

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: MAINTAINING CROSS-CULTURAL HARMONY IN THE WORKPLACE

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Abstract

Cultural differences can affect communication in general, making it difficult to reach a solution. Cultural differences can make communication difficult due to misunderstandings between individuals. People who have just moved from their home environment will find it difficult to adapt if they are not used to the changes. Cultural differences in the workplace lead to differences in the way ideas, perceptions and everyday behaviours are communicated. This also means that there are differences in intercultural communication strategies. If the communication strategy used is appropriate, the communication that takes place in the work environment will be more effective. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the object of research being DPW PKB Lampung Province. The research subjects are DPW PKB employees from Lampung, Java, Sunda and Semendo ethnic groups. The data collection techniques used are observation, in-depth interviews, documentation and literature review. Furthermore, the research data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model as a guide for data processing. The results of this study, namely DPW PKB Lampung Province employees, show that students are aware of the importance of effective communication strategies in intercultural interactions. Some informants have implemented some elements of Steve Cartledge's communication strategy in their communication practices with other tribes, such as planning, adaptation, and strategy development. However, some informants still need to increase their awareness or knowledge of best practices in intercultural communication.

Keywords: intercultural communication; communication strategy; steve cartledge communication strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Social interaction in society can be influenced by various factors, including differences in cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Wibawa and Sumarwan 2023). Differences in culture and language can create barriers in communication due to

differences in habits, values, and cultural norms used in communication. As a result, the message received may not be fully understood or understood at all by the recipient (Juhanda 2019).

A person's cultural background has a significant impact, as it includes attitudes and characteristics that vary by region. For example, Sumatran people tend to have an assertive and direct communication style, while Javanese or Sundanese people tend to be softer in their communication (Rachmadillah 2021). Culture is a way of life that is comprehensive, complex, abstract, and encompasses many things. There are many aspects of culture that influence a person's communicative behavior. These socio-cultural elements are present in various human social activities. In the context of communication, culture plays an important role as one of the factors that influence relationships between individuals.

The process of adaptation when interacting with the environment is natural and important for every individual. Someone who only uses the local language will not understand the message conveyed in Indonesian. People who are used to being polite to parents will not accept behavior that disrespects elders. Conversely, people who come from a culture that does not hide their feelings will not accept a culture that is full of hypocrisy (Suryani 2013).

In general, cultural differences can affect communication and cause difficulties in reaching a solution. Cultural differences can hinder communication due to misunderstandings between individuals. Individuals who have just moved from their home environment will have difficulty adapting if they are not used to change. Expatriates are often faced with situations where they have to adapt to a different culture.

According to Heryadi & Silvana (2013, p. 96), interethnic communication occurs when individuals migrate or move to areas with different ethnicities. At that time, interethnic communication takes place. When migrants intend to settle in the region, they have to adapt to the local customs, language, and culture. This adaptation process can pose challenges in various aspects such as cognitive, emotional and affective. Ethnic, Javanese, Sundanese and Semendo employees working in DPW PKB Lampung Province also experience changes in their life patterns as they have to interact with new people with different cultures.

The employees' lives and experiences include interactions with friends, party leaders, legislative members, and the community in the DPW PKB Lampung Province office environment. Migrant employees need to interact and adapt to the new culture and environment in order to fit in, feel comfortable, and avoid conflict.

Cultural differences in the work environment result in differences in the way ideas, thoughts, and daily behaviors are communicated. This also means that there are differences in intercultural communication strategies. When the right communication strategies are used, the communication that takes place in the work environment

becomes more effective. Therefore, it is important to see how intercultural communication strategies between employees in the work environment of DPW PKB Lampung Province.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research used a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. A qualitative approach is useful to describe a reality and social conditions in the society (Sugiyono 2018). A qualitative approach is an approach based on the reality on the ground and the experience of the respondents. In order to reveal the phenomenon of communication between one ethnic group and another, the researcher uses a qualitative research method with a symbolic interactionism approach.

