


INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION – BRIDGES IN UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES KÜLTÜRLER ARASI İLETİŞİM – KÜLTÜREL FARKLILIKLARI ANLAMA KÖPRÜLERİ

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ABSTRACT

Intercultural communication is firmly linked to interculturality, with relationships between cultures, wherever they take place and which one kind of they may be. In human history, there have always been contacts and encounters of people. Wars, conquests, discoveries, or those developments of political structures between human communities were always accompanied by the need to look one way or another to communicate (which did not necessarily mean tolerance and acceptance of the other). But how did this communication work?

Wherever people from unfamiliar communities met, they had to find forms of understanding in order to express their interests. In some cases, there were local intermediaries. Cultural contact in history was never global, but rather limited to certain regions (e.g., Areas of discovery and conquest), often limited in time or to individual related to social groups, e.g., traders, travelling journeymen, clergymen, researchers, warriors, students. For a long time, there were areas that never entered a stranger came or the stranger was just from the neighbouring town, so that understanding wasn't too difficult. There was mutual understanding wherever certain groups could communicate in a common language, even if they came to other areas.

Keywords: *Intercultural, communication, processualism, cultural contact, cultural differences.*

ÖZ

Kültürlerarası iletişim, nerede ve ne olurlarsa olsun, kültürlerarasılıkla sıkı sıkıya bağlantılıdır. İnsanlık tarihinde her zaman temaslar ve karşılaşmalar olmuştur. Savaşlara, fetihlere, keşiflere veya insan toplulukları arasındaki siyasi yapıların gelişimine her zaman bir şekilde iletişim kurma ihtiyacı eşlik etti (ki bu mutlaka hoşgörü ve koşulsuz kabul anlamına gelmiyordu). Peki bu iletişim nasıl gerçekleşti?

Birbirine yabancı topluluklardan insanlar nerede karşılaşırlarsa karşılaşırlar, çıkarlarını ifade etmek için anlama biçimleri bulmak zorundaydılar. Bazı durumlarda, yerel araçlar vardı. Tarihte kültürel temas hiçbir zaman küresel olmadı, bunun yerine belirli bölgelerle (örneğin keşif ve fetih alanları) sınırlıydı; genellikle de zamanla veya sosyal gruplarla ilgili bireylerle. Örneğin; tüccarlar, gezici kalfalar, din adamları, araştırmacılar, savaşçılar, öğrenciler. Uzun bir süre boyunca, yabancıların gelmediği yahut yalnızca yakın çevreden yabancıların geldiği bölgeler mevcuttu. Başka bölgelere gidilse bile ortak bir dilde iletişim kurabildikleri her yerde karşılıklı anlayış vardı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kültürlerarası, iletişim, süreçsellik, kültürel temas, kültürel farklılıklar.*

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1. INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AS A SOURCE OF POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Social role models in a society are usually solidified by cultural and religious traditions. A particularly sensitive point in intercultural encounters with immigrants is the role of women. Immigrants often express their amazement at the fact that Women in Germany make independent decisions and important jobs and take positions. Equality as a cultural value is one new experience. In the cultures of many migrants, the family, for its part, has a high priority. It is taken for granted to old or needy family members to support and take in orphans. Similarities despite cultural differentiation? The elder of the family in Arab , Asean or African cultures has highly respect. In general, courtesy and respect for the elderly are behaviours acquired in socialization.¹

Encounter and coexistence with the migrants take place under difficult conditions: there are mutual "images in the head" of each other who have long been passed down as prejudices. The image of the Germans is partly coloured negatively, partly by the emotional one shown positive change in welcoming culture. However, the prejudices in Germany against "foreigners" have been handed down over centuries and in part filled with fears. Above all, it is violent fantasies that are being driven by the IS atrocities flare up again. But also, general racist unfortunately, prejudices against strangers are still alive and well.

I see two approaches to reduce prejudice. You have to take history as it was and you cannot rewrite it, but one can draw conclusions from this, how one can overcome traditional prejudices can discuss and gradually reduce in common coexistence. There are of course prejudices between the individual cultural and religious groups of immigrants, so that a discussion about this topic generally seems necessary.

