

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Linguistic differences and cultural norms are often a major source of misunderstanding and tension in digital interactions. Language barriers can reduce the effectiveness of information exchange, while differences in etiquette and communication styles can affect the quality of communication and coordination between cultures. Differences in access to technology also contribute to unequal participation in global digital communication. Therefore, concerted efforts are needed from technology providers and international organisations to create platforms that are more inclusive and responsive to cultural diversity. Improved cross-cultural education and digital literacy are key to addressing these challenges and supporting harmonious interactions online.

Keywords: Challenges, Communication, Intercultural, Digital Communication.

Introduction

In the era of growing globalisation, communication is no longer limited by time and space. Digital technology has enabled individuals from different parts of the world to connect and communicate instantly. Digital platforms, such as social media, email, and instant messaging applications, have become key tools in everyday communication for individuals and organisations (Tyagi & Pichkova . , 2021)

The ability to communicate instantly and effectively through digital platforms has revolutionised the way individuals, companies and countries interact with each other. With the internet, social media and messaging apps, geographical boundaries are no longer a barrier to sharing information, ideas and cultures. Digital communication enables cross-border collaboration that not only enriches personal relationships but also strengthens professional relationships, including in business, education, and government (Valencia & Michelson, 2022) .

In addition, digital communication facilitates the rapid and extensive exchange of information, which is essential for decision-making and response to dynamic global changes. Organisations can access real-time market data, monitor global trends and adjust their strategies more quickly. On the other hand, individuals can connect with the global community, gain access to wider educational resources, and enrich their cultural knowledge (MacDonald, 2020) . All this makes digital communication an important

foundation in supporting the creation of a more harmonised and integrated global network, which in turn can contribute to overall global development. However, this convenience comes with new challenges, especially when communication involves individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Romanyshyn, 2021).

Intercultural communication in the digital context faces unique challenges. Differences in language, social context, cultural values, and non-verbal behaviour become more prominent in digital communication, where many traditional social cues are lost. Misunderstandings can easily occur when messages are interpreted differently by recipients with different cultural backgrounds. This can result in conflict, poor branding, and lack of communication effectiveness (King & Callahan, 2024).

On a global scale, this challenge becomes even more significant. Global companies and international organisations must frequently communicate across cultural boundaries in business, education and diplomacy. Awareness and the ability to overcome these challenges are crucial for successful intercultural interaction in the digital world. However, in-depth and comprehensive research on intercultural communication challenges in digital communication from a global perspective is limited. Not many have critically examined how cultural differences affect digital communication and how these challenges can be overcome with effective communication strategies (Bharadwaj, 2024).

Departing from these problems, this research aims to identify and analyse the challenges of intercultural communication in digital communication, as well as understand the global perspective on these challenges. This research is expected to provide insights for academics and practitioners regarding strategies that can be applied to improve the effectiveness of intercultural communication in the digital context.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is an approach used to collect, review, and analyse secondary data obtained from various written sources, such as books, scientific journals, articles, reports, and other documents. The main purpose of this method is to understand existing developments, findings, and ideas in a particular field of study, as well as identify knowledge gaps that still need further research (Helaluddin ;, 2019) (Sanusi, 2015) . Literature research involves systematic steps such as identifying a research topic, collecting relevant sources, evaluating the credibility and validity of the sources, and compiling a synthesis of the information found to provide a comprehensive insight into the topic being studied. This method is very useful in building a strong theoretical foundation and ensuring that new research is based on existing knowledge (Wekke ., 2020)

Results and Discussion

Intercultural Communication Challenges in Digital Communication

Globalisation and technological advancements have enabled digital communication to become more frequent and widely used. However, intercultural communication in the digital realm faces complex challenges. One of the main challenges is language differences. While many digital platforms offer automatic translation tools, language nuances, idioms and cultural expressions often cannot be translated accurately. This can lead to incomprehension or even serious misunderstandings in communication. In addition, varying digital fluency across cultures is also a barrier to effective communication, where some groups may not have as good access to or ability to use digital technologies as others (Lewis et al., 2022).

Another challenge is the difference in communication norms and etiquette that different cultures have. Each culture has different ways of expressing respect, disagreement or other emotions. For example, some cultures may consider the use of certain emojis or emojis as a sign of familiarity while other cultures may see it as a form of unprofessionalism (Nakayama, 2020). In addition, factors such as who has the right to speak first, how to greet or end a conversation, and the level of formality used in digital communication can differ greatly between cultures, which can lead to miscommunication and potential friction (Ding, 2020).

