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СУЧАСНА КОМУНІКАЦІЯ ТА ЇЇ БАР'ЄРИ

У статті розглянуто особливості сучасної англomовної комунікації, її структуру і типи (міжособистісна, групова, організаційна, міжкультурна), звернуто увагу на основні бар'єри комунікації, серед яких виокремлено внутрішні та зовнішні перешкоди, лінгвальні та екстралінгвальні; проведено експериментальне дослідження для встановлення найчастіших комунікативних бар'єрів. Особливий акцент зроблено на мовних перешкодах, культурних відмінностях, ролі стереотипів та етноцентризму, системах цінностей, традиціях і практиках, запропоновано шляхи їхнього подолання.

Ключові слова: сучасна комунікація, міжкультурна комунікація, перцепція, комунікаційні бар'єри, експеримент.

MODERN COMMUNICATION AND ITS BARRIERS

The article examines the peculiarities of modern English-language communication, its structure and types (interpersonal, group, organisational, intercultural), draws attention to the main barriers to communication, among which there are internal and external barriers, linguistic and extralinguistic; an experimental study was conducted to identify the most frequent communication barriers. Particular emphasis is placed on language barriers, cultural differences, the role of stereotypes and ethnocentrism, value systems, traditions and practices, and ways to overcome them are suggested.

Keywords: modern communication, cross-cultural communication, perception, barriers to communication, experiment.

Definition of the scientific problem and its topicality. We devoted our research to the phenomenon of communication and particularly to the barriers that occur in the course of cultural and cross-cultural communication, considering our mindsets, values and perception of the world. In our research we share the definitions of communication and cross-cultural communication that were suggested by the well-known Ukrainian scholar F. Batsevych. According to him, communication is an interaction of human beings with the help of verbal and non-verbal means in order to convey the information. Cross-cultural communication is a communication of carriers of various cultures that speak different languages (Бацевич 2004: 329). As communication is a complex process that includes an addressee, addressant, channel of communication, code, contact, communicative noise, context, and speech situation it is very important to understand the factors that enhance it and, on the contrary, those that distort the information shared and lead to communicative failures. That is why we want to analyse the factors that work as barriers to communication on different levels: interpersonal, group, organizational, cross-cultural/intercultural in order find the ways to make it better, more effective and resultful. We are convinced that such

knowledge is very essential at the time of globalization, cooperation and intercultural contacts in various contexts and it makes our research acute and topical.

Analysis of the studies of the problem. Analysis of the studies of communication and its barriers has shown that in the course of time there have been quite a lot of scholars interested in this topic. According to F. Batsevych (Бацевич 2004: 329), communication is a modus of existence of language phenomena; a senseful, ideal, and meaningful aspect of a social interaction, communication; operations with information in the course of communication; a constituent part of communication alongside with perception and interaction. The questions of verbal and non-verbal communication, its effectiveness and failures in different cultural contexts were researched by such Ukrainian scholars as I. Alexeyeva (Алексеева 2011), who studied intercultural communication and conditions of its success, L. Matsko (2015), who considered the concept of language communication, models and laws, criteria for distinguishing different types of verbal and non-verbal communication, and language communication in the pedagogical discourse; O. Selivanova (2011), who defined the methodological foundations, formation of the theory of language communication, basic concepts of this linguistic field, and drew attention to the problems of the theory of intercultural communication; T. Stepykina, I. Mygovych (2012), H. Pocheptsov (Почепцов 1999), who researched the theory of communication; L. Soloshchuk (Солощук 2006), who studied verbal and non-verbal means of communication in their correlation; N. Shumarova (Шумарова 2000), who investigated a person's language competence and bilingualism, and others. Among foreign scholars W. Schramm (Schramm 1954) described the communication process, including the barriers that could distort messages and highlighted semantic barriers, psychological barriers, and the effects of individual perceptions on communication. D. Berlo (Berlo 1960) developed the SMCR model (Source, Message, Channel, and Receiver), focusing on the barriers at each stage of communication. C. Shannon and W. Weaver (Shannon, Weaver 1949) focused their attention on the information theory and discussed the concept of noise in communication, which referred to any interference that distorted or blocked the message being communicated. This concept has become central in the study of communication barriers. P. Watzlawick (Watzlawick 1967) pointed out that communication problems arose due to misinterpretation of messages in relationships, whether through non-verbal cues or differences in communication styles and elaborated on communication paradoxes and the idea that "one cannot not communicate." J. Stewart (Stewart 1988) explored barriers to interpersonal communication, focusing on psychological and emotional barriers such as defensiveness, closed-mindedness, and fear of judgment that inhibit effective communication. M. Peck (Peck 1978) addressed emotional and psychological barriers in communication, focusing on how individuals' fears, insecurities, and resistance to vulnerability created communication obstacles in relationships. W. Lippmann (Lippmann 1922) was the first to discuss how stereotypes, biases, and prejudices could distort communication, particularly in mass media and public opinion. These scholars have contributed significantly to our understanding of the various barriers in communication, from psychological and cultural to semantic and technological. Their