Experience of violence is present in all immigrant cultures worldwide. Very fast also break old prejudices or current conflicts among each other again. Violence is also observed in the new culture, discussions and arguments can occur arise everywhere. Experiences in everyday integration are not all positive either. It is therefore an urgent task in the context of integration to address the issue of "violence" in the discussions. This also includes verbal violence.² There are many points that need to be discussed together, including between People with different experiences of conflict in their cultures. An intercultural culture of debate could be discussed on many forums! In connection with this, the subject of "tolerance" is extremely topical. The orientation courses offered, which are designed to impart knowledge for Legal system, history and culture of Germany developed and offered can be the first point of contact here.

The term "intercultural communication" contains factors that interlink in practice: Communication as understanding between people in general and second Intercultural as an encounter and understanding between people who belong to different cultures. It is therefore a good idea to have a brief description of communication and filter out the specifics of intercultural communication. The process of communication and intercultural communication should be shown in their entanglement. The general ground rules of communication also apply to intercultural communication.

¹ Münz, R.: Migration im 21. Jahrhundert-Herausforderungen für Deutschland und Europa. In: Migration gerecht gestalten. Weltweite Impulse für einen fairen Wettbewerb um Fachkräfte. Bertelsmann-Stiftung Gütersloh 2015, S. 12-24. Rienzer, M.: Interkulturelle Kommunikation im Asylverfahren. Frankfurt 2011. Samovar, L, A.; Porter, R.; Jain, N.: Understanding Intercultural Communication, Belmont 1981.

² El Difraoui, A.; Richer, C.: Arabische Medien, Köln 2015, S. 9-24. Deringer, V.: Interkulturelle Kommunikation vor Gericht, München 2012, 38-51.

2. WHAT ACTUALLY IS INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION?

In an intercultural communication, (at least) two people face each other, each with their own identity. This unique identity is through the characteristics of the person formed and their membership in different groups. When working with people from other cultures, we are often inclined to ascribe certain recurring difficulties to cultural differences.³ We then speak of “typically Turkish” or “typically German”. Our observations are confirmed by exchanging experiences with colleagues. They made similar observations, found similar explanations.⁴ At the latest when you realize that the others perceive you as “typically German” and that they see their pattern of interpretation confirmed again and again in the fact that we are “Turks or Germans”, we are in the middle of a mutual perception of others. The behaviour of others - or one's own behaviour for others - can quickly be found subsumed under a handful of categories that are viewed as “typical”.

Stereotyping works in the same way. And it has consequences: We make attributions, create border categories such as “normal” and “abnormal”, which ultimately correspond to “we” versus the “others”. Such processes are known from many intercultural studies. Almost everything can be described to the opposite from a once established perspective of being different. Sometimes the other accent, which is regarded as 'unfriendly', 'penetrating' or 'demanding' - just as "typical" for the others - is enough for the encounter to be full of misunderstandings.⁵ Intercultural communication deals with this problem from very different perspectives. Stereotypes, prejudices and misunderstandings, for example due to different ways of communication, are part of it. Intercultural communication research shows how and why these misunderstandings arise, but it also leads to findings that are reflected in the practice of intercultural awareness training and make it clear to us that both sides are always involved in the process of external perception.⁶

In the following I would like to address some of these theoretical and practical questions and familiarize you with the topic of intercultural communication and at the same time sensitize you to the topic. Is it already a matter of intercultural communication when we meet as Germans and Turks? Or is there something that turns communication into intercultural communication, provided there are cultural differences? But how? What are "cultural differences". I would like to give a small example:

³ Broszinsky-Schwabe, E.: *Interkulturelle Kommunikation: Missverständnisse und Verständigung*, Wiesbaden 2017, S. 107-132. Samovar, L.A.; Porter E.: *Communication between Cultures*. 4th edition, Wadsworth. Thomson Learning. Australia, Canada, Mexico, Singapore, Spain, United Kingdom, United States, 2001, 69-79. Baker, W.: *Intercultural awareness: Modeling an understanding of cultures in intercultural communication through English as a lingua franca*. In: *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 11, 2011, 197-214.

