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Kseniia Kugai

*Senior Lecturer at the Department of Philology and Translation,
Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design,
Kyiv, Ukraine,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9838-904X>*

FOREIGN-LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT

Abstract. In the article the author reveals the essence of communication concept, substantiates various communication functions, analyzes its structure and proposes different models of communication.

Understanding the essence of communication is important. Communication is an integral part of any human activity, while having a social nature. And it is possible to talk about activity only when it is social in nature. Therefore, it can be argued that any human activity is impossible without communication. Thus, communication is an important element of human activity.

The paper analyzes the concept of a “language barrier” and the essence of the difficulties that arise when mastering the skills of foreign-language communication. The language barrier arises when it is difficult to communicate, to explain one’s own position or understand the interlocutor’s point of view.

The problem of organizing effective communication involves studying the rules of communication, identifying its oriented basis and building strategies using different types of feedback in communication.

The paper presents a number of basic recommendations for overcoming language barriers and difficulties in mastering foreign-language communication skills. It is necessary to constantly improve the native language and one’s own language culture. The language barrier prevents people from communicating if the vocabulary is small. You need to continually enrich your vocabulary. Reading aloud also helps to overcome the language barrier. In the process of reading aloud the habit of correct pronunciation is developed, after which it will be easier to communicate with the interlocutor.

Conversational practice is the most effective way of overcoming the language barrier. In the process of communicating in a foreign language, you will be able to quickly improve your speaking skills to the required level. Therefore, among the key scientific methods of teaching foreign-language communication is the communicative method.

Keywords: communication, foreign language, interaction, communication barriers.

Problem statement. Communication is an important condition for human existence in society, one of the main factors and the most important source of mental development, the connection with activities and interactions. The need for communication is the starting point that connects a person with the people around him, ensures his development as a personality.

The whole system of a person's attitude to other people is realized in communication. The concept of communication is one of the key concepts in the system of psychological knowledge.

We are living in the epoch of globalization in all spheres of life. Globalization means that personal contacts' role, and consequently, verbal communication, including interethnic, requires knowledge of a foreign language. At the present stage of educational development foreign-languages skills can be regarded as a social order of society.

But frequently people have difficulties while communicating, meeting the so-called communication barriers. And when it comes to foreign-language communication, this problem is much more common. The reason is that in the process of mastering foreign-language skills communication a person is faced not only with language, but also with a new world view, with a new culture, with new norms of interaction between people. All this necessarily makes a contribution to mastering the means of foreign language communication and the process of communication itself.

Thus, the relevance of research in this area is beyond dispute. Today, the skills of foreign language communication play one of the most important roles for the future specialist, sometimes can be even a determining factor.

Recent research and publications analysis. The analysis of works on the studied issue shows that the concept of communication has been thoroughly explored by such scientists as H. Lassvel, K. Yaspers, B. Lomov, S. Rubinshtein, E. Diurkhaim.

The study includes a review of current theories that reveal the communication essence, structure and functions in the works of E. Kliuieva, K. Kan-Kalyk, O. Leontiev and others.

B. Porshniev, O. Zemska, V. Manakin, O. Sarokin, T. Hrushevskaja, S. Ter-Minasova research the issue of language barriers in the context of intercultural communication.

The problem of foreign-language communicative competence formation has been studied by I. Zymnia, H. Kytaihorodska, M. Svein, N. Bidiuk, L. Byrkun, E. Passov and others.



The purpose of this research is to present an argument for the concept of communication, to analyze the main problems that arise during the foreign-language communication mastering and to identify the ways for overcoming language barriers in the process of learning foreign languages.

Basic material. Communication psychology is a branch of general psychology. Its subject is the psychological peculiarity of communication, which is considered with the regard to the relationship between an individual and society. Speaking of psychological specific features, it should be borne in mind that the processes of communication can be considered not only from psychological but also from another angle – sociological, linguistic and so on.

The concept of communication is widespread in the English-language psychological literature. Semantically, “communication” and “interaction” almost coincide, because they mean “community”, “connection”, “message” [1, p. 9].

According to the Linguistic Encyclopaedic Dictionary, communication (Latin “communicatio”, from “communico” – to make common, connect, interact) is the specific form of people interaction in the process of their cognitive and labour activity [2].

It can be said that communication is an integral part of any human activity, while having a social nature. And it is possible to talk about activity only when it is social in nature. Therefore, it can be argued that any human activity is impossible without communication. Thus, communication is an important element of human activity.