Differences in the concept of time is also one of the major challenges in intercultural digital communication. Some cultures have a very strict view of time and accuracy while other cultures may be more flexible in this regard. In digital communication, these differences can lead to misalignment in the timing of responding to messages or scheduling online meetings. This can be perceived as a sign of impoliteness or indifference by one party, although it may not be the true intention of the other party (Bharadwaj, 2024).

In addition, there are also challenges related to technological access and capabilities. In some parts of the world, access to the internet and modern technology is still a luxury, creating a digital divide that affects communication between cultures. This gap not only limits the extent to which people can connect, but also affects what information they can access and consume. This can exacerbate information and understanding gaps between cultures, which in turn exacerbates challenges in digital communication (Tuleja, 2021).

Finally, ethical and privacy challenges are also increasingly crucial in intercultural communication. Different cultures have different views and standards regarding privacy, data security and the use of personal information in digital communications. This can lead to pros and cons in information sharing practices and how to protect personal data online. These differences in perceptions of privacy can also lead to discomfort and mistrust which can hinder the effectiveness of intercultural digital communication (Shan, 2024).

Despite the challenges, with a better understanding of cultural differences and efforts to improve digital literacy in different parts of the world, intercultural digital communication still has great potential to build better understanding and relationships between global communities.

Global Perspectives on Intercultural Communication Challenges in Digital Communication

In this connected digital age, intercultural communication has become an important part of global interaction. Global perspectives on intercultural communication in the digital realm highlight some critical issues that need to be addressed. One of these issues is language diversity, which is both a bridge and a challenge. Many languages are underrepresented in digital platforms, which are often dominated by major languages such as English, Chinese or Spanish (Pan, 2023). This can create a linguistic gap and hinder the full participation of those who speak less common languages. Translation tools are also not yet fully accurate in capturing the deep meanings and nuances of each language (Wijaya & Rachmad ., 2023)

From a global perspective, varied cultural norms and etiquette are another stumbling block in digital communication. Each culture brings with it unwritten rules on how to communicate properly and politely. For example, in Western cultures, direct and to the point conversations are considered effective, while in many Asian cultures, a more subtle and indirect approach to communication is more valued. This mismatch can make digital conversations prone to miscommunication and intercultural tension (Landone ., 2024)

Cultural origins also influence perceptions of digital spaces, especially in terms of access and technological inequality. From a global perspective, many developing countries face significant obstacles in accessing advanced technologies that are taken for granted in developed countries. This results in digital inequalities that create gaps in opportunities to share and exchange information. The internet is still not a basic necessity in many areas of the world, causing those who are not connected to be marginalised in global communication efforts (Noris & Cantoni, 2022).

Then, there are challenges in the form of data privacy and security. Cultural values play an important role in how individuals and groups view these issues. In some cultures, it is more acceptable to share personal information in the public sphere, while other cultures highly value confidentiality and data protection. A global perspective must take these different ethical standards into account to avoid one-size-fits-all policies that can lead to mistrust or even cultural conflict (Atay, 2021).

Finally, as we move towards a more connected future, these challenges must be addressed with inclusive approaches that respect cultural diversity. Cross-cultural education and global digital literacy can help reduce misunderstandings and increase understanding between nations. International organisations and technology

companies have an important role to play in creating platforms that enable more harmonious intercultural interactions, by being sensitive to the needs and values of each culture. These collaborative efforts will not only solve structural challenges in digital communication, but also build a more connected and tolerant world.

Conclusion

The challenges of intercultural communication in digital communication on a global level include several complex and interrelated aspects. First is the linguistic barrier, where language differences can create significant obstacles to effective information exchange. Although translation technology is constantly evolving, the nuances and deep meanings of language are often lost, resulting in less accurate communication and sometimes misunderstandings.

Secondly, differences in cultural norms and etiquette in how to communicate are also a major challenge. Mismatches in communication styles, such as the difference between direct and indirect approaches, can lead to tension and miscommunication. This is compounded by the disparity in access to technology between developed and developing countries, which further widens the digital divide and affects global participation in digital communications.

Addressing these challenges requires an inclusive and culturally sensitive approach. Technology providers and international organisations should work together to develop more culturally friendly and digitally equitable platforms. Cross-cultural education and improved digital literacy can be important steps in promoting better understanding and harmonious interaction between cultures online.

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