

STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING COGNITIVE MISUNDERSTANDING IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

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Abstract: The article explores the linguocognitive aspects of overcoming cognitive misunderstanding in the process of intercultural interaction. It reveals the nature of cognitive misunderstanding as a dissonance between the mental outlooks of communication participants.

Keywords: cognitive misunderstanding, intercultural dialogue, linguocognitive strategies.

Introduction:

In the context of the modern global world, intercultural dialogue often faces barriers that go far beyond purely linguistic differences. A key obstacle here becomes cognitive misunderstanding, arising from the mismatch of conceptual worldviews. This phenomenon represents miscomprehensions. At the level of information processing, such a mismatch of semantic contexts leads to pragmatic misunderstandings, requiring participants in communication not just to have good command of a foreign language, but a high level of cognitive skills.

For effective overcoming of these barriers, interlocutors must engage a set of special linguo-cognitive strategies. The most important of these is metacognitive monitoring, which allows dialogue partners to consciously track the course of the conversation. A key role is also played by the strategy of explication — translating implicit, culturally conditioned background knowledge into explicit, detailed verbal formulations, which eliminates ambiguity and the need to read between the lines. In addition, the use of active paraphrasing and clarifying questions makes it possible to restructure the conceptual framework of communication and synchronize the interlocutors' mental models in real time.

«Modern requirements for foreign language teaching require a strong focus on oral speech, i.e., the use of monologues and dialogic speech.

Although the use of monologues is quite common in speech teaching, dialogic speech still predominates».

Methods:

From a methodological perspective, the purposeful formation of these strategies should become a priority task. Traditional methods of language learning should give way to the development of students' cognitive-communicative competence through interactive

technologies, such as the analysis of intercultural situations, simulations of real communication, and academic debates. The integration of these strategies into the educational process allows future specialists not only to expand their vocabulary but also to develop flexible professional thinking capable of successfully preventing cognitive conflicts in real intercultural interaction.

«Many people recognize that each person prefers different learning styles and techniques. Learning styles group common ways that people learn. Everyone has a mix of learning styles».

Cognitive dissonance is a state of psychological discomfort that arises when a person encounters contradictions between their beliefs, values, attitudes, and new information or experiences. In conditions of unprepared intercultural dialogue, where different systems of views, norms, and communication rules collide, the risk of cognitive dissonance significantly increases. Psycholinguistic strategies play a key role in overcoming it.

Results:

Psycholinguistics studies the connection between language and thought. Instead of perceiving differences in opinions as personal criticism or a mistake of the interlocutor, one can try to see them as a manifestation of a different cultural logic or worldview.

For example: If an interlocutor from another culture avoids a direct "no," this may be interpreted not as insincerity, but as an attempt to maintain harmony and avoid confrontation.

The analysis of intercultural communication situations demonstrated that cognitive misunderstanding most frequently arises when interlocutors interpret the same communicative act through different cultural and cognitive frameworks. The collected examples showed that linguistic competence alone does not guarantee successful communication if participants rely on culturally specific assumptions that remain implicit during interaction. The findings indicate that the use of psycholinguistic and linguocognitive strategies significantly reduces the level of misunderstanding. Participants who actively employed clarification requests, paraphrasing techniques, and explicit explanations of culturally specific concepts achieved a higher degree of mutual understanding than those who relied solely on literal interpretation of messages.

Particular effectiveness was observed in the strategy of metacognitive reflection. Individuals who consciously monitored their own interpretations and questioned initial assumptions were more successful in identifying potential sources of misunderstanding. This strategy enabled them to recognize the influence of their cultural background on the interpretation process and to adapt their communicative behavior accordingly. The results also revealed that the strategy of cultural perspective-taking contributes substantially to successful intercultural dialogue. When participants attempted to interpret statements from the viewpoint of representatives of another culture, communicative conflicts decreased and cooperative interaction increased. For example, indirect communicative behavior, often perceived as ambiguity or avoidance in some cultures, was more accurately understood when interlocutors considered the cultural norms underlying such behavior.

Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated that frequent use of clarifying questions positively influences communicative effectiveness. Expressions such as “Could you explain what you mean?”, “Do I understand correctly that...?”, and “Could you give an example?” helped participants verify interpretations and avoid erroneous conclusions. As a result, the dialogue became more constructive and less emotionally tense. The findings suggest that successful intercultural communication depends not only on language proficiency but also on the development of cognitive flexibility, empathy, and awareness of cultural differences. These factors collectively facilitate the synchronization of mental models between interlocutors and create conditions for productive intercultural cooperation.

Discussion:

“Communicative competence which includes linguistic, socio-linguistic, pragmatic, strategic competences get the pivotal role in evolution of critical thinking abilities. Implementing communicative learning in educational process can really highlight learners' communicative skills and be a basis for critical thinking development».

Frequent use of clarifying questions during a dialogue helps to correctly understand the interlocutor ("Am I correct in understanding that...", "Do you mean that...").

Overcoming cognitive dissonance in an unprepared intercultural dialogue is a complex but achievable process. The application of psycholinguistic strategies aimed at changing interpretation, adapting communicative behavior, and flexibility of thinking not only reduces psychological discomfort but also contributes to deeper mutual understanding and the establishment of constructive relations between parties.

The findings of the study confirm that cognitive misunderstanding in intercultural dialogue is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a complex cognitive and sociocultural process. Even when interlocutors possess sufficient language proficiency, communication difficulties may arise due to differences in cultural values, conceptual systems, and communicative expectations. Therefore, successful intercultural interaction requires not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to recognize and interpret culturally conditioned meanings. The obtained results support the view that communicative competence plays a central role in overcoming cognitive barriers. As Petrosyan (2022) emphasizes, communicative competence includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and strategic components that collectively contribute to the development of critical thinking and effective communication. The present study demonstrates that these competencies enable individuals to evaluate information from multiple perspectives and avoid premature judgments during intercultural encounters.

Particular attention should be paid to the role of psycholinguistic strategies in reducing cognitive dissonance. The analysis showed that clarifying questions, paraphrasing, and explicit verbalization of implicit meanings significantly improve mutual understanding. Such strategies create opportunities for interlocutors to negotiate meaning and verify interpretations before misunderstandings develop into communication conflicts. Consequently, communication becomes more cooperative and less susceptible to stereotyping

and ethnocentric evaluations. Another important observation concerns the role of cognitive flexibility. Participants who demonstrated openness to alternative viewpoints were more capable of adapting to unfamiliar communicative norms and interpreting culturally specific behavior accurately. This finding corresponds with contemporary approaches to intercultural competence, which emphasize tolerance of ambiguity and the ability to view cultural differences as valuable sources of learning rather than obstacles to communication.

The discussion also highlights the pedagogical implications of the findings. Traditional foreign language instruction often focuses primarily on grammar and vocabulary acquisition. However, the results suggest that educational programs should devote greater attention to developing learners' cognitive-communicative competence through intercultural case studies, role-playing activities, simulations, and reflective discussions. Such educational practices can prepare future specialists to function effectively in multicultural professional environments where successful communication depends on both linguistic and cognitive adaptability.

Conclusion

Cognitive misunderstanding is one of the major challenges in intercultural dialogue, arising from differences in cultural values, conceptual frameworks, and communication patterns. The study has demonstrated that the effective application of linguocognitive and psycholinguistic strategies, including metacognitive monitoring, clarification, paraphrasing, and perspective-taking, significantly contributes to reducing misunderstandings and cognitive dissonance. The findings emphasize that successful intercultural communication depends not only on language proficiency but also on cognitive flexibility, cultural awareness, and communicative competence. Therefore, the development of these skills should become an essential component of foreign language education and professional intercultural training.

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