⁴ Naguschewski, D.; Trabant, J. (Hrsg.): *Was heißt hier „fremd“? Studien zu Sprache und Fremdheit*. In: *Studien und Materialien der Interdisziplinären Arbeitsgruppe „Die Herausforderung durch das Fremde“* der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1997, S. 66-81. Beck-Gernsheim, E.: *Wir und die Anderen. Kopftuch, Zwangsheirat und andere Mißverständnisse*, Frankfurt 2007, S. 141-167.

⁵ Heringer, H.J.: *Interkulturelle Kommunikation Grundlagen und Konzepte*, 5., durchgesehene Auflage, Tübingen 2017, S. 203-212. Apeltauer, E. (Hrsg.): *Interkulturelle Kommunikation: Deutschland – Skandinavien – Großbritannien*, Tübingen 2002, S. 97-102. Beniers, C.: *Managerwissen kompakt: Interkulturelle Kommunikation*, München 2006, 99. Thomas, A.; Kammhuber, S.; Scholl-Machl, S. (Hrsg.): *Handbuch Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kooperation. Bd. 2: Länder, Kulturen und interkulturelle Berufstätigkeit*. Göttingen 2003.

⁶ Sorrells, K.; Sekimoto, S. (Ed.): *Globalizing Intercultural Communication: A Reader*. Los Angeles 2016. Chen, L. (Ed.): *Intercultural Communication*. In: *Handbooks of Communication Science [HoCS]*, 9. Berlin; Boston 2017. Lüsebrink, H.-J.: *Interkulturelle Kommunikation. Interaktion – Fremderfahrung – Kulturtransfer*. Stuttgart Weimar 2005.



Example: an invitation to have a coffee

Anna from Spain attends a language school in Germany. She gets along very well with her German teacher Brigitte. One day B. invites her student over for coffee. "Let's say four o'clock," Brigitte makes the appointment. A. is happy. She comes at four thirty. B. thinks she has been waiting a long time. A. is puzzled. The coffee table is set, the coffee is ready. A. is amazed. She brought home-baked Spanish cake. "Uih, what does that look like", notes B. A. thinks B. is rude. After drinking coffee, A. lights a cigarette. B. asks her to smoke on the balcony. A. feels hurt. At 6 o'clock, B. noticed that she was very busy and asked A. to leave. A. feels thrown out. Your first German coffee drink - a complete disappointment.

To be honest: which side are you on? Do you share Brigitte's "culture" or Anna's? From both we get views, understandings, certain understandings of values and preferences. We learn how differently both assess the same situation. Both have good intentions and follow their normal expectations. Nevertheless, it seems to be a failed invitation to have a coffee. Anna thinks Brigitte is rude, Brigitte thinks Anna is impolite. But both did their best. Such a big misunderstanding! The two do not understand each other on many small points.⁷ They have very different views on the following points:

1. What does it mean to be invited to have a coffee?
2. What does it mean to be invited at a certain time?
3. What does an invitation to someone's home include?
4. What does a private invitation between teacher and student mean?
5. What is a guest?
6. How do you receive a guest?
7. How do you respond to the needs of a guest?
8. How do you prepare for an invitation?
9. Whether and what do you bring with you to an invitation?
10. How do you deal with gifts?
11. Whether and to what extent can you as a guest or host meet your own needs?
12. Whether and to what extent can you react to inconvenience or annoyance?
13. What do you consider to be inconvenience or annoyance?
14. To what extent can you refuse a guest?
15. Whether and to what extent may the guest or host express criticism?
16. In what form can you criticize yourself?
17. What is perceived as criticism and what is not?
18. Whether and to what extent can one express one's opinion openly?
19. How do you formulate something?
20. How do you arrange a farewell?

⁷ Guttenbrunner, M.: Griechenland. Eine Landesstreifung, Wien 2001, S.20-24. Hofstede, G.: Lokales Denken, globales Handeln: Interkulturelle Zusammenarbeit und globales Management, München 2011, 9-36. Lloyd-Jones, H.: Ehre und Schande in der griechischen Kultur. Antike und Abendland, 1987, 33. Jg., Nr. 1, Hamburg, 1-8.

