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Intercultural Dialogue and Multicultural Education as Factors in the Development of Intercultural Competence in the Contemporary Communicative Environment

Dr. Boultache Rachid

Algiers 2 University - Abou El Kacem Saadallah, Algeria, Email : r.boultache@yandex.com

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***Abstract*—**This article examines intercultural interaction within the contemporary communicative environment. Intercultural communication is analysed as one of the key factors influencing the effectiveness of intercultural interaction.Moreover, the role of multicultural education in creating an environment in which individuals develop the ability to interact productively with other cultures and achieve cultural self-determination is examined in detail. The author concludes that key factors contributing to successful intercultural dialogue include a willingness to engage, perceptiveness, cultural openness, linguistic competence and tolerance.

***Keywords*—**Dialogue between cultures; communicative space; cultural diversity; multicultural education; intercultural competence; value- and communication-based attitudes.

Introduction

Intercultural dialogue is not merely an exchange of moral values and experiences, but the realisation of a profound and pressing need among members of different cultural communities to interact and enrich one another while carefully preserving their own cultural distinctiveness. At the heart of such a dialogue lies mutual understanding, which is based not only on similarities between worldviews, but also on recognition of fundamental cultural differences.Thus, Intercultural dialogue is founded on mutual understanding, which presupposes similarities; that is, it is possible only on the basis of mutual understanding while also respecting cultural distinctiveness [7:109]. Cultural diversity undoubtedly forms the basis of the true richness of human civilisation in the age of globalisation; however, differences arising from cultural identity often lead to crises [6: 108], which is precisely why intercultural dialogue has become one of the most pressing demands of our time.

Over the last quarter of a century, the world has undergone global changes that directly affect business and informal interactions between representatives of different cultures. Intercultural relations have changed radically. The rapid pace of development in science and information technology, geopolitical upheavals, wars and large-scale waves of migration have led to cultural, linguistic and ethnic mixing. Amidst these rapid changes, the human need for communication remains constant, making interaction between representatives of different cultures one of the most pressing issues.

Generally speaking, the ability to make contact almost instantly with people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds – made possible by the internet and communication technologies – can lead to serious misunderstandings, aggression and latent conflicts arising from differences in values and perspectives on various aspects of human life. The behaviour of participants in intercultural dialogue depends in part on the values they share. This is precisely why intercultural competence – which involves mastery of both verbal and non-verbal means of communication – must become a priority objective in training specialists in the field of intercultural communication in politics, economics, medicine and other sectors.In addition, Collaboration between professionals from different countries has become commonplace. Many companies now employ staff specifically recruited from other countries; large firms, in their search for suitable employees, are prepared to recruit from the pan-European labour market; joint ventures are being established; and goods and services are being offered in those countries where there is a demand for them [4, 66–67]. All of these factors make intercultural competence a

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key factor influencing the effectiveness of cultural interaction.

Furthermore, Intercultural dialogue provides a favourable basis for developing intercultural relations: it involves interaction between equal parties, fosters a willingness to engage with other cultures. The main challenge in analysing such interaction is to explain its mechanisms. Thus, researchers identify two mechanisms of intercultural interaction: direct, in which cultures 'communicate' through language, and indirect, in which 'communication' takes place within the culture itself [6: 109]. Issues of intercultural communication have long been a subject of research for linguists studying the specific characteristics of languages and communication. Translators regard the 'cultural' aspect as no less important than other aspects of translation. Undoubtedly, language is the primary culture-shaping element; for example, French sentence structures typically express an active subject; whereas, Russian is characterised by impersonality and vagueness, which emphasise the perceived passivity of speech. At the same time, culture constitutes a form of communication expressed through language and moral values [8: 152–153]. The value-based and communicative orientations of representatives of interacting cultures may coincide or conflict. When they coincide, the result is agreement, satisfaction and the listener's approval; when they conflict, the result is surprise, criticism and censure.

At present, given the growing influence of political and economic factors in society, a number of countries attach particular importance to expanding cultural and economic cooperation with leading European, Asian and Western countries. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that international business communication requires an understanding of and consideration for the specific characteristics of the behaviour and mentality of representatives from different countries [1:188]. In this regard, one of the most important tasks of modern higher education is multicultural education, which, amongst other things, supports the acquisition of multicultural knowledge, experience and behavioural norms. Thus, S.G. Kulagina notes that modern higher education should provide a body of multicultural knowledge; its distinctive feature lies in the fact that it embraces multiple cultures and reflects multicultural reality [5: 39–40]. Accordingly, a university should not impart knowledge about any one particular culture, but rather about the totality of cultures, thereby fostering a personality imbued with universal cultural values in the individual.

Thus, multicultural education provides the basis for creating a multicultural environment in which individuals are able to engage effectively with aspects of other cultures, develop their capacity for cultural self-determination, and define their life values and instrumental values [1: 12]. It is hard to disagree with G.D. Dmitriev's view that multicultural education contributes to the formation and development of a democratic state characterised by tolerance towards the diversity of social realities, recognition of cultural diversity within society, and equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all [2: 34–35].

In this context, in communication between representatives of different cultures, the communicative behaviour of the partners—which includes both verbal and non-verbal components—plays a key role. The understanding and interpretation of the meaning of a message in communication are based on the communicators' perceptions of one another, which operate beyond conscious control. This implicit knowledge is shaped by the psychosocial and cultural context of the act of communication, the main components of which are underlying values and knowledge, an understanding of patterns of thought, plans and goals, social and physical contexts, and the personal characteristics of the communication partners [1: 190]. Moreover, communication involves a combination of linguistic and non-linguistic factors, such as the specific context of the interaction, the communicative environment, the intentions and aims of the communicators, and the cultural, national, ethnic and psychological characteristics of the parties involved in the interaction.

Thus, whilst cultures differ significantly, they are capable of enriching one another, which enables them to retain their vitality. At the same time, such mutual development carries a risk of cultural alienation. A single global culture can lead to conflicts, both between different cultures and within a single culture. In the context of globalisation, the formation of a multi-ethnic society is not free from conflict. As modern society becomes multicultural, it requires its members to demonstrate tolerance and understanding when communicating and interacting with representatives of other cultures. In this regard, key factors in successful communication between representatives of different cultures include a willingness to engage in dialogue, perceptiveness, cultural openness, linguistic competence and tolerance.

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