

покоління, зберігають свою ідентичність серед домінуючої культури. Отже, спільне існування в межах одного суспільства природно призводить до взаємозбагачення цих етнічних груп і обміну культурними досягненнями. Така взаємодія культурних систем різних етносів забезпечує їх здатність до інтеграції через комунікативні ресурси, а форми комунікативної взаємодії суттєво визначають характер соціальних відносин.

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### **CHALLENGES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

We all live in a very fragile world. We all have **differences in culture, history, traditions, etc.** We are all different and unique. **Sometimes it is hard to understand each other and one can be easily offended by incidental misunderstanding and these wounds are not so easy to heal. Understanding intercultural varieties is of utmost importance in any**

**sphere of our communication thus it** is not surprising that intercultural understanding and communication are the top priorities for international businesses today [2].

Intercultural communication means first of all cultural background, that is not only language knowledge. You cannot say that you are cultural aware if you know a foreign language. It also implies the knowledge of customs and traditions, long history of the nation, mental peculiarities and religious points, i.e. all issues that are interrelated.

People have to communicate with each other to reach their goals. It is impossible to live in a society and not to socialize. But how can we understand each other if we belong to different cultures? Intercultural communication essentially means communication across different cultural boundaries. Scientists created many intercultural communication theories to facilitate our efforts in this sphere and to overcome intercultural barriers. Thus, we can choose among a number of them, e.g. social science approach, interpretive approach, dialectical approach, critical approach [2].

There are definite advantages of being multicultural or intercultural-aware. It is intercultural communication that should help us to avoid international, intercultural and ethnic conflicts, to enrich our own knowledge of the surrounding world and finally benefit in business and even advance in domestic and international politics. However to achieve this, we have to know subtle cultural social conventions which differ not only from region to region (Asian countries vs Western countries), but also one and the same place may share the same or similar cultural history (European countries).

There are certain common barriers and challenges in intercultural communication.

1) *Language obstacle*. English is the best example of international language, being the second state language in many countries. Still people have different fluency levels and it may hamper the communication. However, poor accent is not the great problem. People may feel just uncomfortable while communicating and sharing their thoughts and ideas. We may have more problems with insufficient thesaurus when people lack words to express their thoughts or ideas in a clear way.

2) *Non-verbal communication*. Each country has its own set of rules (beliefs, values, phobias, bans or taboos etc) that is common for all citizens and is usually taken for granted. But in the process of intercultural communication we meet lots of people with their own «set» which might differ from our own. So, if we break these rules with or without intention the very communication is to be over. One of the brightest examples is the language of gestures that is really of great importance today. Countries of so called «high-context» and «low-context» percept cultural messages in a

different ways (for examples exchange of business cards, body language such as hand-shakes, greetings, ways of expressing emotions etc) and prefer to use implicit and explicit messages. Carol Goman also points out sequential vs. synchronic, affective vs. neutral ways of communication [1].

3) *Ethnocentrism*. More often than not we face with unwillingness of people to integrate into another society and percept the ideas and cultural norms of the host. Nowadays it is common to state that intercultural communication is one of the greatest goals if we want to survive and live in a happy world. But in reality we face with great challenges of migration of millions of refugees that causes lots of problematic issues. They move from one place to another for different reasons. Refugees tend to settle in their ethnic communities where it is easier to survive but there is no necessity to learn the language of the particular country that sheltered them or cultural peculiarities and traditions or laws. They tend to live according to their thousand-year traditions not taking into account the rules and customs of the host.

4) *Incompetency*. Lots of people are just unaware of cultural code of the others. It also may lead to barriers while socializing.

In any situation when «east' meets «west» cultural discrepancies and even clashes are inevitable. This often happens due to the reasons we mentioned above. These challenges seem to be serious, but there are still reasons to hope. We can improve our communication skills by implementing some of these simple rules. First of all we have to be tolerant to others, respect the traditions and customs of the countries we are dealing with, be open-minded and ready to learn something new. We have to understand each other and whatever the situation may be try to break the ice and always find something we have in common.

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