective relationships are considered essential strategic resources since they offer an organization with a unique resource-barrier position in the marketplace (p. 3), allowing the company to profit from above-average returns. However, effective and appropriate communication is required for these partnerships to succeed (Monczka, Callahan, & Nichols, 1995, p. 57), which is a difficult challenge to do. In international business partnerships, the interacting parties come from various nations and cultures. As a result, the communications these partners communicate (written or spoken) should be carefully designed to react to their different audiences' expectations and worries. The sender of the communication, for example, must consider the parties' socioeconomic and cultural gap. Using this information, the sender must determine what changes in communication behavior are required to align with the receiver's cultural norms and preferences.

Three components of communication behavior are essential in relationships, according to Mohr and Nevin (1990): the quality of communicative engagement, the manner of information exchange, and the amount to which both partners jointly engage in planning and goal setting (pp. 36-37). An examination of the elements that influence communication is required to determine the distance between the interacting parties. The interplay of these elements creates the complexity that the message sender must deal with. Communication is influenced by both external and internal elements linked to the type of intercultural interaction (Harvey & Griffith, 2002). The following are some external and internal elements to consider:

- National cultural differences
- organizational cultural differences
- level of economic development
- regulatory environment
- technological know-how

- business goals
- specific communication goals and processes (how they interact and the informal
- rules that govern their interaction).

The originator of the message determines what action to take regarding the direction, frequency, medium, and substance of the communication based on the amount of complexity (high or low) (i.e., what communication strategy to adopt to ensure effective and appropriate communication). Any change in these external or internal factors has an impact on the other components in the communication environment that influence the participant's communication behavior. Given that change and uncertainty are a constant in business, and the problems that arise as a result of these changes are frequently unpredictable and ill-defined, with no clear-cut solutions, participants must constantly reassess the factors that influence communication to adapt their communication behavior to the specific environmental conditions. As a result, learners who desire to operate in a multicultural business environment must comprehend the variables that influence the sender and receiver of a message's communication behavior, as well as be able to analyze and manage the interplay of these aspects.

Language: An Essential Component of Intercultural Communication

Nobody can deny the significance of language in our lives. It's difficult to envision a world without the capacity to communicate. We rarely analyze the significance and influence of the specific system of symbols that we use daily since language has always been present—for as long as we can remember. This is true for our native language system, as well as working with people from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Explore how language mediates virtually everything we do: consider the concept that language makes the anthropoid "human" to better comprehend the function and influence of our native language, as well as that of a second language, during intercultural interaction. Consider language to be a kind of "original sin" in the sense that it is more about what it "stands for" than what it "is." For example, the marks you're "reading" on this page (and the noises they suggest) reflect more than just "markings" on the page or "sounds" in the air. They are the formulaic vehicles via which we communicate meaning from one person to the next. Language is a simple and effective approach to do this.

Furthermore, words in a language reflect abstractions from experience, moulded into concepts, moulded by our linguistic system, and transmitted through discrete visual marks or sound bites, united in a stream. We can specify and designate individual units or concepts (e.g., tears, milk, steam, water, Coke, all manifestations of the category "liquids"), or we can generalize phenomena by using a single word label to lump together even dissimilar things (e.g., "animals" to lump together dogs, cats, porcupines, and cows). To put it another way, we may categorize or organize things as we see fit (and as our language permits). We can alternatively refer to anything as a "whole" entity (for example, a tree) or its individual "parts" (e.g., leaves, bark, trunk, roots). All of these talents are part of a language system that we learned in infancy and continued through childhood, a process that continues throughout life and that we seldom think about.

Nonetheless, language emerges from and influences our experiences, to the point that some argue that we are less than "human" without it. Consider the case of Victor the Wild Child, who was discovered in Aveyron, France, in 1797, as well as numerous stories of feral children throughout

history (Lane 1976). These youngsters were labelled "feral" because they were raised outside of human communities and lacked linguistic skills. It is obvious that language emerges via interactions with people in social contexts, and that communication is required for cultural participation. As a result, using symbolic actions makes us more understandable and acceptable to others around us. Our ability to communicate is our passport to "membership" in a cultural enclave. These examples demonstrate how language and culture are inextricably linked, and how speakers' habits and thinking are inextricably linked to both. Nobody invents language in a vacuum.

Intercultural communication from the perspective of language trainers

Both language trainers and teachers bring to the classroom certain norms and expectations about appropriate teacher and learner roles, as well as the learning-teaching practises they believe are conducive to language learning, as a result of their sociocultural backgrounds and previous educational experiences. Instructors must evaluate how closely the fundamental principles of their chosen technique will correlate with the set of assumptions that learners bring to the classroom to avoid dissatisfaction and failure due to mismatches between teachers' and learners' expectations. Sociocultural awareness-raising and scrutiny should be included into TESOL (Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Language) teacher preparation to equip language trainers to make more socioculturally informed pedagogical judgments. This article describes how incorporating intercultural communication knowledge into technique training might help teacher candidates become more aware of sociocultural relativity and reflect on their preconceived assumptions about target learner groups as they make methodological decisions.

Many academic forums, like the ELT (English Language Teaching) Journal, have disputed the cultural content of language teaching materials, strategies for enhancing awareness of the target language community's culture, and the culture of English as an International Language (Guest 2002, Littlewood 2000, Tomlinson 1990, and McKay 2002). Culture debates have evolved in recent years from an emphasis on 'culture as content' to include the cultural appropriateness of various language teaching practises (here defined as the approaches, strategies, and activities utilised in teaching), particularly when they were exported across settings (Barkhuizen 1998, Coleman 1996, Holliday 1994, Hu 2002). This shift in focus was likely fueled by data from classrooms throughout the world, where the teacher's/chosen school's technique did not align with students' and instructors' cultural norms and expectations of what constitutes "excellent" language education. Classroom research has revealed how 'behaviour in language classrooms is set within taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values, and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education.

