

Literature Review of Intercultural Communication Challenges for Academic Purpose

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Abstract:

This essay focuses on an in-depth analysis of the literature based on how intercultural communication issues are seen when used for academic purposes. More precisely, the definition, factors, theories, and challenges of intercultural communication were the focus of the literature review.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Challenges, Review, International Students

Introduction:

Culture and communication is interrelated in terms of the beliefs, ideals and perceptions on these beliefs. Discussions reflects these beliefs, which ignite differentiation of opinions. This is one of the basic aspect, which the paper attempts to conduct for enhancing the awareness of the readers regarding the intercultural communication challenges faced by students studied abroad for academic purpose.

Definitions of Intercultural communication

According to Klyukanov, (2020), intercultural communication alters the perceptions on the collective identity. Herein lays the effectiveness of the collectivism, as proposed by Hofstede in the cultural dimensions. Leadership styles and approach plays an important aspect in the intercultural communication for ensuring that the cultural diversity is not affected. In the process of intercultural communication, salience enhances the individualism of the individuals like the students of Yunnan Minzu University, China. Previous researchers have shed light on the ethnic identities in the intercultural communications. In the modern context of intercultural communication, references are drawn towards Middle East, African or Central Asian. Use of the symbolic resources shapes the communication across the cultures. In this context, Delante, (2020) draws in the reference of the social media, which influences the cultural communication.

Hua, (2020) states that research on the languages is an action towards taking a concrete stance towards intercultural communication. This action enhances the ethnocentrism, enhancing the cultural diversity. The icons and symbols becomes the universal truth for the students to follow the religious cultural ideals. On the contrary, the university norms, opposes some of these religious ideals aggravating

the complexities in the intercultural communications (Omicsonline.org, 2020).

Communication between the cultures organized in the university premises also defines the attempts towards enhancing the awareness of the students towards dealing with the other cultures. Sometimes, when the group discussions are not chaired by the higher authorities which results in conflicts, which can cause physical harm. This compels the students from the other cultures to form bad image about the university and the measures towards cultural diversity and inclusion. Community services is one of the shades of the intercultural communication, which enhances the corporate social responsibility of the university. Consciousness in protecting the individual sentiments of the community students is effective for attaining their trust, loyalty and dependence (Yang, 2018). In this process, services towards the students with disability is also considered. For these students, the University takes special measures like the accessibility to wheelchair, helpers, and special services among others. In this measures, assistance from the regulatory bodies is effective in terms of averting the emergencies, which can affect the cultural ideals of these students. Therefore, the culture and diversity policies are frequently revised. The process is fair and transparent, which averts the instances of misunderstanding and misapprehensions. It is also ensured that the other students also receive fair and equal treatment according to the needs.

According to the arguments of Nadeem, Mohammed and Dalib, (2019), attitudes of the students and the competence towards culture is related. The manner in which the communication is established affects the competencies and the decisive stance towards it. The perspective towards the cultural competencies differ according to the religious beliefs, ideals and others. In the process of altering the preconceived notions towards these, it is to be ensured by the university

staffs that the religious sentiments of the students are not affected. The western influence and affectation plays an important role in terms of shaping the perceptions. One of the determinants of the cultural competencies is the favorable working conditions towards learning about the different cultures. This is in terms of the trainings and post training tests, which assesses the grasping power of the staffs and the students. Attitudes, in the arguments of Rubtsova, (2019), gains the perception as one of the important aspect in terms of learning about the cultural competence. The religious belief, ideals and perceptions brings noticeable changes in the attitudes, which raises conflicts on the basis of the differentiation of opinion.

Factors affecting intercultural communication

Cultural identity is one of the factors affecting the intercultural communication. In the process of group discussions with the other students, the students of the University find that their cultural identity is enhanced. Inclusive practices are catered in the form of revising the policies, which are a positive determinant of the cultural competence for improving the adjustment skills of the students. Ethnographic measures towards shaping the pedagogy is considered to be one of the aspects, which is improved in terms of involving the students from other cultures to the academic processes. In this context, Toliboboeva, (2020) highlights the aspect of **race**, which reflects the fact that the university staffs and the students belong to different socio cultural backgrounds. This fact is reflected in the approaches towards working and grasping the lectures. **Gender roles** in the form of the male and female students and teachers, is also one of the factors affecting the intercultural communication. This is in the form of the equal opportunities to the female workforce for fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Gender discriminations and workplace harassments contradicts the diversity and inclusion, adding an interrogative parameter to the policies and documents. The students, teachers and staffs in individual are also the factors, affecting the intercultural communication. This is through the means of interacting, which confronts them to the other cultural ideals, believes and perceptions. Acceptance is not always the case, which ignites conflicts, reflecting the complexities in cultural awareness (Ferri, 2018). This issue contradicts the competence towards culture and diversity, questioning the awareness on the cultures.