The list of questions about this little "invitation to have a coffee" should not make you afraid of intercultural encounters. But I just want to use this example to show how things go without saying that we are subjects to routines and expectations. "Isn't that always the case, for every communication?" you could ask. Other questions follow: Where is "culture" anyway? Let me make a second attempt to intercultural communication, a more theoretical introduction, in order to link the two strands, the discussion of the example of drinking coffee with Anna and Brigitte, with the theory.

Intercultural communication has nominally three components: 1. inter 2. cultural 3. Communication. In "cultural" there is the noun "culture". That arouses curiosity about what "culture" is supposed to mean. It is not a question of using the word in the sense of "having culture", i.e., having a high cultural level. No, what is meant is primarily "everyday culture" as it is examined by cultural anthropologists.⁸

But "everyday culture" must also be explained. It affects our everyday actions, our perception as we learn it from an early age, our standards of values that we apply when making judgments, our forms of communication that we choose, that we consider appropriate. The term culture in cultural anthropology describes the living modes of a social group: their way of feeling, acting, thinking; their relationship to nature, to people, to technology, to art and to music. Culture includes both actual behaviour, social beliefs and the models they are based on. The term can be applied to social groups whose nature and size can be very diverse: ethnic groups, social classes, nations, civilizations, etc.

Nevertheless, a certain framework for the definition of a cultural identity can appear particularly suitable for each individual society and in each individual historical situation. In industrial societies, it is the national level that tends to turn out to be the most important for a differential structuring of culture. Because identity presupposes difference: The awareness of belonging to a collective only emerges in relation to other collectives who are perceived as "foreign". It is interesting to note that we can explain culture with actions. Actions we do or do not do. "Culture is a verb", a do-word.

So, culture means acting. But grammatically it is a noun or a name word. We cannot derive a simple verb from this, as in communication and communicate, action and action, language and speaking, evaluation and evaluate and so on. This means that only by speaking, acting, interacting, evaluating and communicating are culturally active in this sense. This is exactly what one of the founders of intercultural communication research, the cultural anthropologist Edward Hall, meant when he emphasized "culture is communication and communication is culture". In fact, most cultural differences are somehow communicated; interculturality takes place in and through communication.⁹

⁸ Heringer, H.-J.: a.a.O., Tübingen, 190-197. Ferraro, Gary: Cultural Anthropology. An Applied Perspective, 6th Edition, Wadsworth 2006. Hepp, Andreas: Transkulturelle Kommunikation, Konstanz 2006. Busche, Hubertus: „Kultur“: ein Wort, viele Begriffe. In: Kultur – transdisziplinäre Zugänge, hrsg. Hubertus Busche et al., Wiesbaden 2019, 3-41. Eagleton, T.: Was ist Kultur?. Berlin, S. 17-29. Varner, I.; Valentine, D.: Teaching Intercultural Management Communication: Where Are We? Where Do We Go?. In: Business Communication Quarterly. Vol. 64 Issue 1, 2001, 99-111.

⁹ Hinnenkamp, V.: Linguaging in the Global Contact Zone: Polylingual Performances als Transcultural Interface. In: Kazzazi, K.; Treiber, T.; Wätzold, T. (eds.): Migration- Religion- Identität. Aspekte transkultureller Prozesse. Wiesbaden 2015, 137-163. Savoy, B.: Die Provenienz der Kultur. Von der Trauer des Verlusts zum universalen Menschheitserbe, Berlin 2018. Reckwitz, A.: Die Gesellschaft der Singularitäten. In: Kultur – transdisziplinäre Zugänge, hrsg. Hubertus Busche et al. Wiesbaden 2019, S. 45–61. Kotthoff, H.; Spencer-Oatey, H.: Handbook of Intercultural Communication. Handbooks of Applied Linguistics. Volume 7. Berlin/New York 2007. Hall, E. T.: Beyond Culture, New York 1976.



