

Challenges in cross cultural communication

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Introduction Communication being an integrated process faces various challenges in an attempt to be successful while transmitting messages to the recipient. This happens particularly where the sender and the receiver understand the language of communication because they have a commonality of a similar background. This in turn assists them in comprehending the message of communication. If two different cultures are involved the capacity to comprehend the transmitted messages becomes very complex (Kendon 22). In these critical times we are always dealing with multimodal process relations of non verbal and verbal communication which play a key role in helping us comprehend the meaning of the communication process as well as be in a position to challenge the perspectives of education in relation to new behaviors and needs.

While facilitating cross cultural communication there is need to dwell on understanding what is listened to as a skill and apply various language learning facets. Some of the assisting strategies are drawn from experience and research that teachers gain over the years as they teach reading skills. Other strategies replicate additional experience in teaching the language particularly in the sound system area (Hess 18). Many people who travel to a foreign country find new and unaccustomed to features in their host country's culture. How one reacts to these features may affect their experience in the host country resulting to various reactions that are negative. To adapt effectively and positively to the host culture, there is need to overcome the negative attitudes.

The biggest challenge is that a majority of these negative responses are derived from non verbal behaviors and thus are difficult to grasp, insidious

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and very real. Verbal communication may not be an issue but understanding the new culture with its societal and non verbal indicators is painful and hard (Hess 20). Non verbal behavior is very much enshrined in the system of communication that is not always acknowledged or explained by native speakers who on many occasions are not aware of this observable fact. Adapting to the environment, Learning another culture, communicating efficiently and developing relations with new acquaintances is an enormous task (Kendon 24). Since trying to live abroad offers a different set of experiences and different lifestyle for people, making necessary adjustments and facing challenges is what is needed so as to survive living and working in a foreign country. Some people may find the challenges too much and thus reconsider their decisions on staying in the foreign country.

The changes encountered by foreigners in an attempt to make cross cultural transitions are usually very stressful. This is because the adjustments consume money, time and effort. In addition to this it requires interest and patience of the foreigners for the adjustments to become a success. In fact it's the way the adjustments are done that will determine whether the foreigner will continue staying in a host country (Kendon 26). The Challenges Non verbal Communication Most cross cultural problems are related to miscommunication through non verbal modalities. Miscommunication will always exist in cross cultural boundaries.

In such a scenario, no solution is observed but things can work out through situations, theories and device strategies and other tactics to deal with ongoing challenges. It may be possible to make adjustments after hearing one's voice but it may not be possible to discern one's body, how it

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communicates, and what it does (Hess 23). The non verbal features of cross cultural behavior include: taste, sight, smell, hearing, touch and gestures. These senses interact with space and time (Kendon 27). The interrelations between non verbal and verbal communication enhance the comprehension of communicative processes.

Some communication gestures are interrupted differently by different cultures. For instance, in American culture, talking while facing down is considered rude and disrespectful while in Japanese culture, it is considered as a show of respect. A foreigner or migrant who goes to a new country for instance the US needs some cultural orientation. Such a person should be given a model of predicting and comprehending intercultural encounter results. This kind of model enables the foreigner be aware of how the new culture makes decisions, speaks, negotiates and acts. The foreigners in this case are not meant to learn how they can imitate the natives rather this acts as a survival device.

A model for cultural orientation will help process and organize information. Once you are given information you have the freedom to ignore or accept it (Kendon 28). Perception Communication occurs both at the cross cultural collective levels as well as the intercultural interpersonal levels.

Communication thus becomes possible through sign perception. When we move to a foreign country the elements of our stability points and identity are threatened. Foreign perceptions undermine them.

(Hess 26)The elements in themselves are not foreign it is we the visitors who are because once we live our country for a new destination everything that is

familiar with us is also left behind. We tend to respond to feelings once our emotions are provoked. Enough percepts may be gathered by our perceptions in an attempt to interpret the puzzle unfortunately the host country's experience and vision filters our perceptions. Values Survival is the critical value of any existing culture. Cultural growth process is all about struggle which is a relative disorder. Compared to culture value is a relative construct.

