

IV. ВЕРБАЛЬНОЕ ПОВЕДЕНИЕ КОММУНИКАНТОВ В ДИСКУРСАХ

J. Pecnikova, A. Slatinska
(Slovakia, Banska Bystrica)

SOCIO-CULTURAL DISCOURSE OF COMPETENCIES AND BARRIERS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The present paper is devoted to the socio-cultural aspects of intercultural communication. The authors analyze the competencies and barriers in communication. The language knowledge is considered to be the key element.

Keywords: intercultural communication, barriers, culture, language, socio-cultural aspects

Intercultural communication requires certain intercultural competencies, especially language skills and respect towards communication partners and their specifics. When talking about intercultural communication, it is of utmost importance to be prepared for unexpected and unusual reactions, English as a communication language, unclear non-verbal communication acts, etc. Moreover, one should be also familiar with different types of culturally determined behavior which can be the factor influencing how open or close we are when communicating with someone. The way of greeting or addressing someone with or without their titles, by the first name or surname as well as particular communication rituals and etiquette (shaking hands, smile, manifesting emotions) are crucial facts, necessary to be aware of, in any kind of intercultural communication.

Referring to intercultural communication, we should also take into account stereotypes or ethnocentrism that can create barriers when mak-

ing contacts. According to Průcha [2010], ethnophaulisms are ethnic and national stereotypes which can ridicule a member of a different nation. They can cause negativity and unfriendliness. Therefore, respect and tolerance are of utmost importance when establishing intercultural communication.

Language is regarded as an important element of intercultural competence. In general, languages can be divided into large and small (according to the number of their users). From the point of view of intercultural communication, there are some key aspects of language that we should take into account such as: how many people speak the given language, how relevant the language is in terms of communication as well as how related the languages are.

Population extensiveness is about the number of people using the language, not only as a mother tongue. Following Graddol [2006], the most frequently used language is Chinese language (1052 mil.), then English (508mil.) and Hindu (478mil.). Only some languages, including Lingua Franca, are considered to be the world – international languages.

Lingua Franca is considered to be the main communication medium of different countries and continents without being the mother tongue of people. Originally, this term was used to refer to the Frankish language in the 5th century AD. There were different Lingua Francas during history beginning with Sumerian, Aramaic, Greek and Latin languages. Today it is English which is used by approximately 1,5 to 2 billions of people. English became Lingua Franca from the territorial as well as functional point of view.

In the 17th century, Great Britain became the naval power extending its territory by gaining new colonies. Hand in hand with expansion, the language found its way to other places. From the economic point of view, Great Britain is the cradle of industrial revolution and thanks to the Commonwealth it has become economic-technical superpower. From the political point of view, after the WWI the USA gave preference to English to be the language of diplomacy and after the WWII this position of English became more obvious (NATO, OECD, UNESCO). The fashion of American and British youth penetrated the world through the medium of culture, es-

pecially film and music resulting in linguistic imperialism and Americanisation of world's culture. Gradually, English has become the compulsory language at schools.

Finally, English has become Lingua Franca in the period between the end of the 20th and 21st century. It is a very specific language comprised of a very small number of letters and pronounced sounds. One third of them have their origin in Latin, while two thirds are of Germanic origin. English is related to many languages defending its prime position in the world.

Today there is a tendency to oppose English as a Lingua Franca because of language imperialism. France is the prime example of such an opposition, trying to protect autochthonous language. However, the lifecycle of English as a Lingua Franca can also be seen as limited from the long-term horizon. Nowadays, English is threatened by Chinese, Spanish or Arabian language. Apart from that, English language alone is fragmented undergoing the process of simplification and divergence from the standard British English. It can happen very easily in the future that English will follow the fate of Latin which was also divided in the process of time into smaller languages with specific differences.