Social class and hierarchies also affects the intercultural communication. This is in terms of the ideals, which they use for communication. It is evident that the cultural competence in this case would be low as there are cultural differences prevailing in the thought processes towards accepting the other cultural perceptions.

Contradictions are to be tactful for averting the affectation and influence of the students from the individual sentiments. Herein lays the effectiveness of the power distance, which is sometimes misused for disseminating the cultural awareness to others. This aspect contradicts the authority of the university in terms of ensuring the well-being of the students in terms of the cultural competencies of the students (Klyukanov, 2020). This aspect puts the aspect of leadership into question, reflecting interplay with the cultural ideals of the students from other cultures. As a result of this, the students lack the courage of approaching the professors for clearing the doubts. The differences in the cultures and its impact on the pedagogy is also an affectation in the academic performance of the students. However, it is the responsibility of the administration to make the students from other cultures feel that they are an asset, enhancing the cultural diversity.

Changing the diversity and inclusion policies helps in creating a positive image in the minds of the students of the University to ensure that they are being able to adjust with the other students (Calafell et al., 2017). Language barrier is a main factor affecting the intercultural communication. However, language trainings are effective for making the students from other cultures an important part of the university.

Perceptions and assumptions are other factors, which affects the intercultural communication. It is obvious that the students of the University belong to different socio cultural backgrounds. Therefore, their perceptions differ accordingly. This is mainly due to the religious beliefs, which they have been learning from the cultural upbringing. The foreign students perceive that they need to be treated well by the university staffs and students (Dasli & Díaz, 2016). On the contrary, the native students are to follow the ethics and core values, which they are instructed to follow. Herein lays the difference between the perceptions of the native and foreign students. Typical evidence of this lies in the group discussions and team work, which sometimes results in conflicts, discriminations and harassments. One of the examples is that of ragging, which degrades the cultural diversity and adversely affects the morale of the foreign students. Therefore, the policies, practices and programs are to be strictly reviewed by the higher authorities and administrative staffs for ensuring that the students receive fair and equal treatment. This necessitates the need for enforcing the latest version of Equality Act (Croucher, 2017).

Expectations also affects the intercultural communication. The sender expects that the receiver would be able to understand the intended message through the used communication medium. On the contrary, the receiver expects clarity in the communication, which is assistance in terms of

interpreting the messages. Miscommunication or communication gaps contradicts the factors of expectation, aggravating the complexities. This issue can be resolved by hiring flexible and competent translators of mediators (Liu & Fang, 2017).

Theories of intercultural communication

Gudykunst's anxiety or uncertainty management theory is related in this context. This is because of the encounters, which takes place between the groups and the strangers. In terms of the pedagogy, the communication theory reflects the interactions between the students, professors and the agencies. Miscommunication and communication gaps reflects the anxiety, which raises uncertainty in terms of the intentions for rolling the crucial messages, which are to be disseminated to the agencies. Lack of planning for organizing the communication processes results in uncertainty in terms of maintaining the sequence in the processes. **Face negotiation theory**, as proposed by Ting Toomey, reflects the cultural differences in the process of communication. Negotiation is needed for handling the conflicts. In this context, Godwin-Jones, (2019) reflects the perception that the facial negotiations are effective in terms of handling the conflicts. This is because it ignites the facial expressions, which helps in gaining an insight into the approaches on intended messages.

