

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE MODERN EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Introduction. In today's global context, Europe can be described as a melting pot of different cultures, languages and traditions. As such, the significance of intercultural communication cannot be overstated, particularly in education. Intercultural communication becomes more and more prominent each day as a result of the increasing number of international students within European universities. With globalisation, international cooperation and technological advances bringing people from different backgrounds closer together, the ability to navigate cultural differences is more important than ever before.

The purpose of the work is to analyse the importance of intercultural communication, its main challenges and the strategies employed to facilitate effective communication amidst cultural differences in the context of the modern European educational environment.

Presenting main material. Intercultural communication encompasses the exchange of information, ideas and values between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It is concerned with the effects on communicative behaviour that occur when different cultures interact together. Thus, intercultural communication can be seen as communication that takes place in symbolic intercultural spaces.

Differences between cultures are the main obstacle to intercultural communication. Different cultures are characterised by different languages, values, behaviours and attitudes to aspects such as time (the importance of punctuality, for example), backgrounds, customs, non-verbal cues, etc. One of the common problems faced during intercultural communication is that speakers

of different cultures often perceive information differently. The success of intercultural communication does not depend only on the knowledge of a country's language and national peculiarities. Language is only a necessary prerequisite for communication, in which the sense of style and the general mood of said communication, inherent to a particular culture, play an important role.

In the modern European educational context, where students and educators may come from different cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, effective intercultural communication is essential. It facilitates mutual understanding, promotes inclusiveness and cultivates respect for different points of view, laying the foundation for a harmonious learning environment. Intercultural communication in the European educational environment, however, is not without its challenges. Language barriers, cultural stereotypes and differing communication styles often hinder effective interaction among students and educators. Furthermore, the prevalence of ethnocentrism and cultural prejudice can deepen misunderstandings and hinder meaningful dialogue. In addition, the rapid influx of international students and the growing trend towards multicultural classrooms often further complicate the dynamics of intercultural communication.

Addressing the challenges posed by cultural diversity requires innovative approaches aimed at the development of intercultural communication competence in the modern European educational environment:

First, educational institutions should prioritise foreign language programmes to facilitate effective communication between students and educators from different linguistic backgrounds. Second, promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity through multicultural education initiatives can help break down stereotypes and encourage inclusiveness. Third, implementing intercultural training programmes for both students and educators can provide them with the skills necessary to navigate cultural differences and resolve possible conflicts peacefully. Additionally, facilitating opportunities for

international exchange, such as study abroad programmes and multicultural events, can contribute to cross-cultural understanding and cooperation.

Several European educational institutions have implemented innovative approaches to the development of intercultural communication. For example – the Erasmus+ programme is an exchange programme for students, educators and researchers from EU member states, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway and Turkey. The programme provides an opportunity to study, do an internship or teach in another country participating in the programme, promotes student mobility, enriches their experience and enhances intercultural competence [4].

Conclusion. Intercultural communication plays a key role in the modern European educational environment, facilitating meaningful interaction and cooperation across different cultural backgrounds. Despite the many challenges, innovative approaches, such as language proficiency programmes, cultural awareness initiatives and international learning, can help bridge the communication gap and contribute to a more inclusive educational environment. By embracing diversity and encouraging intercultural understanding, European educational institutions can help students succeed in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world.

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