The research object is DPW PKB Lampung Province. The research subjects are employees from Lampung, Java, Sunda and Sumendo ethnicities. The data collection techniques used are observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review. In addition, the researcher used Miles and Huberman's model as a guide for data processing in analyzing the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overall, the results of this study show that employees within DPW PKB Lampung Province have a good awareness of the importance of appropriate communication strategies in social interactions with different ethnic groups. This is important in the context of Indonesia, which has high cultural and ethnic diversity, where appropriate communication strategies can help strengthen relationships between different ethnic groups and promote tolerance and better cooperation.

Referring to the context of communication strategy presented by Steve Cartledge in Cangara (2013: 54), there are six dimensions of communication strategy theory, including 1) communication planning, channel strategies, building the effective communication function, developing the overarching communication strategy, implementing the communication strategy, and communication audits against best practices (Cangara, 2013).

Communication Planning

Communication planning, according to Steve Cartledge, is one of the most important strategies in understanding the planning of a communication carefully. Before embarking on any endeavor, he invests time in creating a communication plan. This includes identifying key objectives, defining target audiences, and determining the most appropriate messages for each audience segment. By planning its communication initiatives in advance, it ensures coherence, consistency, and maximum impact (Kalla and Arreola 2020).

Based on the results of the research on employees in DPW PKB Lampung Province, it can be concluded that most of them have a good awareness of the importance of communication planning in their social interactions with different ethnic groups. In line with Steve Cartledge's assumption, he stated that an important element of intercultural communication planning is to gain a deep understanding of the specific cultural context in which he operates (Gudykunst and Kim 2017). He recognizes that cultural norms can vary even within a single culture.

In terms of communication planning, almost all informants are aware of the importance of considering different contexts and audiences in their communication planning. They use language that is appropriate to the situation and audience, and some informants even have specific strategies for communicating with different ethnic groups. From the interview results, it can be seen that there is a key element of Steve Cartledge's communication planning, which states that language and nonverbal cues play an important role in intercultural communication (Martin and Nakayama 2020).

In addition, according to the interview results, the informants are flexible and have the ability to adapt to their mixed cultural environment. Where, flexibility and adaptability are the main principles in Steve Cartledge's intercultural communication planning. Steve understands that different cultures have different preferences and communication styles (Samovar, L. A., Porter and McDaniel 2019), which can be seen from several informants.

Some informants also stressed the importance of paying attention to the ethnicity and culture of the people with whom they are communicating. They recognize that effective communication styles may vary between different ethnic groups and therefore need to be tailored to the needs and preferences of the audience. Informants also showed a good awareness of the importance of thinking about the message to be delivered and how it will be received by their interlocutors. This is one of the most important aspects to consider in intercultural communication. The choice and use of language must be clear and easy to understand.

Channel strategies

In intercultural communication, choosing the right communication channel is crucial to successful interaction and understanding. Intercultural communication channels refer to the different ways in which information is transmitted between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Steve Cartledge recognizes that choosing the right channel is essential for effective communication and ensuring that messages are received and understood across cultural boundaries (Chen 2014).

Based on the results of the study, it can be seen that employees in DPW PKB Lampung Province have different channel strategies in communicating with others. Some of them use flexible and adaptive channel strategies in communicating with

different audiences. They use Indonesian when they do not understand another tribe's language, but when they do, they can use the tribe's language. This shows that they are able to adapt to different conditions and situations in communication. In addition, the informants also consider the different channels or media available to communicate with others.

The informants also stated that they did not choose a particular communication channel, such as social media, to communicate. This shows that they are able to communicate in a variety of ways depending on the situation and communication needs. Furthermore, the informants mostly use Indonesian as the main language in interethnic communication. However, he also learns to understand the language and culture of others so that he can communicate more effectively and efficiently. This shows that he is able to master different languages and consider different communication needs.

Overall, it can be concluded that the employees in DPW PKB Lampung Province have different channel strategies in communication. They are able to adapt to different conditions and situations, choose and consider the right media, master different languages, and choose the right communication channel so that the message can be conveyed well. This demonstrates their ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with different audiences.

