GENDER ROLES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION PROCESS

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Abstract

This literature review, searches for better understanding the implications of gender roles differences when intercultural communication takes place in societies. This research suggests that the differences in male and female communication styles affect and have an influence when communicating with people from another cultures. The cultural barriers in societies are massive referring to differences and stereotypes are the main reason for this barriers to exist. This document seeks to define gender stereotypes and their impact in interculturality. In addition, this paper explains and makes a contrast in women and men communication in relation with human behavior. As main conclusion of this document it can be argued that gender roles and stereotypes affect intercultural communication processes and create a social impact that hinders the expression of ideas and thoughts between men and women.

Key words: gender roles, differences, stereotypes, intercultural communication.

Resumen

Esta revisión literaria busca comprender las implicaciones de las diferencias de roles de género cuando la comunicación intercultural se lleva a cabo en la sociedad. Esta investigación sugiere que las diferencias en los estilos de comunicación de ambos sexos afectan e influyen en la comunicación con personas de otras culturas. Las barreras culturales en la sociedad son enormes en referencia a las diferencias y la principal razón para que existan dichas barreras son los estereotipos de género. Este documento tiene por objeto definir los estereotipos de género y su impacto en la interculturalidad. Además, explica y hace un contraste entre la comunicación de hombres y mujeres en relación con el comportamiento humano. Como conclusión de este documento, se puede decir que los roles y estereotipos de género afectan los procesos comunicativos interculturales y generan un impacto social que dificulta la expresión de ideas y pensamientos entre hombres y mujeres.

Palabras clave: roles de género, diferencias, estereotipos, comunicación intercultural.

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Introduction

For the development of this literature review, a number of steps will be taken into account to achieve the expected results. The text is divided in four parts: introduction, structure, development and conclusions of the topic. In the introduction to the topic, there will be a discussion about items such as, origins of gender role differences and intercultural communication process. The use of these topics are necessary to clarify the subject being treated. The second section, the structure of writing, will discuss issues such as gender roles and stereotypes as well as the explanation of culture and gender roles for this study. The development of the subject will be supported by topics such as differences in men´s and women´s communication styles and all related to Male-female miscommunication. In the fourth and final phase, conclusions will be drawn based on the information discussed, so that they answer the research question.

Problem statement

Many countries have consolidated their society in the idea of gender roles as a necessity for social order to function healthily. Taking into account that gender roles have been established for a very long period of time because of the importance of creating individual identity, all societies are structured and built their culture around the sexual difference of the individuals comprising. In society, female and male roles are intrinsically different one from another; Female gender suggest that women should cultivate love and compromise at home, be concerned for their family and express sympathy for everyone. En the contrary, masculine role dictates that men should be concerned about achievement, challenge, ambition, economical support and that they should be assertive and competitive.

These differences between each gender can generate miscommunication problems in terms of interculturalism because of long time ago established parameters concerned by society. In many cases, it has generated a great cultural impact in which the communication process is affected and in most cases, the intent of the message to be conveyed is lost.

According to the above approach, the development of this issue is carried out in order to identify what the communication problems arise because of gender roles. With the knowledge that has been acquired during the studies in modern languages, in classes like Introduction to translation, Managerial skills and General business translation we can notice that there are many problems that affect communication processes in different areas, this is the reason why we want to identify these shortcomings, this paper aims to respond and provide information in relation to the following question of research: .

How do gender role differences affect the intercultural communication process in society?

Literature Review

Definition of gender roles and stereotypes

Taking into account that gender roles are a manifestation of psychological, social and cultural processes, it is necessary to note that every society defines and establishes human behavior and its characteristics, even thoughts, personal feelings, and the value of men and women based on stereotypes and consensual ideas, as Schalkwyk (2010) mentioned that "Expectations about attributes and behaviors appropriate to women or men and about the relations between women and men are shaped by culture". Furthermore, each culture determines their beliefs related with what should be the performance and the role that men and women play in society leading to gender stereotypes.