works offer insights into how communication can be distorted or blocked, and how to overcome these obstacles.

Modern foreign academics research how emotion, power differences, and misunderstandings can hinder effective communication in close relationships and organizations (Knapp, Vangelisti 2005); how emotional baggage, attachment styles, and misalignment of expectations create obstacles in relational communication (Green 2005); how semantic ambiguity, cognitive overload, and nonverbal communication issues can cause misunderstandings or failure to connect meaningfully (Beattie 2006); how cultural differences, ethnocentrism, and in-group/out-group dynamics create communication obstacles and ways to overcome them through intercultural sensitivity (Gudykunst 2004); how communication barriers in the healthcare setting can create life dangerous situations (Street 2013); how Asian cultural norms, including respect for authority and non-confrontational behavior, create barriers in interpersonal communication, particularly in professional settings (Kim 2010); how differences in gender communication styles, appearance, expectations, and societal roles can act as barriers in interpersonal communication (Levine 2015); how lack of self-awareness and uncertainty about one's purpose can prevent people from effectively communicating their values and emotions to others (Steger 2009); what barriers exist in political communication in the democratic societies (Mutz 2006). So, we can see that all these scholars are actively contributing to the study of communication barriers across different fields, including interpersonal relationships, organizational communication, cultural studies, and health communication. Their works provide valuable insights into how communication can break down in various contexts and how we can address and overcome these challenges.

The purpose of our research is to analyze communication, its types, and barriers to its success in different communicative contexts. **The object** of the research is communication, **the subject** of the study – various barriers to its effectiveness and success. **The task** of the research is to analyze the existing academic works on communication, to find out the main barriers to successful communication, to conduct an experimental study of the most frequent barriers to communication, and to define the ways of overcoming the communication barriers. The factual data and the theoretical materials have been processed with the help of such linguistic **methods** as synthesis and analysis, a descriptive method, contextual and experimental ones. The **topicality** of the research is defined by the very topic of the study – communication which is a part of our personal, social, political, organizational and cultural life where we cannot but communicate and want to be heard and understood. **The theoretical value** of the study is its multivectoral approach to the problem of communication, literature review on the topic of communication, its linguistic, psycholinguistic and extralinguistic contexts of realization.

The main body of the research and justification of the results. We all live in or inhabit different worlds. Differences in the way we see, hear, taste, smell, and feel specific stimuli – that is the way we perceive – occur all the time. Each of us views reality from a different angle, perspective, or vantage point. Our physical location, our interests, our personal desires, our attitudes, our values, our personal experiences, our

physical condition, and our physical states all interact to influence our judgments or perceptions.

According to T. Gamble (Gamble 1996: 77), *perceptual processes* are not only highly selective but they are also personally based. That is why different people will experience the same cues in very different ways. W. Haney (Haney 1987: 55) has also emphasized this when he noted that we never really come into direct contact with the reality. In fact, our nervous system works as a medium between us and the reality. Everything that is seen, heard, tasted, felt or smelled depends on who is seeing, smelling, listening, touching, tasting etc. It is important to point out that perception includes more than just the eye alone, the ear, the nose, the skin, or the tongue alone. Perception is the “I” behind the senses – the “I” behind the eye. Keeping this in mind we can define perception as the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory data in a way that enables us to make sense of our world (Gamble 1996: 77). So, we can assume that in most cases we see the world as we have been conditioned to see it.