3. WHAT IS "COMMUNICATION" IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION?

That brings me to the second point. What is "communication" in intercultural communication? Communication primarily comprises language, verbal language, but also non-verbal communication, the accompanying gestures, body language and more; then paraverbal communication, how we speak: loud, quiet, fast, emphasis, rhythm, flow and more; finally, characteristics in the conversation. In addition, other aspects also count, such as politeness or relationship signals. The entire interaction structure of our actions is in our sights - in other words, what we say, How we say something, When and With What Intention, For What Purpose we say something, Whom we can say What When; and not only say, also in the sense of doing, acting, mediating.

An example: At one point, for example, we mainly want to say something substantive, but then unintentionally communicate on the relationship level, which is then suddenly in the foreground. By asking Anna to smoke on the balcony, Brigitte defines for Anna at the same time that interference from smoke seems more important to her than friendship. Content stands here against relationship, is covered by it. By simply taking: a cigarette and starting to smoke, Anna confronts Brigitte with the conflict of having to decide whether to tolerate it or not, even though she may hate cigarette smoke.¹⁰ Can she expect her guest to smoke on the balcony? - Because of this Brigitte interrupts the previous conversation and suddenly puts another action in the foreground of having coffee together. It creates a new, different framework for action. We see that Content and Relationship always go hand in hand - often even when we don't intend to. We can summarize: What begins with simple words, speech acts, can turn to a multitude of layers below.

It is amazing on how many levels the relationship between Content and Relationship comes into conflict. If we consider the complexity of the interaction structure, there is much more to it than that, also about what we say first and what after; How long our speeches are, how often we interrupt, correct the conversation partner, how we synchronize with him/her in the rhythm of the conversation. How we connect the one thing with the other, the verbal, nonverbal, paraverbal with the structural interaction. After all, it is also about what we don't say and do, what is noticeably missing - whether it's just the right break in the right place or the right intonation of a sentence.¹¹

Here is a small example: Yes, the credit card.

The other day a friend of mine wanted to buy something in a Danish furniture store and wanted to pay by credit card. When he opened his wallet, he realizes: "Oh, I don't have my credit card with me!" Then the Danish salesman, who served him courteously, only said "yes, yes". But he said it so funny, with a falling emphasis, as if he wanted to say: "Yeah, well, I can see, first you choose the costliest things, and when it comes to paying ...". My friend was a little embarrassed. "I'm really sorry. I still had it in my wallet yesterday. But I'll go home straight away, get the credit card and be right back," he tried to justify himself. Again, the same "yes yes"! Now he was getting

¹⁰ Guttenbrunner, M.: a.a.O., Wien 2001, S.28-33. The Hofstede Centre: What about Greece? <http://geert-hofstede.com/greece.html>. [abgerufen am 19. März 2021]. DAAD. Griechenland – Interkulturelle Einordnung. <https://www.daad.de/laenderinformationen/griechenland/de/>. [abgerufen am 20. März 2021]. Agar, M.: Language Shock. Understanding the Culture of Conservation. New York 1994.

¹¹ Varner, I.: The Theoretical Foundation for Intercultural Business Communication: A Conceptual Model. In: Journal of Business Communication. Vol. 37 Issue 1, 2000, S. 39-57. Hess-Lüttich, E.B.; Müller, U.; Schmidt, S.; Zelewitz, K.: Differenzen? Interkulturelle Probleme und Möglichkeiten in Sprache, Literatur und Kultur. In: Cross Cultural Communication, Vol.14, Publikationen der Gesellschaft für Interkulturelle Germanistik (GIG), Vol. 9, Frankfurt 2009, S. 82-98. Galli, J.: Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Körpersprache. Freiburg 2000.

a bite upset. Should he really be such an unbelievable customer? And why does the salesman behave so arrogantly? In any case, my friend had lost the desire to buy something in this shop.