To better understand gender stereotypes and their implications, it is necessary to know what a stereotype is; first of all, stereotype is a common aspect in terms of culture. It can be defined as the perception that searches to justify the behavior of a person or group of people that share characteristics, qualities and abilities. Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, & Esses (n.d.) stated that stereotypes are qualities that reflect the way of perceiving the values and essence of a group. It may affect the socialization and communication process of invidious that are directed by the same standards. (p.8). Additionally, stereotypes are based on a set of ideas, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, customs, and ways of breeding, among others, imposed by the social and cultural group to which it belongs. Another definition by McGarty & Yzerbyt & Spears (2002) that explained he well topic is "stereotypes should be formed in line with the accepted views or norms of social groups that the perceiver belongs to"- stereotypes are accepted by society on the basis of traditions, in other words, in most cases, stereotypes are inherited from parents, grandparents and thoughts and opinions from others.

Today there are many barriers and cultural divisions due to such stereotypes. People are rejected by their religion, what they believe, for their ideas, and opinions. According to MclLeod, S. (2008) thought, stereotypes are not only harmful in their own right; they do damage by fostering prejudice and discrimination. After all, if encyclopedia readers are led to believe that black people have intellectual limitations, why spend time and money educating black children? As used here, "discrimination" involves putting group members in disadvantage or treating them unfairly as a result of

their group membership. More specifically, "personal discrimination" refers to acts of discrimination committed by individuals.

With this in mind, it is natural to give a negative connotation to the term "stereotyped", owing to (in many cases), that one group judge to another that does not belong to it. Williams & Spencer (2010) add that groups use stereotypes as a consequence of a greater emphasis in the social community (para. 4). However, it can be argued that this kind of situation leads to predict, prejudice, and discriminate.

It is universally acknowledge that gender stereotypes are linked to masculinity and femininity, as Gergen (2001) establishes, the vision of man is linked to productive prototype instrumental role, resulting in productive activities, aimed at the maintenance and provision of family, characterized to be autonomous, achievement-oriented, strong, successful and supplier, while the view of women is linked to emotional efforts to childcare, the household and the partner, as well as possessing features such as submission, abnegation and dependence. Campbell & Storo (n.d) give a good explanation of this problem "It's probably a stereotype if it describes how girls and boys are "supposed" to be. For example, the statement that "Susie will be better than Ed at babysitting because she is a girl" is a stereotype. These gender stereotypes are reflected in the same way in men and women.

It is highly probable that, stereotyping, discriminating, and prejudice never disappear from the eyes of society around the world and gender stereotypes are a common aspect in every culture. The Newsweek (2000) manifested "Gender stereotypes consists of beliefs about the psychological traits and characteristics of, as well as the activities appropriate to, men or women. Gender roles are defined by behaviors, but gender stereotypes are beliefs and attitudes about masculinity and femininity" (p.2).

The real problem appears when gender stereotypes affect intercultural communicative process; however, this concept is understood in many ways. The University of North Carolina-Chapel School of Education Hill (2010) defines it as:

> The interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds using authentic language appropriately in a way that demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the cultures. It is the ability to experience the culture of another person and to be open minded, interested, and curious about that person and culture. (para. 1)

According to this, exchanging costumes, ideas and opinions with members of diverse cultural groups can achieve a full understanding and acceptance of the

differences that exist among them. This interplay also seeks to keep individuals interested in exploring other people's behaviors and habits in the societies they live.

On the other hand, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2013) describes the meaning of the term intercultural, as "what occurs when members of two or more different cultural groups (of whatever size at whatever level) interact or influence one another in some fashion whether in person or through various mediated forms" (p.11). Conforming this, a key aspect to have into account is how the exchange of culture among different groups or individuals influences the other. It can be imply that this process is not only about comprehension and acceptance between women and men but about what each part can take and learn from the other, how they can adapt and embrace change, and what kind of society-probably with a new unique identity- will become overtime as a result of this.

In addition, gender stereotypes can affect intercultural communication process because the interaction of people of different cultures must occur in a tolerant and respectful manner, as stated by the Council of Europe, (CoE) (2008), which says that "intercultural dialogue is understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect" (para. 22). In that way, gender stereotyping has an emotional impact and the members of the several culture groups around the world will not be receptive and open-minded with each other during that interchange process resulting in the loss of interculturality and the culture clash will be strong, .