Among the factors that modify our perception are *life experience, culture, and demographic features*. Effectiveness of our communication is highly influenced by our past, and our perceptual sets. It is very important to take into consideration the fact that our past experiences often shape our perceptual sets and affect how we perceive and process the information we get. Motivation and education are other factors that modify our perceptive abilities and skills. If we see the necessity and need to get the information, we will do our best to have it. On the other hand, our education will help us to apply our knowledge and skills in order to process the data and accept it. A key factor in our perception of the world is our *readiness to expose ourselves to new experiences, ideas and places*. Our existing attitudes, beliefs and values influence our perception spectrum because most of us tend to perceive those things that do not contradict with our life philosophy. As a result, we often try to reject the unknown or unpleasant by avoiding, ignoring it. Sometimes we put a barrier and do not want to face an unpleasant, ending up with self-deception.

Another factor that is closely connected with selective exposure is *selective perception* which means that we see what we want to see and hear what we want to hear. Our selective processes enable us to add, delete or change stimuli in order to avoid certain information. At the same time our expectations, needs, and past experience determine our present perception and enhance our desire for closure. As a result, we perceive a secure and complete world and process the information that confirms our beliefs, expectations or convictions and do not accept those pieces of information that contradict them. In other words, we close ourselves and try not to perceive what is unpleasant, strange or frightening.

One more factor that influences our perception is *the first impression of our interlocutors*. It is important to take into consideration our emotional state and attitudes, whether we like or dislike our interlocutors, whether we are ready to change our first impression or freeze it. According to M. Gamble (Gamble 1996: 87), the first impression or primacy effect can modify the tone of a communicative process and affect the result of communication efforts. S. Asch (Asch 1987) conducted an experiment on the first impressions. He used two lists of character traits that were

identical but the order in which they were organized was different. The first list (person A) began with positive features while the second one (person B) – with negative:

Person A	Person B
1. Intelligent	1. Envious
2. Industrious	2. Stubborn
3. Impulsive	3. Critical
4. Critical	4. Impulsive
5. Stubborn	5. Industrious
6. Envious	6. Intelligent (Gamble 1996: 87).

As a result, person A was attributed positive qualities and person B was described in a negative way. We repeated the same experiment with a group of students (30 people) who study applied linguistics at Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University (Lutsk, Ukraine, 2024). They were given S. Asch's lists of adjectives and were asked to share their first impressions. At the end, they positioned person A as a positive one and person B as a negative one. The power of our first impression is very strong and even if it is wrong, we tend to hold on it and we end up seeing not a real person but our perception of him or her.

One more factor that affects the first impression is *a psychological state of a receiver* due to which a real image of an interlocutor may be corrupted. Another potential factor that serves as a perceptual barrier is *stereotyping*. In many cases stereotypes are based on a cultural/subcultural generalization. Cultural generalization is a categorization of the predominant tendencies in a cultural group – the tendency of a majority of people in the group to hold certain values and beliefs and to engage in certain patterns of behaviour. Cultural stereotype is the application of a generalization to every individual in a cultural group or generalization from experience with only a few people from the group. When we stereotype people, we are ruled by generalizations, assumptions and prejudice or our experience with other representatives of the group to which we refer the interlocutors. Stereotyping makes us oversimplify, overgeneralize and exaggerate or misinterpret what we see or experience. Stereotypes can be infused with emotions and are not accurate.

One more barrier is caused by *the notion of allness*. The term was introduced by A. Korzybski (Korzybski 1933) in order to name a wrong assumption that there is a possibility that a single person can know everything/all about everything. We all have different priorities, life experience, education, background knowledge, so our maps of the world vary and we do not have similar knowledge about the perceived world. That is why our belief that we know everything or are told so by a Mr-knows-all can distort our perception and corrupt a real picture.

Another factor in perception is *blinding* which occurs when our focus is too narrow, when we tend to see only certain things or see things only in certain ways. Blinding can lead to undesirable actions or prevent us from finding solutions, taking actions or making decisions.