Interpersonal theory of Intercultural Communication by Irwin is also relative in this context. The theory is based on the ideology of intimacy and performance. This is in terms of the competencies in communication according of the self-expression and the dynamism. The key features of communication, according to the theory, is that of context, conduct and content. Context is the situation factors, which reflects the basis on which the plans are to be constructed. Meetings, conferences and others consider the situation issues in Yunnan Muan University, which results in the development of the plans and policies, which are to be renewed for upgrading the standards and quality of the education (God & Zhang, 2019). Maintaining consistency in the communications with the stakeholders and shareholders results in ensuring the approaches towards academic excellence of the students. Conduct is the pedagogical methods, which are reflected in the strategic planning like the increasing of scholarship options for the foreign students, planning quality accommodation services foreign students. The conduct is also to be reviewed for assessing the extent to which they align with the academic needs of the students. Content needs quality in terms of the practices and policies related to communication. This quality is effective for assessing that the pedagogical means are effective in terms of evaluating the academic performance and the transformations in the performance (Hua, 2020).

Mention can also be made of the Muted Group Theory, which perceived that language is manmade. This is correct in terms of the needs, for which the humans communicate. According to the theory, women are the muted group, as language lacks the efficiency in narrating the experienced. This is contradictory statement, as most of the women have become successful by narrating their experience in the form of written versions. Now, most of the women are independent and have access to the communication modes for globalizing their approaches on the worldly issues. All of the propositions in the theory have been denied in terms of the suppression of the women. The adjective "muted" is contradicted in the group discussions, where the male and female university students are given equal opportunities to present their opinions on the forwarded issue (Liaw, 2019). Hall, on the other hand, expressed high context and low context aspects in the communication process. High context aspects are the string interpersonal bonds, which strengthen the flexibility in the personal relationships, justifying the communication. Low context reflects the low commitment, which reflects the weak bondage in the relationships. This affects the communication process, adding interrogation towards the process adopted for communication. Based on these affectations, the reactions on communication are also affected. This reduces the trust in the communicating, adding to the complexities in the interexchange of the messages. In case of the university, absence of uncertainty avoidance plans results in anxiety in the communications, making the conflicts obvious. Therefore, the need is to make effective face to face negotiation, which would be productive for understanding the responses for the proposed messages (Romero-Trillo, 2019).

If the communication between the native and foreign students are concerned, then competence refers to the understanding of the competence in culture, which needs to be catered for establishing the communication. Interviews with the external agencies can ignite conglomeration of the different cultures, which can give rise to conflicts (Ward & Given, 2019). Therefore, it is to be ensured that the communication does not have any slang, foul and others, which can hurt the individual sentiments of others. Theinterviews reflects the aspects of social class and the hierarchy, which is maintained in terms of gaining an insight into the intercultural communication exchanges. Herein lays the exchange of beliefs, ideals, which gives rise to the role models, who are to be followed for the cultural diversity. In this context, leadership is one of the main aspect, where crisis communication plays an important role. Consciousness in maintaining effective communication in the period of crisis enhances the trait theory of leadership in case of the professors. Behavior in this context is vital for assessing the

approached towards diversity management (Delante, 2020).

Challenges in intercultural communication

It is evident that with the cross cultural communication or communication managed across different cultures, it becomes much difficult and challenging for people to communicate with each other within the workplace. According to Seregina et al., (2019), the working and communication managed through intercultural communication often results in people experiencing a wide range of issues and challenges that not only affect their behaviors, but also affected the overall organizational performance and efficacy. It has been found in many situations that the cultural differences result in making the team members facing challenges and difficulty to communicate with each other, which becomes evident in the emergence of conflicts and misunderstandings that are difficult to mitigate and thus affect the overall business functions largely too. The differences often influence the team members and their behaviors and attitudes towards communicating, while sharing or exchanging information and while managing leadership and status quo (Liu & Zhang, 2020).

When the perceptions of the incompatibility between the cultural values, beliefs, norms, limitations of resources and different styles and processes are prominent, the intercultural conflicts and communication challenges tend to appear more. Due to this, the unfamiliar way of communicating between individuals and situations where people need to negotiate, create difficult situations. Also stated by Kabir and Sponseller, (2020) that the ethics and values guide the way people communicate with each other and influence the principles of conduct of individuals and groups within the workplace. There are certain codes of ethics and conduct that shape the emotional behaviors and way people communicate among each other and thus also represent the guidelines, which represent what are the right things to do and what might be the wrong things to do. Whenever these values, beliefs and notions differ, it has led to racist, sexist and non-ethical behaviors and responses. This also has hindered the level of verbal communication among team members as well as affected their level of participation in decision making, sharing of information, thus, and resulting in causing serious challenges associated with the communication among team members within the workplace (Handford et al., 2019).