Well, although the Danish furniture salesman certainly spoke German very well, he used the Danish accent pattern when stressing "yes". In Danish, that would have been the polite form of confirmation. The small "yes yes" spoken in falling accentuation initiates the assumption among the buyer that the furniture seller does not take him seriously. He does not interpret it in the light of the fact that the seller does not speak perfect German, he does not use the seller's overall behaviour as a yardstick, but the small accentuation faux pas. There are many examples of this kind. Of course, from cultural anthropology, these small communication signals are of particular interest. The said "yes yes" is a paraverbal sign, the emphasis on what accompanies a word. A break, i.e., not speaking, can also have such a meaning.¹²

It has been proven that even the fraction of a second it takes for someone to follow up on the speaker's speech can prevent that person from saying what they want to say. So far, we have exhausted a communication concept that is interactive, that is based on face-to-face communication. Of course, there are also many other signs that we interpret, interpret one-sidedly, about which we do not exchange, which we do not negotiate, i.e. ("What do you mean?"). I have not yet spoken about those signs that are communicated one-sidedly, that do not find their confirmation or their contradiction in dialogue, but that have meaning - starting with architecture, through clothing, jewelry and smells - and of course through to ours Dealing with time, as we could see very nicely with Brigitte and Anna, with their different understandings of punctuality, the course of the afternoon, when the coffee table has to be set and when it is time to say goodbye.

Also, a story that shows how easily such externals are misunderstood: Communication, number 2 in a trio of "inter", "culture" and "communication" seems inexhaustible. If we now look again at all the questions raised by the "invitation to drink coffee" between Brigitte and Anna, then we come closer to the brief equation of "culture equals communication and communication equals culture". We can understand that all these sources actual and potential misunderstandings have to do with culture.¹³

Now for the third part:

The "inter" in "intercultural communication" wants to express that it not only occurs between communication and culture, but also in a figurative sense that it is about processes in which people, as subjects, as participants of Culture and communication act. "Inter-" addresses movement, processualism and dynamism. It shows something very fundamental and perhaps crucial: If we all act in the web of our culture, Anna acts in Spanish, Brigitte in German, to put it simply, then we first bring the knowledge and actions of our own culture with us into new constellations. We make transfers, right and wrong transfers. The Danish furniture salesman translates his Danish accent into German. Anna transfers - among other things - her Spanish notions of time into German. But still, this transferring to inappropriate situations is only one aspect.

¹² Gieler, W.; Bellers, J.: Fremdes Verstehen. Entwicklungspolitische und Ethnologische Beiträge. Baden-Baden 2009, 69-87. Collett, P.: Ich sehe was, was du nicht sagst. So deuten Sie die Gesten der anderen – und wissen, was diese wirklich denken. Bergisch Gladbach 2006.

¹³ Broszinsky-Schwabe, E., a.a.O., Wiesbaden 2017, S. 79-101. Heringer, H.J.: a.a.O., Tübingen 2017, 219-252. Hinner, Michael B.: Intercultural Misunderstandings. Causes and Solutions. In: Russian journal of linguistics: Vestnik RUDN, Vol .21, Iss. 4, 2007, 885-909. Thomas, A.; Kammhuber, S.; Scholl-Machl, S. (Hrsg.): Handbuch Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kooperation. Bd. 2: Länder, Kulturen und interkulturelle Berufstätigkeit, Göttingen 2003.



Just as a foreign language learner develops completely new strategies and solutions in the language learning situation, which often have nothing to do with his mother tongue or the target language, in intercultural communication situations, solutions are developed that are entirely due to the situation, improvising, to move towards one another, who are neither Spanish nor German, which means that they have nothing to do with one or the other culture of those involved in communication.¹⁴ Out of this situation, for example, in many regions of the world where speakers with very different languages have come together, new languages have emerged, so-called Creole languages. Something new, third, is created, is brought according to the situation. And just as creole forms of language may arise, in cultural contact, hybrid cultural forms and even new cultures can arise beyond the situation. But at least constant contact is required.

However, when making such a comparison, it is essential to note that there are no homogeneous cultures, no so-called national cultures of the kind in which we speak of national languages, which in the course of historical development become standard and are recorded in the form of dictionaries and grammars. We cannot produce a book of culture that serves as a reference work for intercultural communication. Culture, as it is reflected in intercultural encounters, always includes different aspects: What is mistakenly transmitted, our habits, mostly unconsciously; then what we spontaneously develop as a solution in the situation and which often represents something third, original; and finally what we think is already the behavior adapted to my foreign cultural partner: I act in a certain way because I think that is how it is expected of me in the foreign cultural environment - we call this "adaptation".