It is important to mention one more barrier to communication that is caused by our *inference*. In the course of our communicative activities, we can confuse what we infer and what we observe. M. Gamble states that facts are not always easy to come by, and

sometimes we mistakenly believe that we have facts when we actually have inferences. Failing to recognize this distinction can be embarrassing or dangerous (Gamble 1996: 94).

A communication barrier is anything that prevents us from receiving and understanding the messages others use to convey their information, ideas and thoughts. These barriers may be related to *the message itself*, *internal barriers (thoughts and feelings)*, or *external barriers*. When we talk about the barriers that are related to the message, we mean long and poorly organized messages, complicated language, irrelevance to the communicative needs, and inconsistent body language. *Internal barriers* include such factors as poor listening skills, tiredness, indifference, bad experience in the past, life difficulties or hardships. Such things as noise, unfriendly environment, equipment failures are thought to be external barriers.

Scholars point out various numbers of the main barriers to effective communication. For example, among *the main 10 barriers to communication* there are the following ones: physical and physiological barriers; emotional and cultural noise; language; nothing or little in common; lack of eye contact; information overload and lack of focus; not being prepared, lack of credibility; and talking too much. Perceptual barriers presuppose that we all see and perceive the world differently and, as a result, due to cultural or individual differences we see one and the same object from different angles.

In order to find out more about *the mentioned above barriers* and how they work in real life situations we conducted a survey among students of applied linguistics of Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University (Lutsk, Ukraine), having included the barriers into a questionnaire. There were 21 male and female students, aged 20–21, who participated in the survey. The students were given a table with the most common barriers to communication and were asked to rank them, giving 5 to the most serious ones and 1 – to the least ones. The following barriers were included into the questionnaire: physical and physiological barriers, emotional noise/barriers, cultural noise/barriers, language barriers, gender barriers, interpersonal barriers, rituals, nothing or little in common, lack of eye contact, information overload and lack of focus, not being prepared, lack of credibility, talking too much, different perception of the world, and others. *The results* have shown that most respondents found language barrier (38%), emotional noise (19%), physical and physiological barriers (19%), nothing or little in common, and cultural noise (14%) to be very important. The least important ones were gender barriers (60 %), rituals, lack of eye contact, talking too much.

Many restraints go back to our childhood and are connected with *our education*, to the times when we were taught our dos and don'ts, and were instructed to be careful what we say or share with other people. For example, *Mind your P's and Q's.; Don't speak until you're spoken to; Children should be seen and not heard*. In the end, we hold back from communicating our emotions and thoughts to others, feeling vulnerable or insecure.

Cultural barriers are the ones that can be caused by different cultural values of individuals and groups. When we join a group and we want to remain in it, we will have to adopt the behaviour patterns of the group. The adopted patterns of behaviour will serve as signs of belonging and the group, in its turn, will demonstrate their approval by the acts of recognition, approval and inclusion.

Our language may also be a barrier to others who do not know it, its set expressions, idioms, jargon, or slang and when we conduct our communication in such language, it excludes others. On the international level, the greatest compliment/respect we can pay another person is to talk to them, if it is possible, in their native language. Another way to overcome *a language barrier* in the course of intercultural communication is to talk via an interpreter/translator but it is also challenging as even good translators are not always able to know the historical, technical or cultural nuances. For example, one of the very chilling memories of the Cold War was the threat by the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, saying to the Americans at the United Nations: “*We will bury you!*” This was taken to mean a threat of nuclear annihilation. However, a more accurate reading of Khrushchev's words would have been: “*We will overtake you!*” By this he meant economic superiority. It was not just the language used that was the problem. The fear and suspicion that the West had of the Soviet Union led to the more alarmist and sinister interpretation (Garner 2012).