It can't be observed in its operation. On the other hand behaviors are capable of being observed and they lead to acceptance if justified through aesthetic statements or morally through reasoning. They could also lead to desirability in normal terms this is understood to mean dichotomies that oppose such as dislike/like, wrong/wright, and must/can or by choosing alternatives. Miscommunication comes about as a result of value differences particularly when each party upholds its own values in high esteem and thus undermines the other party's values by not recognizing them (Hess 30). A small misunderstanding could result to a negative image which causes social isolation that ends up in non communication.

Therefore conclusions and interpretations should be separated from facts to avoid disorientation, conflict and dissonance that could threaten the unconscious and basic belief that the uncultured behaviours, customs, values and assumptions are right. Culture Shock Culture shock is usually cumulative rather than sudden. It results from lack of non verbal and verbal communication. Cultural differences come from expectations and assumptions. The messages could be erroneously decoded. In such cases

there is an assumption which acts as the major premise and the information which acts as the minor premise .

The conclusion here become the obstacle rather than functioning as the adequate message transmitter. Interpretations by the receiver are based on the message which acts as his raw material (Hess 32). The unexpressed silent assumptions of the receiver determine the interpretation. Their assumptions are unexpressed because they are assumed by communicators to be self evident and thus universally understood. They also think that these expressions are unconscious and thus don't need to be expressed. Acquaintances/Friendship When you meet people in a foreign country they usually have some apparent openness when they introduce themselves.

Firstly they exhibit some friendly behavior then they later contradict themselves and walk away. If you are a visitor to the foreign country your first reaction would be astonishment. This is because during interaction members of the host country firstly tend to be friendly yet in their priorities socialization and friendship is not included. But if you are in your native country your fellow citizens will friendly talk to you and spare some time even if they are late for their various chores such that even when saying bye they will always ask you to show up at their residential place. Cross cultural communication in business transactions There is a lot of cross cultural misunderstanding if one is doing business with a foreigner. If you are in a foreign country and you don't understand their language you become a silent person.

It's this silence that is often times judged and misinterpreted. People involved in international business transactions are therefore challenged to meet their foreign clients' demands such as good will from parties, perception and orientation (Gesteland 86). When doing business in a foreign country one needs orientation which is the adaptation or adjustment to a new set of ideas, environment, customs and situation. It's a big mistake to assume that adjustment comes with time. Therefore one should give themselves some orientation time before they leave for business in a foreign country.

While dealing with foreigners it's imperative that you try to convey a self image that is strong enough to give a lasting good impression. Making the unconscious conscious The three elements that lead to misunderstanding are non verbal, verbal and vocal. Because we hear what we speak the verbal is classified as conscious. Nonverbal and vocal are non conscious and therefore become a major challenge in cross cultural misunderstanding. Cross Cultural Class This is where the foreigner is made to go through a learning ordeal that doesn't encourage his own input like in a class environment where the professor teaches and the students take notes. The student's participation is negated making the whole encounter boring (Kendon 29).

Conclusion and Recommendations This paper helps to come up with an insight of challenges that people face when they travel to foreign countries in terms of cross cultural communication. The paper shows that challenges are inevitable to a person moving to a foreign country due to differences in cultural understanding and background. Cultural understanding inconsistencies mainly result from different cultural background and upbringing. It is thus up to the two parties involved i. e. the foreigners and <https://assignbuster.com/challenges-in-cross-cultural-communication/>

the natives to be aware of these challenges and become receptive towards them (Hess 33).

This paper therefore recommends that various countries should educate their citizens to enable them be aware of the cultural differences that exist between various nationalities. This would assist in lessening miscommunication or misunderstanding in their interactions with foreigners. In addition to this more research should be done to understand communication and cultural differences between locals and foreigner (Gesteland 88).