Building an Effective Communication Function

Building effective communication involves establishing supportive processes, systems, and environments that enable meaningful and effective information exchange across cultures. It involves fostering understanding, trust and respect to bridge cultural gaps and ensure that common goals are achieved. Steve Cartledge recognized that a strong communication function is essential for successful cross-cultural collaboration (Ting-Toomey and Chung 2012).

From the results of this study, it can be seen that employees in DPW PKB Lampung Province have a good understanding of the importance of building effective communication functions in social interactions and in the context of organizations or groups. Steve Cartledge's theory of Building the Effective Communication Function states that effective communication functions can be built by understanding the characteristics of others, using styles or cues in communication, understanding the culture and nature of others, and building good social relationships.

In *Building Effective Communication in an Intercultural Context*, Steve Cartledge places a strong emphasis on developing cultural sensitivity and awareness in the communication function. Clear and transparent communication is essential in an intercultural context (Wiseman and Shuter 2019). Steve Cartledge emphasizes the importance of articulating ideas, expectations, and goals in a concise and unambiguous manner. By providing clear instructions, using simple language, and

encouraging open dialogue, he ensures that messages are understood and interpreted accurately across cultures (Ting-Toomey and Chung 2012).

Informants 01_EJ and 02_EL are aware of interpersonal dynamics in communication and pay attention to style or cues in communication. This shows that they build effective communication functions by understanding the characteristics of others and using appropriate cues in communication.

Informants 03_ESun and 04_ESum emphasized the importance of understanding the culture and characteristics of others in building effective communication functions. They build the ability to understand the language and culture of others in order to build good relationships and avoid conflict.

Informants 01_Ej and 03_ESun also show a simple and natural way of building comfortable and pleasant social relationships and play an important role in building effective communication functions in organizations or groups. This shows that they build effective communication functions through good social interactions and become agents of change in building effective communication functions among tribes.

Thus, the overall results of this study show that employees in DPW PKB Lampung Province build effective communication functions by understanding the characteristics of others, using gestures in communication, understanding the culture and nature of others, and building good social relationships. This is in line with Steve Cartledge's theory of Building the Effective Communication Function, which states that effective communication functions can be built through these ways.

Develop an overarching communication strategy

Developing an overall communication strategy involves creating a comprehensive plan that aligns communication goals, methods, and messages with the specific needs and challenges of intercultural interaction. This includes identifying target audiences, selecting appropriate channels, and tailoring messages to promote cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. Steve Cartledge recognized the importance of a well-defined communication strategy in navigating intercultural complexities (Jandt 2020).

Based on the results of the research conducted on DPW PKB Lampung Province employees with seven informants above, there are several things that can be analyzed in relation to the theory of developing an overarching communication strategy (Steve Cartledge's Communication Strategy).

First, informant 01_EJ and his tribe have an inclusive communication strategy and strive to expand their understanding of the language and culture of other tribes. This is consistent with the principle of developing an overarching communication strategy, which emphasizes the importance of considering cultural and linguistic differences in developing an inclusive and holistic communication strategy.

Second, Informant 02_EL considers the characteristics of others and herself in developing effective communication strategies. This shows an awareness of the importance of understanding context and individual characteristics in developing appropriate communication strategies.

Thirdly, informant 03_ESUN understands that good communication must be polite and in accordance with the social norms prevailing in her community. This is consistent with the principle of developing an overarching communication strategy, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the cultural context and customs in developing effective communication strategies.

Fourth, informant 04_ESUM has a communication strategy that is adaptive and flexible depending on the situation and conditions faced. This shows an awareness of the importance of developing flexible and adaptive communication strategies in dealing with environmental changes and social needs.

Overall, the results of this study show that employees within DPW PKB Lampung Province have a high awareness of the importance of considering differences in culture, language, and individual characteristics in developing effective and inclusive communication strategies. This is in line with Steve's strategy, which emphasizes that an important step in developing an inclusive communication strategy is to conduct a thorough analysis of the target audience (Kalla and Arreola 2020). Steve Cartledge recognizes that understanding the cultural background, preferences, and communication styles of the intended audience is critical.