Another noticeable communicative barrier is connected with *gender differences* of interlocutors. According to E. Garner, there are distinct differences between the speech patterns of men and women. A woman speaks between 22,000 and 25,000 words a day whereas a man speaks between 7,000 and 10,000. In childhood, girls speak earlier than boys and at the age of three, have a vocabulary twice that of boys. The reason for this lies in the wiring of a man's and woman's brains. When a man speaks, he uses the left side of his brain but not a specific area of it. When a woman speaks, she uses both left and right sides, in two specific locations. This means that men speak in a linear, logical and compartmentalised way, demonstrating left-brain thinking. Women speak more freely, mixing logic and emotion, using both sides of the brain. This also explains why women talk for much longer than men each day.

R. Lakoff (Lakoff 2004) generalized women's speech and stated that women use (super)polite forms: “*Would you mind...*”, “*I'd appreciate it if...*”, “*...if you don't mind*”; use tag questions: “*You're going to dinner, aren't you?*”; hedge: using phrases like “*sort of*”, “*kind of*”, “*it seems like*”, and so on; use empty adjectives: *divine*, *lovely*, *adorable* etc.; have a special lexicon: women use more words for things like colours; use direct quotation: men paraphrase more often; use “wh-” imperatives: such as, “*Why don't you open the door?*”; use indirect commands and requests: for example, “*My, isn't it cold in here?*” – really a request to turn the heat on or close a window; use modal constructions: such as *can*, *would*, *should*, *ought* – “*Should we turn up the heat?*”; use more intensifiers: especially *so* and *very*, for instance, “*I am so glad you came!*”.

According to G. Keith and J. Shuttleworth, women talk more than men, talk too much, are more polite, are indecisive/hesitant, complain and nag, ask more questions, support each other, and are more co-operative. As to the men, they swear more, do not talk about emotions, talk about sport more, talk about women and machines in the same way, insult each other frequently, are competitive in conversation, dominate conversation, speak with more authority, give more commands, and interrupt more (Keith, Shuttleworth 2008: 222). The given above suggestions and examples, are, of course, based on generalizations and cannot be accurate, though they are good to know

as they can help understand reasons for misunderstandings and communicative gaps caused by gender differences.

Interpersonal barriers are another group of communicative obstacles and misunderstandings. According to E. Garner, there are six ways in which people can distance themselves from one another. First of all, it is necessary to mention a withdrawal, an absence of interpersonal contact, when we observe both a refusal to be in touch and to have time alone. Rituals, games, and work activities are other forms of setting barriers as they are about following rules, procedures and simulation but not about real contacts. The purpose of an interpersonal contact is closeness as a good interpersonal contact promotes honesty, acceptance and various ways of communication. Awareness of the barriers breaks down the barriers that get in our way and start building relationships that really work (Garner 2012).

At the time of business and cultural globalization and mobility it is worthwhile mentioning *the main barriers to communication in an organization*. D. Kadu (Kadu 2008) points out external barriers, organizational, and personal. He states that communication in an organization is one of the biggest challenges today. In an organization, whenever we put two people together in a relationship, they each bring divergent values, beliefs, expectations, goals, personality type, communication styles and feelings. Better communication in an organizational relationship is possible only when we recognize these differences and become flexible in accepting and understanding other person's views, opinions or communication style. Otherwise, it creates communication barriers, and first of all the external ones. *External barriers* can be sub-divided into such types as semantic and psychological or emotional. *Semantic barriers* are caused in the process of receiving or understanding of the message by coding and decoding ideas and words. Because of the semantic polysemy, the linguistic capacity of both interlocutors may result into misunderstanding as words, if not properly used, may fail to convey real meanings. Kadu points out that semantic barriers may occur as a result of badly expressed message, faulty translation, unqualified assumptions and technical language. *Psychological or emotional barriers* are caused in the interpersonal communication. Interpretation of meaning in a message largely depends on the psychological and emotional state of the parties involved. Such barriers are due to the following reasons: premature evaluation, lack of attention, loss of information in transmission, poor retention, lack of reliance, distrust of one/some of the communicators, fear, anxiety and stress, and failure to communicate.