Intercultural communication (ICC), which has not been effectively exploited in teacher education, is a subject that may provide language trainers and their crucial insights into how and why learning cultures may differ. ICC is the process that occurs when the senders and recipients of communications are from different cultures. When the instructor, teaching approach, and/or materials are products of one (sub)culture, while the receivers are members of another (sub)culture, this concept can be used to ELT (English Language Teaching). Indeed, a methodology becomes an example of an intercultural encounter once it is transferred from its original context and given to various learner groups.

Three perspectives on intercultural communication

The indigenous approach, cultural approach, and cross-cultural approach were identified as three viewpoints in research on cultural and intercultural communication.

- Indigenous approach: attempting to comprehend the significance of many civilizations.
- The cultural approach: comparable to the indigenous method, but the cultural approach additionally considers an individual's social environment.
- Cross-cultural approaches: examines cross-cultural validity and generalizability by focusing on two or more cultures.

Benefits of Intercultural Communication and Business English To The Business Class

The concept of Business English has shifted dramatically in recent years as a result of two developments: first, advances in genre theory, which has expanded far beyond surface-level textual analysis of genres to include in-depth and substantial context analysis, including professional practise; and second, the gradual convergence of two approaches in terms of research, theory, and pedagogy. As a result of these and other developments, it is critical to revisit and review not only the concept of Business English and the context in which it is currently learned and taught, but also the framework within which it has been conceptualised, developed, taught, and learned, as well as assessed and evaluated. Based on current work in a number of areas essential to the teaching and learning of Business English, this state-of-the-art study will explain the constant shift in the reasoning for the design and implementation of programmes in this subject.

Bridging the Gap between the Classroom and Business Contexts

In recent years, we've witnessed a growing disconnect between classroom activities and professional practices in the business sector. Academic research has also been criticized for lacking relevance and practical application in the workplace, which is especially true in light of current corporate practice and culture (Thomas 2007). Even among EBC (Economic BusinessCommunication) scholars, instructors, and practitioners, there is a growing belief that if academics do not make substantial attempts to understand and work with business communication professionals, the issue will worsen. Business and corporate practices, as well as the culture in which they are ingrained, are changing at a rapid pace. Our frameworks, models, and theories of corporate communication are rapidly becoming obsolete in the academic world, and they are also losing touch with the changing reality of work, which is becoming increasingly multicultural, multimodal, virtual, and strategic. As a result, EBC (Economic Business Communication) researchers and practitioners must engage with members of professional communities to better understand how and why they communicate.

Bridging the gap between the academic and professional worlds is about more than just establishing face validity in the business world; it's also about developing better theories about business communication and convincing our students that we have the necessary expertise to engage in EBC (Economic Business Communication) teaching and learning. The study of communication in intercultural and cross-cultural business situations is known as intercultural business communication. Because it addresses cultural variations between foreign business partners and clients, it plays an important role in the global economy and world commerce.

Intercultural training is a good way to get the information you need about cultural differences and how to communicate with people from different cultures. Learners get an understanding of how their own culture impacts how they use language in a cross-cultural setting. Intercultural communication training is critical for bridging cultural divides and increasing cultural understanding, as well as improving self-awareness and communication abilities.

Understanding the Factors of Cultural Shock in the International Business Arena

Cultural Shock is a traumatic experience that occurs when a culture change is perceived at home. It's a communication issue involving the difficulties of not comprehending the host culture's verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as its conventions and value systems. Cultural shock can result in a variety of difficulties with an employee's comfort level, notably in corporate inter-personal interaction reactions, which can lead to mental stress. Psychological stress is the result of an employee's inability to adjust to significant differences in lifestyles, living circumstances, and business procedures in another cultural context, which disrupts the employee's routines and comfort levels, resulting in anxiety and dissatisfaction at work. In this study, an attempt is made to comprehend the nature of cultural shock and its features, to determine the usual degrees of culture shock, and to provide solutions to relieve and reduce cultural shock in international business based on these assessments.

Conclusion

Business in Different Cultures Communication has firmly established itself as an issue that shapes young people's cultural consciousness. It goes into the most significant intercultural communication ideas and concepts. Dealing, socialising, and presenting are among the most essential components of commercial communication. Language trainers and corporate English teachers may use this guide to learn how to give intercultural communication skills training.

Many companies have faced new problems as a result of the rising globalisation of commercial operations in the late twentieth century, which has resulted in more international contacts and enhanced the capacity to collaborate with partners in many economic and cultural sectors. Because efficient corporate communication is vital to succeed in such global areas, linguistic and cultural barriers have a greater profile. When doing business overseas, linguistic and cultural expertise are essential. Given the development of English as a lingua franca, international and intercultural business communication is one of the most significant topics of research in the framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Integration of IBC training with Business English education is a long-term project that follows a systematic manner. As a result, in order to educate well-rounded pupils in business English, Business English teachers should focus on developing students' international communication skills through instructional activities. To begin, educators should pay attention to their students' cultural perspectives and emotional needs. Second, teachers must improve their teaching approaches and materials in order to stimulate students' interest in cross-cultural communication. Finally, teachers should encourage students to experiment with new ways of expressing themselves in order to meet their emotional and cultural needs. Fourth, teachers must improve students' overall quality and business acumen in order to meet the growing demand for international engagement. Finally, intercultural communication education aims to develop multinational businessmen and women capable of competing in the global market.

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