Understanding the essence of communication is important. According to psychological dictionaries, this concept is defined, first, as a complex, multifaceted process of establishing and developing contacts between people, which arises from the need for joint activities, includes information exchange, development of the common strategy of interaction, perception and understanding of communication partner. In communication, the content, purpose and means are distinguished [3, p. 98].

Secondly, communication is the interaction of subjects, which is carried out by symbolic means, due to the needs of joint activities and aimed at a significant change in the state, behaviour and personal meaning of the partner. It is a form of life, as a result of which a human becomes a person.

The purpose of communication is what a person needs to communicate: the purpose of transferring and obtaining objective knowledge about the world, education and upbringing, coordination of actions in joint activities, establishing and clarifying personal and business relationships, and much more.

Communication methods are original ways of coding, transferring, processing and decoding of the information which has been obtained in the course of communication. Encoding information is a way of transmitting it from one living

being to another. These are language and other sign systems, writing system in its various types and forms (texts, schemes, drawings, sketches), technical means of information recording, transmission and storage.

The structure of communication can be defined as follows:

✓ communicative and informational component, which means receiving (recipient) and transmitting (communicating correspondent) messages and future feedback, based on psychological contact;

✓ cognitive (perceptual) component, based on the process of partner's perception and understanding;

✓ interactive (conative) component associated with the process of influence, behaviour.

There are different kinds of communication. We can mention the following:

- ✓ interpersonal
- ✓ between the group and individual
- ✓ group and intergroup
- ✓ mass
- ✓ trustful and conflicting
- ✓ intimate and criminogenic
- ✓ business and personal
- ✓ direct and indirect
- ✓ therapeutic and non-violent.

There's no doubt communication is possible only through sign systems. Verbal means of communication (oral and written speech) and non-verbal (non-verbal) means of communication can be distinguished.

Communication functions are important for understanding its essence.

B. Lomov distinguishes three groups of the functions: information and communicative, regulatory and communicative, affective and communicative.

Information and communicative function covers the processes of information formation, transmission and reception.

Regulatory and communicative function is to regulate behaviour. A person regulates not only his own behaviour through communication but also the behaviour of others and responds to their actions. There is a process of mutual adjustment.

Affective and communicative function characterizes the emotional sphere of a man. Communication affects a person's emotional state. In the emotional sphere, a person's attitude to the environment, including social, is revealed. One of the features of communication is the formation of interpersonal relationships.

Man's need for communication is natural. This is something we cannot live without. Every day we have to share information with other people, find common ground with colleagues at work, in the family, and so on.



Communication is a process of interaction of at least two people, aimed at mutual knowledge, establishing and developing relationships, mutual influence on states, attitudes and behaviour, as well as the regulation of their joint activities. The question of the effectiveness of human communication is universal.

Within the communicative aspect of communication, partners' psychological interaction is concentrated around the problem of contact. This problem should not be limited to the skills and abilities of communicative behaviour and the use of communication means. The key element in the success of partner's contacts is the perception of each other.

During communication, many people experience certain difficulties (barriers to communication) that affect the effectiveness of information exchange, interaction, perception of each other. They are social or psychological in nature. Communication barriers can be related to people's characters, aspirations, attitudes, language characteristics, communication manners, religious beliefs, and so on. However, the process of communication can be carried out even with these difficulties [4, p. 55].

The problem of organizing effective communication involves studying the rules of communication, identifying its oriented basis and building strategies using different types of feedback in communication.

Difficulties of communication can be considered from the viewpoint of different branches in psychology: general, age and pedagogical, social, occupational psychology, legal and medical, psychology of individual differences.

During communication, its participants have different states, each of which reveals certain mental properties of the individual.

Speaking about general psychology, we can both study the typical for all normal people phenomena of communication, patterns and mechanisms of its course and identify difficulties in communication. These are characteristics of mental processes, states and personality traits that do not meet the criteria of psychologically optimal communication.

Therefore, communication barriers can be caused by various reasons. It is possible to distinguish the following types: barriers to understanding, barriers to socio-cultural differences and barriers to relationships.

1. Barrier to mutual understanding. Its occurrence can be caused by psychological and other reasons. It can take place due to flaws in the transmission of information. This is a phonetic misunderstanding. The phenomenon of phonetic misunderstanding of fast speech, colloquial speech or speech with a large number of parasitic sounds.

2. Semantic barrier to understanding. It is due to the fact that the participants of communication use different meanings of words.

3. Stylistic barrier to understanding. It usually occurs when there is a mismatch between the speaker's language style and the communication situation or the language style and state of the listener.