Other types of communicative barriers are *organizational* ones or *structural*. They appear because organizations are designed on the basis of a formal hierarchical structure. They are developed to attain certain identified objectives, which require regulation of day-to-day activities by developing performance standards, framing rules, regulations, procedures, policies, behavioural norms. All these affect the free flow of communication in organization, and communication mostly loses the essence of 'two-way communicative process' (Kadu 2008). The possible reasons for organizational barriers can be the following ones: hierarchy, status relationship, functional specialization, organizational policy, rules, and regulations. Hierarchy can become a communicative barrier as a result of the information in transmission being delayed or distorted, especially when

subordinates communicate to superiors. Superior-subordinate relationships, due to a formal organizational structure, also block the flow of communication because of the status incongruence. Functional specialization develops departmental interests and thereby they may affect the free flow of communication. Organizational policy, rules and regulations must provide certain facilities within the organization – such as meetings, conferences, a complaint box, a suggestion box, an open door system, social and cultural gatherings, etc. for the effective communication to take place, otherwise they will become undesirable obstacles.

As we live at the time of globalisation, we cannot but communicate with the representatives of different national cultures on the international level. According to I. Alexeyeva (Алексеева 2011: 4), communicating with those who are not like us, we acquire new skills and abilities as well as develop those that we already have. In order to avoid mistakes and conflicts in communication, it should be remembered that “other” means first of all “different from us”. Everyone preserves their unique nature due to their specific life. The more one understands what makes people different from each other, the shorter the route to understanding will be.

Intercultural/cross-cultural communication can be challenging due to various barriers that arise when people from different cultural backgrounds attempt to communicate. Some of the main barriers to intercultural communication include:

a) *language barriers* that appear due to differences in a language or variations in dialects that can cause misunderstandings or failure to convey the intended message accurately. Even if both parties speak a common language, differences in vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation can still create confusion. And it is not only about the differences between American, British, Australian or Canadian English but there are a lot of people who use English for the intercultural communication though their language level may leave much to be desired. For example, there are many cases when one and the same word/phrase has different meanings in American and British variants of English: *flower girl* – a girl who sells flowers (British English = (BrE)), a young girl who carries flowers at a wedding (American English = (AmE)); *bomb* (about a film) – a great success in BrE and a total failure in AmE (Puffalt, Starko 2012: 131); and there are also examples when one and the same notion has different names in British and American English: *дитяча молочна суміш* – *baby milk* (BrE), *formula* (AmE); *перша передача* – *bottom gear* (BrE), *low gear*, *first gear* (AmE); *вагон* – *carriage* (BrE), *car* (AmE); *баклажан* – *aubergine* (BrE), *egg plant* (AmE); *ток-шоу* – *chat show* (BrE), *talk show* (AmE) (Puffalt, Starko 2012: 119– 120). Other examples are connected with translation as in the course of code shifting from a target language into the source one there might be various distortions/corruptions of meanings or senses. They may occur as a result of translator’s incompetence, interpreter’s unfriendly behaviour of speakers, technical challenges and complexity of the texts for translation/interpretation, accents and speech disorders, background noises, stress etc. In such cases we also talk about the mistranslation of words or phrases, about the so called ‘false friends of translators’ or contextual ambiguity. For example, in English the word *actuality* means *reality* ‘реальність’, while the Ukrainian word *актуальність* is to be translated as *topicality*, *urgency*; *academic* – ‘студент чи

викладач університету', академік – *academician* (Puffalt, Starko 2012: 57). Another example is taken from the real-life situation when during a business training (Kyiv, 2020), a speaker, talking about the art of negotiations, used the verb *to cry* in the phrase “*And when I cannot convince my wife, I start crying*”. Due to the ambiguity of the context, the interpreter translated it as ‘*кричати*’ while the speaker meant ‘*плакати*’;

b) *cultural stereotyping* which involves generalizing people from certain cultures or ethnic groups based on preconceived ideas, which can distort communication. These stereotypes often ignore individual differences and contribute to biased perceptions, leading to misunderstandings or prejudices in communication. According to G. Allport (Allport 1954: 120), a stereotype is not just a series of images that describe the world in a bad or nice way. Besides a simple description, a stereotype includes a very strong and fixed evaluation. If a stereotype tells us that, for example, that person is bad then we do not make ourselves think what/who he is in reality. We see *a lazy Indian, a sly Jew* and *a violent Turk*. Another example can be given with a European cultural exchange, namely what different peoples say before they start eating – *Bon appetit* in France, *Buon appetito* in Italy, *Guten appetit* in Germany and *Never mind* in England (the story is that it has been believed that English national cuisine is not tasty as they boil everything until it loses its taste);