Some further basic aspects to be considered:

What is intercultural communication good for? Why are very different branches of science suddenly interested in it? Why should we concern ourselves with considering them in our behavior? Most of the time we get the answer that we understand each other better with more intercultural expertise; above all, we could avoid misunderstandings. Others want to become better communication partners, for example for international relations, they even want to secure peace. Still others think that you can do better business if you understand your foreign partner better. In times of globalization this is really important. Of course, there are also academic interests to simply broaden our knowledge of previously neglected conditions of communication in a world of global and international action, also under academic-practical considerations, such as when learning a foreign language, for example, communicative competence can be expanded to include intercultural competence. What is decisive, however, is that in a world that is becoming more international, in an immigrant society like Germany, cultural differences and diversity play an increasingly important role in interpersonal and professional practice.

We have to learn to understand what it means to live in a society and culture that is perceived as different and foreign, to grow up between different cultural demands; must understand the search for cultural identity, also the fundamentalist-oriented longings; must know how to combine all of this with generation conflict, relationship between the sexes; we must understand that under this immense internal and external mobility, old cultural habits are being eroded, new ones being sought and emerging; and finally that we are all affected by it -

¹⁴ Hanisch, H.: Der interkulturelle Kompetenz-Knigge. Kultur, Kompetenz, Eindrücke, Gesten, Rituale, Zeitempfinden, Berichte, Tipps, Erlebnisse, Do's and don'ts im Ausland, Bonn 2013, 12-17. Klein, H.-M.: Business-Etikette International: Das Deutschlandbild im Ausland. Kulturelle Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede. Praktische Verhaltenstipps für 26 Länder, 2. Aufl., Berlin 2009.

the term “globalization” also wants to make this clear: Nobody can escape the process of cultural diversification.¹⁵

A first important step is certainly that a sensitization for intercultural communication is developed. This not only feeds on insights gained from factual knowledge and analyzes, but above all requires interactive-confrontational training under the guidance of interculturally trained trainers in cooperation with employees of the various help systems, especially mixed-ethnic and mixed-functional composition. What I mean by this is that in the training itself, the different behaviour and different ideas, for example the German and Turkish culture, must be compared. Specialists from the respective linguistic environment must provide support. Using cultural resources also means using the “cultural competence” of all participants. Methods of such awareness training range from guided work with “critical incidents” (as in the examples) to crisis experiments and self-observation in video feedback. Such a sensitization is a building block for the development and operationalization of intercultural competence.¹⁶

Becoming sensitive to one's own and foreign cultural behaviour, to the processes and possible consequences of an intercultural encounter can be related to a specific culture - for example the German or Turkish - or can also be culturally general. Foreign culture cannot be viewed as uniform and unchangeable. Rather, the aim is to develop a "third eye" that we can practice a look and the ability to reflect, with which we can not only understand and analyse the communication methods of the "foreign" interlocutors, but also learn to observe and analyse ourselves; above all to keep an eye on what is happening between the communication partners. The “third eye” therefore not only has the partner in its sights, but rather hovers over the intercultural communication situation and has the entire interaction in view, as it is constituted depending on the conversation partner and the development of the communication situation.¹⁷

Intercultural communication will not only make it easier. Intercultural communication also becomes exhausting and being uncomfortable requires learning and grappling. And intercultural communication also has disadvantages: the more we become sensitive to intercultural communication, the more likely we are to feel our own bias; if we recognize that all sides are involved in the alien process, we learn something about the mechanisms - perhaps also our own - of discrimination and inequality in the relationships between cultures.¹⁸

In Germany, for example, I have done a lot of research on this topic, how the communication between German and Turkish migrants works, in the US and in Great Britain there is a number of studies on racism in this regard, on interethnic communication between black, white and Hispanic Americans or through communication between white British and British originating

¹⁵ Glahn, R.: Kommunikation im globalen Geschäftsleben. Selbst- und Fremdbilder als Quellen interkultureller Missverhältnisse, als Basis für die Ermittlung von Handlungsbedarf und als Chancen für Wettbewerbsvorteile. Reihe: Angewandte Sprachwissenschaft. Hoberg, R. (Hrsg.) Band 14, Frankfurt 2005. Thieme, W. M.: Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Internationales Marketing. Theoretische Grundlagen als Anknüpfungspunkt für ein Management kultureller Unterschiede, Frankfurt 2000. Zakaria, N.: Culture Matters: Decision-Making in Global Virtual Teams, Boca Raton 2017.

