

6 ICLEI 2016-15 Shabana Tunio

Intercultural, Interreligious Harmony, a Dream to Achieve; An Investigatory Review on the Notion of Intercultural Communication in Communicative Pedagogy in Pakistan

Shabana Tunio, Jafre Zainol Abidin & Shaik Abdul Malik Mohamed Ismail
School of Educational Studies
Universiti Sains Malaysia
Penang, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

In recent era when world is facing political, cultural, social and religious divergence, the notion of intercultural-social seems to be an essential element of education. Especially, in the countries like Pakistan which are multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi religious, encompassing different social strata in it. Pakistan is a state comprised of different nationalities with different cultures, different languages & different religions. It is the need of time for such countries to take major steps towards maintenance of intercultural harmony. This can be achieved if since the beginning, we train & educate our children with intercultural communication. This gap in communicative pedagogy was found during a doctoral study in field of communicative competence. It was observed that in most of the institutions of Pakistan, the pedagogy of communicative skills lacks the practice and training of intercultural communication, the notion that can bring the tolerance and harmony in the society. The researcher has tried to highlight the importance of the notion in curriculum and syllabus of Pakistan in light of the few recent incidents in the country.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Communicative Pedagogy, Multi-ethnic, Multi-cultural.

Introduction

The term Intercultural communication stands for the effective transmission of messages and ideas from individuals of one culture to another. The need and urge of effective intercultural communication cannot be ignored in any field of life may it be academia, management, business, science, politics, culture, health, development, diplomacy or other fields. In the era of economic globalization it is not possible for any community or culture to stand alone; for its progress nations and organizations have to acquire effective interaction with other cultures, communities and societies of the globe.

Besides this, nowadays there are many problems that are global in nature, for examples the issues like environmental pollution, corruption, terrorism, poverty, international security, health are the problem that effect not only the whole world but the universe. This would be dream order to combat all these issues collectively looking at the international politics to solve these problems and implement the strategies and solutions without successful interaction between the all countries. All these issues need the cooperation and collaboration across the border, across the culture.

Above mentioned situations reflect the problem from global perspective but there are many countries on the map of globe that have to encounter all these problems internally too, Pakistan is one amongst the list of those countries. Pakistan is the country that came into being in name of religion in 1947. Pakistan has currently four provinces namely Sindh, Balauchistan, Punjab, KPK and Gilgit Baltistan. It is amazing to know that all these provinces are comprised of different nations having different cultures, languages, traditions,

customs and social norms. Urdu being the national language plays the role of lingua franca among the people of these nationalities. Census 2001:107 (as cited by Rehman, 2010)

Languages	Percentage of speakers
Punjabi	44.15
Pashto	15.42
Sindhi	14.10
Siraiki	10.53
Urdu	7.57
Balochi	3.57
Others	4.66

Source: Census 2001: 107

In addition, there are people of different religions in Pakistan. Christians, Hindus, Sikh, Jews live in different parts of Pakistan. They practice their religion, religious rituals and customs in their own way.

All this situations makes shows that Pakistan is the multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual country with different social classes in it. Although at state level it is assumed that all people of different nationalities and ethnicity are living in peaceful environment but there are few issues that cannot be ignored. In this perspective, when all people of these nationalities and ethnicities have same educational institutes, we need to address.

The present study is carried out to investigate that how through education and notion of intercultural communication these problems of diverse cultures and religions can be solved or lessened. The paper presents the critical review of educational policies, courses and syllabus that gives less attention for promoting and maintaining intercultural and interreligious harmony in Pakistan. The literature review in this study suggests that oral communication is the most neglected element in the pedagogy and assessment in Pakistan, not to mention about intercultural communication.

Literature Review

The history of development of intercultural communication in academic field has gone through many phases and formations throughout the history. It was Charles Darwin who highlighted the notion in his book *Expression of Emotion in Man and Animal* (1873), this book led the further research in verbal and non-verbal communication in cross-cultures latter for many researchers. For example Sigmund Freud's concepts of unconscious was taken to assume that nonverbal actions of the human are beyond the awareness of human being (Roger and Hart, 2001). But scholars like Leeds-Hurwitz (1990) argue that it was in the middle of twentieth century that intercultural communication was formally developed as sub division. The author quotes the famous event of hiring anthropologists and linguist by the Foreign Service Institute of USA to train the government and business personals to work for post-war rebuilding in oversea. The notable linguistics like Georger Tager and Ray Britwhistle and enthropologists Edward T. Hall, who is named as the founding father of Intercultural Communication (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990) were among the hired staff. The experts came to the conclusion that besides the training of good language there is something else without which there can be no effective communication with people of other societies and cultures. Edward T. Hall, who was most interested in the unconscious aspect of the non-verbal communication or cultural clues, believed that non-verbal communication varies across the culture and countries like languages itself which for him at that time was a novel idea (Roger et al. 2002). It was at that time that E. T Hall wrote his famous books *The Silent*