c) *ethnocentrism* which is the tendency to view one's own culture as superior to others, interpreting other cultures' behaviors through their own cultural lens; it can lead to misinterpretations and conflict and result in judgmental attitudes to other cultures, and an inability to appreciate cultural differences. As an example, we can give a link to a series of maps of Europe labelled according to national stereotypes that has become an internet sensation in 2009 (Mapping Stereotypes). According to Y. Tsvetkov (Tsvetkov 2009), the author of the Mapping stereotypes project, every nation sees itself in the best light while others are looked down or laughed/mockd at. An interesting thing is that the closer the nations are the more negative they might be towards each other. For example, Europe, according to Germans, looks like: *Germany is Germany, France is Eifel-Reich, Portugal – cheap hotels here, Russia – gas vault, Ireland – whiskey, Britain – Enigma code hackers, Italy – pizza and museums, Poland – vegetables, Ukraine – gas transit land, Moldova – unknown, Romania – vampire land*;

d) *differences in values and norms between cultures* can lead to misunderstandings. For example, some cultures may prioritize individualism, while others emphasize collectivism. These differences can affect communication styles, decision-making processes, and how relationships are managed. Some topics are considered to be a taboo: *money/salaries, up-bringing of children, religion, politics*, while in the Ukrainian culture its very fine to discuss them among relatives and friends or even a stranger in the street can give a parent a piece of advice;

e) *non-verbal communication differences* that include gestures, facial expressions, posture, eye contact, and personal space, numbers, colours etc. vary greatly across cultures. A gesture that is considered friendly or polite in one culture might be seen as offensive in another. For example, in Ukrainian culture it is not appropriate to give an even number of flowers on happy occasions, they are good only for the funerals. The sign which means nothing for North Americans;

f) *different communication styles* that can be direct or indirect. For example, in direct communication cultures, people are expected to express their thoughts clearly and directly, while in indirect communication cultures, people might communicate more subtly or use context to convey meaning or even talk to the “third party”. This can cause confusion or frustration if not understood properly;

g) *time orientation* which means that different cultures have varying attitudes toward time, that can influence communication. Monochronic cultures (e.g., U.S., Germany) view time linearly and value punctuality and efficiency, while polychronic cultures (e.g., Latin American, Ukrainian, Arab cultures) may be more flexible with time and focus on relationships over strict schedules. These differences can create misunderstandings, especially in professional or business settings. For example, Americans, knowing that Ukrainians are not very punctual, have a special expression “*Ukrainian time*” which means 15–20 minutes later and also use suffix *-ish* in order to describe the Ukrainian time, for example: “*When shall we meet? At twoish?*”

h) *power distance* which is realized by the perception of power and authority in relationship. In high power distance cultures (e.g., Mexico, India), there is an acceptance of hierarchical structures, and subordinates may avoid directly questioning or challenging authority. In contrast, low power distance cultures (e.g., Scandinavia, Western Europe) value equality and open communication across ranks. These differences can lead to misunderstandings in terms of authority, leadership, and decision-making in intercultural communication;

i) *different approaches to conflict* which are seen in conflict resolutions. In some cultures, conflicts are handled openly and directly (e.g., the U.S., Germany), while others may avoid open confrontation to maintain harmony (e.g., Japan, Korea). Misunderstandings can occur if one party expects confrontation or resolution in a manner that is unfamiliar to the other party’s culture;

j) *contextual differences* that are seen when high-context cultures rely heavily on non-verbal cues and context to interpret messages, while low-context cultures prioritize explicit, verbal communication. People from high-context cultures may find low-context communication overly blunt, while those from low-context cultures may perceive high-context communication as vague or ambiguous. As an example, we can talk about communication with the Chinese who very often avoid direct answers and it is necessary to guess what they really mean;