4. Logical barrier to understanding. It arises when the logic of the speaker's reasoning is either too difficult for the listener to understand or seems wrong to him, or contradicts his own manner of proof.

5. Socio-cultural barrier to understanding. Socio-cultural differences between communication partners can sometimes be the cause of barriers to understanding. These can be social, political, religious and professional differences that lead to different explanations of certain concepts.

6. Barrier to authority. Sometimes the perception of a communication partner as a person of a certain profession, nationality, gender and age can be an obstacle. Psychologists have shown that the lower the barrier of communication, the higher the authority of the speaker in relation to those who listen. In some cases, there are barriers to relationships. It is about the emergence of a sense of hostility, distrust of the speaker, and as a result of the information he transmits [5, p. 57].

Communication barriers arise at the interpersonal level, manifested in information overload. So, what do these barriers depend on? Here we can mention some individual personality traits, e.g. shyness, secrecy, communications gap, attention in the process of communicative interaction, ability to express opinions, differences in the age of interlocutors, ability to listen to the interlocutor, special psychological relationships that have developed between people, e.g. hostility, distrust, etc.

Both interacting partners can manage the effectiveness of communication and each of them can play a role in both improving and reducing the effectiveness of communication.

Some authors argue that the structure of interpersonal communication should be considered in terms of internal (motivation to act) and external (means, methods) aspects of communication. In real acts of communication, these aspects are interdependent.

The communicative act, like any action, contains oriented and instrumental parts. Oriented part involves the communication situation analysis and an adequate partner's idea formation. The effectiveness in the oriented part of communicative act determines the effectiveness of the action as a whole. One of the manifestations in the ineffectiveness of this communication part is the subjective sense of a partner's misunderstanding, the inability to create a holistic image and, therefore, to properly organize their actions.

The instrumental part is the ability to adequately express your own views, choose the method of communication in accordance with the partner's peculiarities and the atmosphere of communication, and this, in particular, should be based on understanding the partner and the situation in general.

How can communication barriers be overcome or prevented?

It is necessary to constantly improve the native language, your own language culture, to humanize your speech. This requires the creation of attitudes to master



the correct literary speech in all communication situations, self-control and development of expressive speech skills, development of general psychological personality features that create prerequisites for successful mastering of speech skills and abilities, development of such communicative qualities as correctness (compliance with accentual, orthoepic, grammatical, punctuation and other norms of modern literary language), comprehensibility, accuracy of pronunciation, motivation, richness (variety of speech means), expressiveness (imagery, emotionality, brightness), purity (inadmissibility of jargons, vulgarisms and colloquial words), conciseness, knowledge of non-verbal means of communication (facial expressions, gestures, rules of speech flow articulation, speech rate, voice tone).

It is well known that learning foreign languages promotes mutual understanding, a sense of belonging to the international community and personal development.

Students learn to understand the culture, traditions, and customs of different countries. By comparing, they learn more about their own culture and history. The ability to communicate and understand another language undoubtedly contributes to self-education, employment not only in their countries but also around the world.

Language learning includes skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. A certain level of these skills mastery gives confidence in their knowledge, independence and impetus to creativity. Students analyze the similarities and differences between the native language and the foreign language they are learning.

The development of communication skills together with an understanding of the language structure can be the basis for learning different languages in the future, as well as help improve the level of native language literacy [6].

Therefore, all the above definitions of “communication” cannot be fully applied to the concept of “foreign-language communication”. This process is much more complex and multifaceted.

To ensure foreign-language professional communication, the following circumstances must be taken into account [7]:

- ✓ sufficient professional-oriented vocabulary;
- ✓ development of the ability to choose from long-term memory the necessary lexical material, adequate to the situation of professional communication;
- ✓ ability to form linguistic and semantic coordination;
- ✓ ability to hone a certain thought in internal speech;
- ✓ ability to express an opinion in accordance with the phonetics laws of a certain foreign language;
- ✓ formation of super phrase unity mechanism, that is the ability to produce each subsequent phrase at the end of the previous one.

In this paper we are interested in the difficulties that students face in learning a foreign language and are often the cause of barriers to professional communication

in foreign languages. According to different researchers these difficulties occur due to a number of linguistic, didactic, socio-cultural, axiological and personal reasons.

Thus, as the dictionary says a “language barrier” is the inability to communicate in a foreign language. Of course, sometimes people from different countries can’t communicate just because one doesn’t know the partner’s language. However, as practice shows, that is not the only reason.