Language (1959) and *Hidden Dimension* (1966) in which he explained the usage of personal space in cross cultures and regions and emphasized that every culture has its distinct features and rules of using their space and for a smooth and effective communication one has to respect those cultural artefacts. Same thoughts for respecting the cultural differences are expressed by Cook(2001) when he discusses the speech of Rigoberta Menchu Tun (Nobel Prize Winner, 1992) where talks about the globalization of poverty, human rights' abuse, and violations. Cook believes that all the theory and practice of intercultural communication can respond towards the ethics, respect, and responsibility across cultures and it can also foster the sense of responsibility in people for how to behave and live in the world full of differences and different cultures. Same is the purpose that researcher want to achieve in this paper.

Additionally, Chomsky (1965) gave the idea of ideal speaker listener. In his book *Aspects of the theory of syntax* (1965) he defined the notion as competence of knowledge of grammatical rules and speaking in an ideal speaker and listener setting in a homogenous setting. This concept was criticized by researchers like Dell Hyme(1972 and Widowson(1984) for ignoring the social and cultural setting and variance of speaker and listener. Hyme believed that communication should be heterogeneous. Whereas Widowson gave the theory of communicative capacity and inclusion of sociolinguistics conventions in it. Latter this notion of sociolinguistic was incorporated in the communicative competence model of Canale and Swain (1984) and Bachman and Palmer model(1996) communicative language ability. Both of the model were designed on the base that social and cultural norms cannot be ignored while designing anything for an effective communicative skills.

While the situation in Pakistan is totally different as compare to the communicative approaches and methods in academic fields in world. English is the official language of Pakistan and all government, corporate sector, media, educational, academic and government functions are to be done in English language(Reham, 2003) but the English language skills of students are not up to the mark (Shamim, 2008; Mahmood & Ghani, 2012; Alam, 2013). Being specific on communication skills in English language, Kakepoto et al. (2012) in two different studies found out that there was lack of communicative skill component in the syllabus of the university level student, in result of less attention on communication student felt nervous, hesitant and unwilling to communicate in the class. One other thing they found was large classes. Same problem of large classes is also discussed by Shamim (2008) which is the main problem of learning for many students where most of the students cannot participate in class activities. Kakepoto et al. (2013) also believe that lack of communicative apprehension is hindrance in seeking job and competing at workplace where you have to communicate with national and international organizations. Mahmood and Ghani (2012) show lack of satisfaction over the situation of communication in the pedagogy of Pakistan, they believe that teachers don't give attention to communicative skills. Mahmood and Ghani (2012) conducted a research and trained the teachers and student with communicative skill. The results of the study show the higher rate of achievement in both teacher and students. This proves that students are willing to learn but the educational system does not fill up those gaps. Same points are raised by Kanan (1999) who criticises the pedagogical and assessment system of Pakistan and calls it as a test of rote memorization rather than assessing students' critical and integrated skills. Similarly, Warsi (2004) also emphasises that educational system and syllabus of Pakistan are faulty and assessment system is erroneous, it does not cater the needs of the modern globalized world.

Another problem in Pakistan's educational system is that it is divided in different classes (Reham, 2003; Shamim, 2008) namely English medium schools, Urdu medium school, Private school (which mostly follow English medium) and Public school. English

medium schools are high in fees where only children of high class can afford to get education while public schools are cheaper where children of middle class and lower middle class can get education. The cheapest of all those are the Madarsa (Religious institutes, where religious education is given to students with more or less other things), in which those people send their children who cannot afford the education of private or public institutes (Rehman, 1999). This in itself is a major cultural and social divide in Pakistan which has brought many problems in the country.