Definition of interculturality, and their implications in gender roles

To clarify these issues, it is necessary to define interculturality as an action that goes beyond the idea of communication among cultures; it is a respectful interaction that allows learning, as well as influencing, different aspects of a cultural group –such as habits, customs and behaviors, which eventually, will lead them to change and progress, As Trujillo, F. (2002) said "interculturality is about explicitly recognizing the value of diversity while doing everything possible to increase interaction, mixing, and hybridization between cultural communities" (p. 16). Bearing this in mind, it can be argued that gender stereotypes can interrupt the communication process between people

or groups with different cultural identities. Moreover, every relation between people is reflecting an act of interculturality.

In addition, it is indispensable to note that interculturality has been present around the world because it is no longer an option but a necessity, to assent diversity and be accepted by another people in another cultures. Furthermore, gender role differences can affect interculturality for the simple reason that the primary purpose of intercultural communication is to increase understanding of culturally mediated communication and universal interaction. In order to avoid the gap and the misunderstandings leading by stereotyping -with the purpose of achieving intercultural relations- it is important take into account personal feelings, attitudes, and perceptions as well as those of people of other cultures.

Differences in men´s and women´s communication styles

The famous saying "men are from Mars and women are from Venus" clearly indicates that men and women are different in many areas, in their dress, their speaking styles, to express themselves, to be understood, among others. The difference in communication styles between men and women can result in misunderstanding, discomfort, and that bother purposes mistake of both parties alike. Cinardo, J. (2011) describes in more detail this difficult:

> Inter-sex communication can make interacting complicated because of differences in communication styles. Whether the cross-sex relationship shared is romantic, a friendship, or a co-worker, the manners of communication will most likely differ in numerous ways. Men and women develop differently, both biologically and socially during early childhood, causing divergent actions. (p.3)

With this in mind, it is clear that men and women are different in areas including senses, expressions, behaviors, feelings and ideas, which are part of the verbal and nonverbal communication. These parameters generated a set that is used for communication processes; in one way or another, the intention is to convey a message and interact with the person who is speaking. "The roles which males and females enact in their lives are reflected in the ways they carry themselves, including their method of interaction" (Cinardo, 2011, p.7)

Additionally, many of the problems that arise in communication processes between gender roles are produced by the behavior and beliefs of each individual in

society. The stereotypes used between men and women create major conflicts in communication. Wood (2009) empathized that "many people believe women should have equal professional opportunities but think women should not be involved in actual wartime combat. Although a majority of young adults believe that both parents should participate in children rearing, most people also assume that the mother, not the father, will be the primary caregiver during the early years of children's lives" (pag.16). This situation creates a cultural impact that affects the intent of the message transmission between both parties, thus creating a problem in the communication process. In some cases the transmitter performs this action without intention, but many do not.

Male-female miscommunication

Communication problems are generated by failing to convey the message that wants to be transmitted. Misunderstandings, annoyances and mistakes are just some of the main problems that arise between men and women for the different approaches and features that both genders have to communicate their views on relationships and daily life. Another of the most common communication problems between gender roles occurs when the receiver does not have the level of care that requires the issuer, in other words when the attention of the message is not enough to be received. Malltz and Borker (n.d) explained that in the case of women, such problems occur more frequently as women always want to have all the attention, and in some cases, the man does not; there are many cases where the man tells the woman, "I'm listening you, please continue," but it really is not doing, and at the end of the conversation, the receiver does not grasp the message they were conveying (p.8). To highlight, these communication problems also occur between same genders, but they are evidenced mostly in men and women, especially couples. The consequences of such situations also have an impact and a culture misunderstanding.

To summarize, it is possible highlight that roles in society is an important part in the development of communication skills. Kramer (2008) emphasized that everyone in society has a role; women implies a role of self-care, cooking, care, self-sacrifice and decisions at home, while the man has the role of financial support, discipline and important decision in the family.(p.2) All these roles are created by society and criticized for it. The communication problem may be generated when trying to judge because these roles are not fulfill, saying "women, why are you not at home taking care

of your children?" or else "men why you're not working and maintaining the home if you are the men?" Phrases like those cause a cultural impact that in turn causes breakdowns in the communication process.