Today, English is part of basic literacy. There is a snow-ball effect – the more people in different countries learn English, the more English is used in communication and the number of its users increases. In this way, the possibility that English will become universal international language one day increases gradually. Good knowledge of foreign languages is necessary in any type of intercultural communication. English is considered to be the neutral language in such cases when two foreigners, speaking different languages, use it for communication. English is used extensively in media space. In this way, the negative expressions are being replaced by more neutral ones. Therefore, the *war* in Iraq was replaced by the term *insertion*, etc. In 2008 the French minister of culture described the idea of being represented by the English song at the Eurovision contest as a public shame. For now, the position and role of English is irreplaceable. But the knowledge of cultures is also of crucial importance in communication. That is the reason why the term intercultural communication is preferred rather than international communication.

Intercultural communication is based on face-to-face contact. Information is viewed through codes which are specific for the given culture. This is the way how cultural patterns arise. If two partners do not understand each other in intercultural communication, it is not because of different language, but because of cultural differences. In such a way, cultural stereotypes are created and social distance is widened [Niento 2013]. Intercultural communication which is not managed well can lead to cultural distance and division rather than decline of barriers, making ethnocentrism in public and private area stronger. Therefore, it is extremely important to stress that intercultural communication should not view nations as closed units, but more attention should be paid to cultural characteristics and differences of individual cultures. Culture alone cannot be reduced in any way to certain place or territory. The basic idea of intercultural communication should go hand in hand with the existence of cultures and carriers of culture – cultural identities. When members of certain culture communicate, they represent the given culture, especially how the given culture communicates. When we fail to acknowledge different cultures, cultural idealization or misunderstandings emerge [Durant, Shepherd 2009].

The forms of culture and communication have been in constant development. That is why it would be ideal to devote more time to this topic because cultures are not closed entities. The ways of communication have been changing very rapidly influenced by new technologies. Intercultural communication should therefore react to these changes and new research should be focused on new areas of communication.

Barriers of Intercultural Communication

Prejudices and stereotypes are considered to be the most frequent barriers in intercultural communication: “*They represent often comfortable intellectual simplification*” [Povchanič 2012: 124]. As far as the prejudices are concerned, they are more likely regarded as a type of behavior, possibly preceded by real negative experience. However, the stereotypes are viewed more as being neutral supposing they usually stem from real facts. From the schematic point of view, they represent and simplify cultural performances and patterns. It is a very interesting fact that they transcend time

and many times they are transmitted from generation to generation. They summarize, schematize, caricature and standardize difference. Prejudices are usually based on stereotypes, but stereotypes do not have to necessarily become prejudices [Mešková 2007].

When breaking down cultural barriers, it is necessary to overcome cultural shock and try to adapt to cultural diversity which subconsciously threatens roots of our own culture. This process is accompanied by a huge level of tolerance, ambiguity and effort to solve the situation in the form of compromises, empathy and communication competence. Trompenaars [2014] mentions the term intercultural sensitivity which transcends the multicultural concept and is focused on interconnection of cultures in regard to their differences: *“If multi and pluricultural approach stops at the level of making statements, then intercultural approach is the way how cultural diversity is analysed. Moreover, it is an approach, analysis, view and a kind of challenge when dealing with cultural interactions”* [Povchanič 2012: 140].

Jandt [2010] differentiates 6 main barriers in intercultural communication:

- 1) anxiety,
- 2) similarity instead of differences,
- 3) ethnocentrism,
- 4) stereotypes and prejudices,
- 5) nonverbal misinterpretations,
- 6) language.

These barriers reflect the concept of Simmel’s stranger [2014]. The stranger in this case is viewed as a member of a group who acts in a certain way – usual for his own culture, but he differentiates himself from the host group by the act of doing. Following this example, it is possible to examine the abovementioned barriers in communication as mentioned by Jandt [2010]. The stranger is limited in a new culture by the existence of fear based on the fact that he must deal with the idea of being “different” everywhere. This fear can be created in his immediate environment too, the members of which are not familiar with such a difference, and therefore do

not know how to react. As far as the society tries to search for similarities instead of differences, in terms of accepting the different, it can have an adversary effect. It happens when what the stranger normally regards as normal, represents a shock for the environment such as the intensity of emotions and their manifestations, different habits or lifestyle.