This divide is ongoing process because all the higher jobs such as Federal Public Service Commission, Combine Competitive Services demand high English proficiency of candidates, only the students of English medium schools can perform and achieve more in this. This is where we remember the words of Cook (2012) that *all the theory and practice of intercultural communication can respond towards the ethics, respect, and responsibility across cultures and it can also foster the sense of responsibility in people for how to behave and live in the world full of differences and different cultures.*

Analysis and Discussion

Celce Murcia et al. (1995) described the contents of sociolinguistic competence from Canale and Swain (1984) and Bachman and Palmer model (1996) as follow;

SOCIAL CONTEXTUAL FACTORS	Participant variables Age, gender, office and status, social distance, relations (power and effective) Situational variables Time, place, social situation
STYLISTIC APPROPRIATENESS FACTORS	Politeness conventions and strategies Stylistic variation Degree of formality Field specific registers
CULTURAL FACTORS	Sociocultural background knowledge of the target language community Living conditions (way of living, living standards); social and institutional structures, social conventions and rituals; major values, beliefs, and norms; taboo topics; historical background; cultural aspects including literature and arts. Awareness of major dialect and regional differences Cross cultural awareness Differences, similarities, strategies for cross-cultural communication

<p>NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIVE FACTORS</p>	<p>Kinesic factors (body language) Discourse controlling behaviors (non-verbal turn taking signals) Backchannel behaviors Affective markers(facial expressions), gestures, eye contact Proxemic factors(use of space) Haptic factors(touching) Paralinguistic factors Acoustical sounds, non-vocal noises Silence</p>
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The syllabus of the different institutes of Pakistan will be analysed based on the components suggested by Celcie Murcia (1995). As mentioned earlier, Pakistan has five provinces; for this study the syllabus of one province Sindh is analysed with brief description of few other institutes. It was found that the major universities of Sindh only prefer to enhance students’ grammatical skills as most of the syllabus contents were based on the language and grammar e.g Functional English Grammar, Compulsory English, Basic English and comprehension, Remedial English, Advance English etc. All these courses only intend to improve students’ English language skills with special focus on grammar such as sentence structure, tenses, voice, narration, etc. there was few courses namely communicative skills which comprised of application, letter, precise writing where more focus is on written communication and formats of the letters and applications ignoring the oral communication and intercultural communication notion totally. This concept of language teaching in opposition with McKay(2002) concept of English language teaching where the author argues that while teaching English at worldwide, the social, cultural, political and educational context of that region should be focussed. Opposite to that concept, it is seen in Pakistan that people want to be perfect English man when it comes to learning or teaching of English. One of the engineering institute has better communicative skills course which focusses on the oral communication as well but that gives more attention to the enhancement of presentation skills in terms of English language. The medical universities and colleges have no English classed at all in the campuses, whereas the communicative skills and intercultural communication is their professional need as they have to communicate with the patients of different social strata and cultures. In all developed countries the special communicative classes and courses are introduced for medical students but the situation is totally opposite in Pakistan. Here it is important to mention that Sindh province is comprised of different cultures, religions and sects. Besides this, due to its rich natural sources and market place, it is the hub of earning for people of different provinces.

Above mentioned situation is for public universities and colleges, the situation is slightly better in private colleges, universities and institutions in terms of oral communication. There the teacher give importance to oral communication and the good spoken English is appreciated in these institutes. Although a little attention is given to intercultural communication but at least the component of body language is taken care of. The infrastructure is comparatively better, number of students per class are limited in these institutes in which all students get opportunity to respond and communicate. But the problem is how many people afford these private institutes as discussed by Rehman (1999) and Shamim (2008). If we analyse the results of the data and studies of Rehman and Shamim, we

come to the conclusion that educational system of Pakistan itself is responsible for the cultural and social divide in Pakistan.

Conclusion

Although the notion of intercultural communication is still in the phase of formation and is seen as a challenging components of teaching experiences but in different fields of different countries it is already implemented and is being taught (Cook, 2001; Roger, 1999). While in Pakistan, despite of its need in the society the intercultural communication is neither the part of syllabus nor is taught and promoted at the educational institutes. As extremism is growing during recent years in Pakistan , no one can deny the need of such steps to be taken but the results of this research prove aligned with the views of authors in literature review who said that educational system and feedback and assessment is erroneous and testing only rote memorization (Warsi, 2004; Kanan, 1999). It is the need of time for Pakistan to look into the academic and educational system and take revolutionary steps to save the country from extremism, class divide, and ethnic problems.

Note: The 1st author is Graduate Assistant at School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Lecturer at Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam, Sindh.

References