The barriers of **language** are the most common, as it has hindered people to talk in common languages. Due to the people communicating in different languages, it becomes much more difficult to understand what they want to tell, further,

alleviating the issues and challenges experienced. Also, it has been found by many that the intercultural communication makes people share their individual values, beliefs and opinions, which are often ignored by others and this could be one of the major reason of conflicts and misunderstandings too. Not being tolerant about the values and beliefs of people along with making racist and discriminating comments should also pose significant challenges and difficulties for the undergraduate students to communicate or interact with each other, belonging from different backgrounds, cultures, race, religion, color or ethnicity (Miike, 2019).

Taking a cue from the aspect of approaches towards disclosing the information through the means of communication, Gudkova et al., (2019) is of the view that absence of control on emotional intelligence is also a challenge. This is in terms of the chances of encountering mocking and taunts from the other students. These instances sometimes give rise to misunderstandings, which reflects the discrepancies in the intentions for rolling out the information and the information, which are for the receiver for interpret. Countering this, Klyukanov, (2020) states that in this process, the cultural belief of the both the speaker and listener are affected, distorting the act of disseminating the important information.

Omicsonline.org (2020) reveals the international cultural exchanges in the premises of the University. The vision is that of the "Unity and Progress", which is somewhat distorted with the reference to incompatibility issues. Motto of "Pursuit of Truth and Cultivation of Morals" is based on cultural and moral values, which is to be inculcated within the students. Projects across the borders, enhances the ethnocentrism. These projects are one of the viable means for dealing with the challenges of incompatibility and communication barriers. As a measure of the improving the standards and quality of pedagogy, the university aims to imbibe modern university systems, which are inclined towards upgradation of Minor talent cultivation. Emphasis on this aspect have been effective in empowering the Minority Groups through the provision of quality education services in the University (Dasih, Triguna & Winaja, 2019).

When two cultures conglomerate, there are many chances of conflicts, discrimination and harassments. This is because of the belief on the religions, which the students are reliant on. When there is differentiation of opinions, it takes the shape of discriminations and harassments. The challenges in the form of miscommunication, communication gaps also conglomerates the factors of age, personality, social class and hierarchy. Delante, (2020) is of the view that when the students indulge in group discussions with the international students,

it is the social hierarchy of the professors, which are at practice in terms of the power distance. It is the responsibility of the professors to ensure that the balance and negotiation is maintained in the communications.

Rubtsova, (2019) is of the view that education aims towards the academic excellence of the students, therefore, the culture is only to be limited in terms of the cultural diversity and adjustments in terms of enhancing the adjustability within the students. Any kind of political power exertion is to be averted in terms of ensuring that there is no compromise with the academic establishment of the students. Under no circumstances, the students are to be placed in an awkward situation of ethical dilemma, which can raise confusions in terms of the cultural beliefs. Tactful, rational and logical reasoning is the main tenet, which helps in dealing with the instances of ethical dilemmas. Along with this, counselling, face to face communication are to be increased with the students for assessing the behavior in terms of the culture, in which they are to adjust for achieving the academic excellence (Toliboboeva, 2020).

Intercultural communication reflects the exchange of messages in the written or oral form between two persons.

This is the conglomeration of the cultures, ideas and beliefs, which enhances the preconceived knowledge, ideas, skills and expertise for the persons involved in the communication. In the process of communication, the tone used reflects the cultural upbringing the persons have received (Ferri, 2018). Use of ornamental yet simple language, makes it easy for the persons to interpret the crux of the intended message, which is being disseminated. On the contrary, if slang, jargon and foul language are used in the communication, it reflects the negative connotation in terms of the cultural communication. This type of communication, usually results in conflicts, which gives rise to discrimination and harassments, degrading the cultural ideas and beliefs of the person intended for mocking and taunts. It is from the communication, that personality of a person is reflected. Based on the negative connotation, it can be established that the intercultural communication in the Yunnan Minzu University is based on the upgradation and empowerment of the minority groups (Klyukanov, 2020).

There are various types of communication used in the university premises like verbal in the presentation, meetings, conference, seminars and others. Written communication is used for writing the letters and the request, claims and others, which are completed online. Clarity in these writing makes it easier for the receiver to interpret the message intended to be disseminated. Professionalism is reflected in the style and tone of the language used

for communicating. Lack of this professionalism results in the formation of negative image about the sender (Calafell et al., 2017).

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