Ethnocentrism can be regarded as a negative performance of closed culture which can result in cultural shortsightedness and preference of own culture. Following this example, meeting new cultures can have different consequences like extreme defense of own culture. Prejudices and negative stereotypes about the whole groups are based on misunderstandings. Psychologists describe the prejudiced person as an authoritative one: *“Such persons tend to overgeneralize and think in bipolar terms. They are highly conventional, moralistic, and uncritical of higher authority. <...> Highly prejudiced people are unlikely to change their attitudes even when presented with new and conflicting information”* [Jandt 2010: 91].

Non-verbal and verbal communication can also be a critical point in creation of misunderstandings during intercultural communication. *“Language communication takes place in the area of identical meanings. Different users of language must not only agree objectively in uniform use of the same symbols, but they must also be aware of this similarity”* [Habermas 2011: 353]. It is because of incorrect interpretation of the same signs, gestures and symbols which can be the reason for creation of intercultural misunderstandings.

It is not only about the use of language, but also about the selection of unsuitable language means that can create barriers in intercultural communication. *“Language creates differences that do not exist in reality. In general, Eastern perspectives are as skeptical of language as the way to understand our world as Western perspectives are skeptical of intuition in language”* [Jandt 2010: 59]. It is of utmost importance to take into account different use of verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication in different cultures when establishing a contact because even a seemingly different aspect can change into an insurmountable barrier in communication.

Conclusion

As far as it could have been seen, the language acquisition as a key competence is not the only barrier in intercultural communication. We have come to the conclusion that except for the six basic barriers mentioned by several authors, there is also one extra barrier which is connected with the difference in cultural values. How people act and what approaches they have is directly linked to those values. Intercultural communication competence is based on the knowledge of dominant cultural values. When ignoring them, with no effort to understand the given culture deeply, intercultural communication is doomed to failure. Following the example of current affairs in the world of today, where Western democratic values are preferred, a clash of different systems of values gives way to armed conflicts.

Bibliography

1. Habermas, J. Teória jazyka a východiská sociálnych vied. Bratislava: Kalligram, 2011.
2. Graddol, D. The Future of English? London: British Council, 2007.
3. Jandt, F.E. An Introduction to Intercultural Communication. London: Sage, 2010.
4. Durand, A. – Shepherd, I. „Culture“ and „Communication“ in Intercultural Communication. In: European Journal of English Studies. London: Taylor-Francis, 2009.
5. Mešková, L. Communication interculturelle France – Slovaquie. Banská Bystrica: UMB, 2007.
6. Niento, V. G. Understanding Social Distance in Intercultural Communication. Alicante: University of Alicante, 2013.
7. Povchanič, Š. Initiation à la communication interculturelle. Bratislava: Ekonóm, 2012.
8. Prucha, J. Interkulturní komunikace. Praha: Grada, 2010.
9. Simmel, G. The Stranger. [cit. 2014-06-25]. Available at: http://midiacidada.org/img/O_Estrangeiro_SIMMEL.pdf
10. Trompenaars, F. Culture od Business. [cit. 2014-06-25]. Available at: <http://www2.thtconsulting.com/>

Я. Пецникова, А. Слатинска
(Словакия, Банска Быстрица)

СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНЫЙ ДИСКУРС КОМПЕТЕНЦИЙ И БАРЬЕРОВ В МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ

В статье представлены социокультурные аспекты межкультурной коммуникации. Авторы анализируют компетенции и барьеры в межкультурной коммуникации с акцентом на знание иностранного языка (английского).

Ключевые слова: межкультурная коммуникация, языковые барьеры, культура, язык, социокультурные аспекты

J. Šavelová
(Slovakia, Banská Bystrica)

CURRENT TRENDS IN TEACHING ENGLISH WITH CAT TOOLS FOR TRANSLATION PURPOSES

This article deals with professional translation, its importance and relevance at the present time, teaching methods connected with it, computer-assisted translation tools and the impact the CAT tools have on general methods of teaching.

Keywords: teaching English, CAT tools, translation

Introduction

After the Slovak Republic accession to the European Union, the need to teach translation as a subject has become more important. Translation as a subject on its own became a part of inevitable social changes, within the framework of which, the methodology of teaching English is being developed and modified. The communicative approach with regard to translation