INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN EDUCATION: CHALLENGES IN MULTICULTURALISM

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Abstract. This research article explores the challenges faced in intercultural communication within the context of multicultural education. With the increasing diversity of student populations in educational settings, effective communication between individuals from different cultural backgrounds is critical for fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments. This article examines the key challenges that educators encounter in intercultural communication and provides insights into strategies for addressing these challenges. By understanding the barriers to effective intercultural communication, educators can enhance their ability to promote cross-cultural understanding and create a supportive learning environment for all students.

Keywords: intercultural communication, strategy, cultural background, axiology, teacher training, cultural barriers, intercultural competence

Introduction:

Before talking about intercultural communication problems in education, the authors of the article analyze the concept of intercultural communication, which was introduced not so long ago, although such scientists as Aristotle, I. Kant, G. W. Hegel were also studying the issues that formed the basis of the theory of intercultural communication. The term "intercultural communication" was first formulated in 1954 in the book by E. Hall and D. Trager "Culture as Communication: Model and Analysis" to designate intercultural communication as a special area of human relations, the ideal goal that a person should strive for in desire to adapt to the world around you as best and as efficiently as possible.

The scientists called intercultural communication "an ideal goal that a person should strive for in his desire to adapt to the world around him as best and as efficiently as possible". [1]

However, it is important to remember that intercultural communication is an ancient phenomenon that emerged concurrently with the formation of different cultures as a result of a person observing individuals who were different from him and analyzing the differences between him and representatives of other cultures.

It should be noted that "intercultural communication" is frequently translated into English as "cross-cultural communication," despite the fact that "intercultural" has the least distorting meaning, implying communication between representatives of different cultures rather than a collision, intersection, or conflict.

The following are the main characteristics of intercultural communication that were discovered during the research:

the sender of the message and the addressee cannot be from the same culture;

participants in communication should be aware of each other's cultural differences;

intercultural communication is always interpersonal communication in a specific context, where the analysis of received messages is carried out in various ways;

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All of these definitions can be attributed to "intercultural competence," including the ability to build relationships, conduct constructive dialogue, and interact with people from different cultures while taking into account their values and norms, as well as the appropriate use of verbal and nonverbal communication methods. Intercultural competence is defined by A.P. Sadokhin as "a personality trait required for successful and effective intercultural communication, joint activities, and cooperation with carriers of other cultures," that is, a personality trait that allows participants in intercultural communication to create a socio-cultural space in which representatives of various cultures and ethnic groups can interact.

Intercultural communication refers to the exchange of information and ideas between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds. In the educational context, it encompasses the ways in which teachers, staff, and students of diverse origins interact, interpret messages, and collaborate (Deardorff, 2006). The ability to communicate across cultural lines is a crucial competency for fostering inclusive learning environments and preparing students for an increasingly globalized world.

However, the realities of multiculturalism in education often pose significant barriers to achieving this ideal. Disparities in language proficiency, divergent cultural norms and values, and implicit biases can hinder mutual understanding and constructive dialogue (Yeh, 2017). These challenges can manifest in various ways, such as misunderstandings during classroom discussions, difficulties in parent-teacher interactions, and unequal opportunities for students from marginalized backgrounds.

This research article examines the key obstacles to effective intercultural communication in educational settings and explores strategies for addressing them. By drawing on scholarly literature and real-world case studies, the paper aims to shed

light on the complex dynamics of multiculturalism in education and offer insights for cultivating inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive learning communities.

Barriers to Intercultural Communication in Education

Linguistic barrier

One of the primary barriers to effective intercultural communication in education is the diversity of languages spoken by students and their families. Language proficiency, or the lack thereof, can hinder the ability of individuals to fully understand and express themselves, leading to miscommunications, frustrations, and feelings of exclusion (Hollie, 2012).

For students who are English language learners (ELLs), the language barrier can pose significant challenges in accessing course materials, participating in class discussions, and building relationships with their peers. Teachers may struggle to effectively convey instructions and provide appropriate academic support, further exacerbating the achievement gap between ELL students and their native English-speaking counterparts.

The language barrier can also impede effective communication between educators and parents or guardians, particularly in contexts where parent-teacher conferences, school events, and other essential exchanges rely on a shared linguistic medium. This can hamper the development of strong home-school partnerships, which are crucial for student success.

Divergent Cultural Norms and Values

In addition to language differences, the presence of diverse cultural backgrounds in educational settings can give rise to misunderstandings and conflicts due to divergent norms, values, and behavioral expectations (Banks, 2015). What may be considered appropriate or polite in one cultural context may be perceived as rude or inappropriate in another.

For example, the degree of eye contact considered respectful during a conversation can vary significantly across cultures. Some students may interpret a teacher's direct eye contact as a sign of engagement and attentiveness, while others may view it as intrusive or disrespectful. Similarly, the ways in which students are expected to interact with authority figures, such as teachers, can differ based on cultural upbringing.

These cultural differences can manifest in various aspects of the educational experience, from classroom participation and group work to discipline and conflict resolution. Misunderstandings and misattributions stemming from divergent cultural

norms can lead to strained relationships, diminished trust, and suboptimal learning outcomes.

Implicit Biases

Even in the absence of overt discrimination, the presence of implicit biases among educators and students can pose significant challenges to effective intercultural communication and the creation of inclusive learning environments (Staats, 2016). Implicit biases are unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that influence our perceptions, judgments, and behaviors without our conscious awareness.

In the educational context, implicit biases can manifest in the way teachers interact with students, the way they evaluate student performance, and the way they make decisions about resource allocation and academic opportunities. For example, research has shown that teachers may hold lower expectations for students from certain racial or socioeconomic backgrounds, leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy where those students underperform (Jussim & Harber, 2005).

Similarly, students themselves may harbor implicit biases that shape their perceptions of their peers and their willingness to engage in constructive cross-cultural dialogue. These biases can hinder the development of empathy, respect, and a sense of community within the classroom.

Addressing implicit biases is a critical step in fostering genuine intercultural communication and creating educational environments that are truly inclusive and equitable.

Conclusion

Effective intercultural communication is essential for navigating the realities of multiculturalism in educational settings and fostering inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive learning environments. However, the barriers posed by language differences, divergent cultural norms, and implicit biases present significant challenges that require a multifaceted, systemic approach.

By developing culturally responsive curricula and pedagogical practices, providing comprehensive teacher training and professional development, and promoting meaningful dialogue and mutual understanding, educational institutions can take crucial steps towards enhancing intercultural communication and creating learning communities that celebrate diversity and unlock the full potential of all students.

Ultimately, the ability to effectively communicate across cultural lines is not only a key competency for success in an increasingly globalized world but also a fundamental pillar of social justice and equity in education. As the demographic

composition of classrooms continues to evolve, the imperative to address the challenges

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