You can perfectly perceive and understand the language by ear, write competently and read foreign literature with interest, but unfortunately you cannot express your thoughts. And the strangest thing is that as soon as you consult the dictionary, it immediately becomes clear that this word or this construction you have already known for a long time. Yet this knowledge does not benefit you because the word, phrase or construction does not come to mind at the right time. Unfortunately, students studying a foreign language often face the problem of the language barrier.

Here we can broadly group such barriers into linguistic and psychological. The linguistic barrier is definitely easier to overcome because it is associated with objective difficulties, such as lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar knowledge, difficulties in understanding.

In fact, the linguistic barrier is the uncertainty in your own knowledge and abilities, low self-esteem and fear of the need to speak in a foreign language. This uncertainty can arise from the negative experiences while learning a foreign language. It is very important to understand that making mistakes is quite natural for a person who is just studying it. Another reason for linguistic barrier is the large number of terms that literally overwhelm the student’s brain. This can happen due to improper teaching. And the most common difficulty is the failure to grasp the language phonetically. Thus, this barrier can be removed by filling in knowledge gaps.

The causes for psychological barrier are much deeper. First of all, it is based on various fears associated with temperament, low levels of emotional stability and low self-esteem. This can be self-doubt due to mistakes and blunders, unwillingness to make mistakes in front of the group, fear of causing laughter or disapproval, awkwardness in a situation of conversation paired with a partner who has a good command of a foreign language, inability to apply knowledge in a situation of real communication, etc. Sometimes there is a reason such as students’ insecurity in their level of a foreign language knowledge, which they consider imperfect, so they do not want to participate in communicative activities in the classroom. Negative previous experience of learning foreign languages, lack of motivation to learn a language can also be the reasons for the appearance of a psychological language barrier, unwillingness to overcome language difficulties on their own [8, pp.109-110].

Therefore, in the study of a foreign language the term “language barrier” is an individual, subjective inability to use the knowledge that already exists in the



process of speaking. This is a kind of psychological barrier, when for some reason it is difficult for a person to express what he wants in a foreign language with relevant knowledge.

In his work B. Porshniev described the communication barriers, among which he identified four levels of misunderstanding: phonetic, semantic, stylistic and logical levels [9].

The phonetic barrier is due to various symbolic means of information transmission. These obstacles are created by acoustic and physiological features of a language. The phonemic barrier of misunderstanding arises between people when information is not perceived by them. The range of phonetic misunderstanding is wide – from insignificant (in the pronunciation of some words) to complete, its sources may be different. Complete misunderstanding arises when speaking incomprehensibly or in a foreign (unknown to us) language. Incomplete misunderstanding occurs when speaking quickly (colloquially), indistinctly, with an accent, etc. To alleviate misunderstandings, it is necessary to use pauses that interrupt the flow of speech, thereby increasing attention, emphasizing what is said, helping to take a break.

The phonetic barrier also arises at sharp increase of a voice as at perception of speech on the raised tones its understanding is blocked. In such situations, a person's attention is focused not so much on the sense of explanation, but on the attitude of the speaker. It is important to come to emotional balance and ask your partner to speak calmly.

In addition to the tone of voice, the emphasis and tone of speech are important for effective communication.

The semantic barrier arises when the interlocutors do not understand the sense, the meaning of the words spoken. Such situations arise when people are carriers of different subcultures (differences in customs, norms and values, language, jargon).

Stylistic barrier arises while using different means of speech to express opinions, due to differences in style when presenting information. Style is the ratio of the presented information form to its content. We can describe this barrier as an inconsistency of the communicator's language style, communication situation and the current psychological state of the recipient, the partner's intentions.

By its psychological nature, the communication barrier serves as a mechanism for protection against unwanted information. The psychological barrier that the recipient sets in the way of unwanted, dangerous information may have different transparency.

Conclusion. Summarizing the above, we should emphasize that understanding the concept of communication in the process of learning a foreign language is very important factor. Communication functions are necessary for understanding its essence. The problem of organizing effective communication involves studying the

rules of communication, identifying its oriented basis and building strategies using different types of feedback in communication.

While learning a foreign language a person can face with the language barriers which may interfere with mastering a foreign language. Communication barriers are diverse due to different factors. Therefore, it is very important to understand their nature, causes and conditions of origin and solution.

Among the most effective scientific methods of teaching foreign-language communication is, of course, the communicative method. Its main principle is to communicate as much time as possible in the language being studied. It is the combination of the communicative method with some traditional elements of teaching that is one of the best ways to overcome the language barrier. It is about the maximum student's language immersion, which is achieved with minimal reference to the native language.

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