Implementing communication strategy

Implementing a communication strategy involves translating planned goals, tactics, and messages into actions. This requires careful implementation, monitoring, and adaptation to ensure effective communication in cross-cultural settings. Steve Cartledge acknowledges that the implementation of successful communication strategies is crucial for building strong relationships and achieving desired outcomes across cultures (Gudykunst and Kim 2017).

Based on the research results of employees in the DPW PKB Province of Lampung with the 4 informants mentioned above, it can be seen that they are able to implement different communication strategies in interacting with others. Overall, the implementation of effective and efficient communication strategies is very important in building good relationships with others.

Informants 01_EJ and 02_EL, for example, implement responsive and proactive communication strategies to ensure better understanding by directly interacting with others and using a unifying language. Meanwhile, informants 03_ESun and 04_ESum prioritize an approach through social interactions and inquiring about the prevailing traditions and customs.

In the context of implementing communication strategies, it is important for individuals to be aware of the importance of building good relationships with others in their community and to choose the right strategies to ensure good understanding. Additionally, individuals must also be able to overcome communication difficulties in a responsive and proactive manner, such as asking for further clarification or posing questions when they do not understand something.

In this case, the Implementing Communication Strategy theory (Steve Cartledge's Communication Strategy) can serve as a good foundation for understanding how individuals can implement effective and efficient communication strategies when interacting with others.

Communication Audits Against Best Practice

Communication audits involve a systematic evaluation of the processes, strategies, and outcomes of an organization's communication. When conducted on best practices in intercultural communication, this audit helps identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in intercultural communication efforts. Steve Cartledge understands the importance of conducting a communication audit to align his practices with the evolving field of intercultural communication (Chen 2014). An important aspect of a communication audit is evaluating the effectiveness of communication channels in an intercultural context. Steve Cartledge evaluates various channels used in his organization to determine their suitability and efficiency for intercultural communication.

Based on the analysis of the provided data, it can be concluded that most informants do not demonstrate a clear use of communication audits to evaluate and improve their communication strategies. However, some of them showed an awareness of the importance of understanding different cultures and languages to communicate effectively with diverse audiences.

Informant 01_EJ and their community demonstrate flexible and adaptive channel strategies to communicate with different audiences, showing their willingness to adapt to the needs of others. Informant 04_ESum learned to understand different languages and cultures over time, which enabled them to communicate more efficiently and effectively. Informant 03_Sun demonstrates a good understanding of the use of Indonesian as a unifying language to communicate with people from various regions.

Overall, the results of the research analysis on employees in the DPW PKB Provincial Office of Lampung show that they are aware of the importance of effective communication strategies in intercultural interactions. Some informants have implemented several elements of Steve Cartledge's Communication Strategy in their communication practices with other ethnic groups, such as planning, adaptation, and

strategy development. However, some informants still need to improve their awareness or knowledge regarding best practices in intercultural communication.

Communication Strategy Steve Cartledge can help understand how the right communication strategies can build effective communication functions in intercultural interactions. Conducting a communication audit on best practices in intercultural communication is crucial for achieving successful interactions in diverse cultural contexts. The stages in this theory, such as Communication Planning and Building the Effective Communication Function, can help people to plan, adapt, and develop appropriate communication strategies to build good relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, awareness and knowledge of effective communication strategies in intercultural interactions are crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of intercultural communication and building good relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

Communication Strategy Steve Cartledge can help understand how the right communication strategies can build effective communication functions in intercultural interactions. The stages in this theory, such as Communication Planning and Building the Effective Communication Function, can help people to plan, adapt, and develop appropriate communication strategies to build good relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Employees within the DPW PKB of Lampung Province demonstrate that they are aware of the importance of effective communication strategies in intercultural interactions. Some informants have implemented several elements of Steve Cartledge's Communication Strategy in their communication practices with other tribes, such as planning, adaptation, and strategy development. However, some informants still need to improve their awareness or knowledge regarding best practices in intercultural communication.

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