k) *cultural anxiety and uncertainty* that refer to the degree to which people in a culture are comfortable with uncertainty or ambiguity. Some cultures have a high uncertainty avoidance (e.g., Japan, Greece), meaning that their members may be uncomfortable with unstructured situations or unfamiliar ideas. This can lead to communication barriers when people from low uncertainty avoidance cultures (e.g., the U.S., Sweden) interact with them, as they may approach unfamiliar situations with greater openness and flexibility. Thus, it is not easy for foreigners from low uncertainty avoidance cultures to plan things with many Ukrainians well in advance as very often they may say “*Я ще там не живу; треба ще дожити; якщо доживемо/доживу; час покаже; якщо хочеш розсмішити Бога, розкажи йому про свої плани*”;

l) *assumptions of similarity* that occur when individuals assume that people from other cultures think and behave the same way they do. This false assumption of similarity can result in misunderstandings and frustration, as individuals might misinterpret behaviors or messages that deviate from their own cultural expectations;

m) *technological barriers* that appear when intercultural communication is done through technology (e.g., email, video calls, messaging platforms). Technical issues such as language translation errors, poor internet connection, or misunderstanding of tone can lead to barriers in effective communication. Moreover, digital communication often lacks the non-verbal cues present in face-to-face interaction, leading to potential misunderstandings.

Having analysed some of the main groups of barriers to cross-cultural communication, we can assume that it is vital to know about them but at the same time it is very important to apply this knowledge in order to overcome them successfully. First of all, we have to talk about cultural awareness and sensitivity as becoming aware of cultural differences and making an effort to understand the perspectives of others can significantly improve intercultural communication. The second way is to listen actively, paying attention to both verbal and non-verbal cues and asking for clarification when needed. The next way is to be open-minded, to avoid making assumptions or judgments based on stereotypes and be open to learning from others. Another very important step is cultural adaptation which means flexibility and willingness to adjust a communication style based on the cultural context. According to the Canadian specialists who work in the field of successful communication the best ways to overcome communication barriers are to be clear about the goal of the message, choose the best time, use appropriate language, get feedback, check the body language, practise active listening skills, develop cultural competence, avoid giving too much information, and monitor emotions (Garcia, Lagace 2024). So, understanding and addressing these barriers can significantly enhance communication and collaboration between individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Conclusions and perspectives of the research. Barriers to communication are inevitable parts of our communication on the interpersonal, group, organizational, international levels. They may be internal and external and are connected with our physical, emotional, and mental state, language and topic awareness, culture competences and various extralinguistic factors that shape our communication, influence the effectiveness of our work and human activities. That is why it is very vital to learn more about them, study them and find the best ways to overcome them in order to convey the message, to understand and be understood. This is the context in which we see the perspectives for our further studies and researches.

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MODERN COMMUNICATION AND ITS BARRIERS

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Abstract

Background: We devoted our research to the phenomenon of communication and particularly to the barriers that occur in the course of cultural and cross-cultural communication considering our mindsets, values and perception of the world. As communication is a complex process that includes an addressee, addressant, channel of communication, code, contact, communicative noise, context, and speech situation it is very important to understand the factors that enhance it and, on the contrary, those that distort the information shared and lead to communicative failures.

Purpose: The purpose of our research is to analyze communication, its types, and barriers to its success in different communicative contexts, to conduct an experimental study of the most frequent barriers to communication, and to define the ways of overcoming the communication barriers.

Results: The analysis of the existing studies in this field, the conducted experiment and survey have proved that among the most important barriers to communication are language barriers, systems of values, stereotypes, ethnocentrism, organizational culture types, prejudice, and types of interlocutors. In order to overcome these barriers, it is necessary to be clear about the goal of the message, choose the best time, use appropriate language, get feedback, check the body language, practise active listening skills, develop cultural competence, avoid giving too much information, and monitor emotions.

Discussion: Barriers to communication are inevitable parts of our communication. They are connected with our physical, emotional, and mental state, language and topic awareness, culture competences and various extralinguistic factors that shape our communication. So, it is vital to study them and find the ways to overcome them in order to convey the message, to understand and be understood. This is the context in which we see the perspectives for our further studies and researches.

Keywords: modern communication, cross-cultural communication, perception, barriers to communication, experiment.

Vitae

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