¹⁶ Hinner, M. B. (Hrsg.): The Influence of Culture in the World of Business. In: Freiburger Beiträge zur Interkulturellen und Wirtschaftskommunikation, Bd. 4, Frankfurt 2007, 42-61. Bolten, J.: Interkulturelle Kompetenz. Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung Thüringen (Hrsg.), Erfurt 2007.

¹⁷ Bochner, S. (Hrsg.): Cultures in Contact. Studies in Cross-cultural Interaction. Oxford, New York 1982. Daftari, S.: Fremde Wirklichkeiten: Verstehen und Mißverstehen im Fokus bikultureller Partnerschaften. Fremde Nähe – Beiträge zur interkulturellen Diskussion. Bd. 13, Münster 2000.

¹⁸ Beck, U.: Was ist Globalisierung? Irrtümer des Globismus – Antworten auf Globalisierung. Frankfurt 2007. Bitterli, U.: Cultures in Conflict: Encounters Between European and Non-European Cultures, Stanford University Press 1993. Jullien, F.: Es gibt keine kulturelle Identität. Wir verteidigen die Ressourcen der Kultur, Berlin 2017. Gieter, W.: Regulated chaos. An epistemological discourse on Western ethnocentrism. Bonn 2022.



from the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent. From this it ultimately follows that intercultural communication has the task of developing a strategy against racism. To come back to the beginning: Intercultural communication is always a mirror for all those involved in communication. Only when I am reflected by the culturally foreign behaviour of my communication partner I am thrown back on my own self-evident facts, I have to question myself. Those who do not deal with foreign cultures cannot know their own culture either.¹⁹

Finally, we can learn something else in intercultural communication, namely, to accept the foreign, the other without understanding him/her. That can be a commandment: to understand, to understand that one cannot understand, but has to tolerate. Prejudices and misunderstandings in contact with strangers often arise from the fact that each side views the other through the lens of their own culture. Opinions and judgments about the behaviour of strangers are restricted, distorted or simply wrong.

Such ethnocentric thinking exists in almost all societies, and it demonstrates power: "Power is the ability, another person's story not just to tell, but to turn them into an authoritative story to make that person. The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that the easiest way to expropriate a people is to tell his story and start with "second". To begin the story of the North American Native Americans with the arrows and not with the arrival of the British, they say a completely different story. You start the story with the failure of the African state and not with the establishment of the African state through colonization, you tell a completely different story."²⁰ Even if we can assume that through global networks more and more people adjust to other cultures, that is how they become at the same time Frames of reference for the identity of the individual remain important, be it that Region, nation, social group or subculture. The resulting conditions for intercultural communication therefore remain in place and are necessary the development of intercultural competence. Intercultural communication can open up different perspectives. Breaking down stereotypes, prejudices and racism and thus making a fundamental contribution to understanding between different peoples and cultures.

Intercultural communication opens our hearts - and we all have one!

¹⁹ Gieler, W.: Ethnozentrismus. In: Kirloskar-Steinbach, M.; Dharampal-Frick, G.; Friele, M. (Hrsg.), Die Interkulturalitätsdebatte – Leit- und Streitbegriffe, Freiburg/München 2012, 227-231. Datta, A. (Hrsg.): Transkulturalität und Identität. Bildungsprozesse zwischen Exklusion und Inklusion, Frankfurt/London 2005. Böttcher, S.: Kulturelle Unterschiede Grenzen der Globalisierung. Ein Vergleich zwischen dem Westen und Ostasien. In: Schriftenreihe des ifo Instituts für Wirtschaftsforschung. Nr. 147, Berlin/München 1999.