Conclusions

According to information obtained in this paper, it can be concluded that the processes of intercultural communication in society are affected by differences in gender roles. There are many factors which can generate such difficulties, gender stereotypes still among the most common. Currently, there remains a great communicative and cultural shock because discrimination that is lived day to day by the perception that society has of how men and women should behave, the roles to be played in different social areas, and even how they should relate to each other. Each society defines categories of their own beliefs, behaviors and thoughts. These categories are socially constructed, as humans both create and assign individuals to them. As Cuddy (2010) explained "Gender roles and stereotypes are the pillars of gender socialization. Through them, boys and girls are assigned the norms, roles, expectations and social spaces for male and female identity". Another statement that supports this definition by the European commission (2010) says that "Gender roles continue to influence crucial individual decisions: on education, on career paths, on working arrangements, on family and on fertility. These decisions in turn have an impact on the economy and society" (p.4). This mean that society could not exist in the same way with the implementation of stereotyping that not all cases are bad, but where they are, generate a marked sociocultural impact, affecting feelings, thoughts, beliefs, opinions and other. The effects are not only cultural and social nature as previously explained, but also affect the economy, because women is stereotype to stay at home, not to generate income to support the financial obligations of the family . Besides this, it has negative effects on employment discrimination, because in many cases the effectiveness or ability to look for a job is depending on the gender role.

Moreover, in most cases, a person does not choose these gender stereotypes individually; they are imposed by society and the individual, as a member of society who follows it. The person begins to think and believe the same as their parents believed, their neighbor, their co-worker, and thus it works. Schippers (2007) adds that "while individuals can accept or resist traditional gender roles in their own presentation of self, gender roles are a powerful means of social organization that impact many

aspects of society". In this case, the problem in the process of intercultural communication occurs when a person who use gender stereotypes transmits a message to someone who uses another stereotype.

Gender stereotypes, learned by society are one of the main causes that affect the processes of intercultural communication, because of, as previously the term "multiculturalism" was defined, it is the way in which cultures and different people interact to each other. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2000) establishes that in the specific case of differences between men and women -no matter whether they are from the same culture- also happen these drawbacks. The saying "mourn is for women" is universally known as a man is not able to mourn before the public because it will be frowned upon. (p.12). similarly, a man who cannot achieve any physical activity or achieved with too much effort people say him "you do as a woman," as in many cultures, women are classified as bad conductor. These are all stereotypes that affect intercultural communication processes.

To address all these communication difficulties, it is recommendable to maintain a gender equality; not judge the capabilities of a person if it is male or female. Do not judge a person by their gender role. It is clear that men and women are different in many ways, but is not a reason to offend or to create barriers to have an effective communication. Frankó (2012) explained "The identified cultural differences do not evaluate their own or other culture. There is no culture that is better than the other" This is a social activity that is made from the individual and autonomous part to the collective part. But gender equality is also stereotyped. Marinova (2003), says in her text that gender equality is perceived in many societies as relative only to women, invented by women and implemented by women, and it is men who feel pressured to this position. (pag.2) But do men not the beneficiary also gender equality? Would not like that women stop saying that men can only do one thing at a time? It is an activity that would benefit both parties and avoid many conflicts and communicative culture clashes that happen daily in society.

The cultural barriers generated because of the differences between men and women have as main causes: ideology, status, language, and prejudging. Furthermore, no to listen each other is perhaps the most important barrier for an effective communication process. It is said that the basis of human relationships is the ability to

communicate and to do so, it is necessary to listen; for learn to listen ... you have to learn to be quiet, to be silent. Russell (2009) make emphasis on the importance of listening for effective understanding process between women and men, to communicate and to avoid misunderstandings in verbal and nonverbal communication. (p.5). Actually, men and women rarely heard, when dialoguing they are already preparing the response, ready for verbal combat. Certainly, human relations could be enriched if, first of all, the priority for every one were less talking and more listening.

As well as negative attitudes that can represent a serious impediment to communication process, and approach people. In these cases, apart from limiting human relations, it is projecting a bad image of the person who communicates. Pfeiffer (1998) exemplify this concept with:

> A woman may come home from just having had a confrontation with her boss and may carry over her hostility to her family by overreacting to her husband's messages concerning the day's irritations, or she may simply filter out all messages and respond in monosyllables to any attempts at communication. Her husband is also having a bad day and he confronts her and a big fight starts. (p.3).

According to this example, sometimes negative attitudes can even lead to deformed perceived reality in human relationships. Another common factor that can generated misunderstandings in male-female communication is destructive criticism. It is well known that criticism destroys both criticized and that criticism. The same applies to value judgments; that is, judge people is give a judge of the behavior of these, standing above them and, therefore, valuing as someone better. Lunenburg (2010) emphasized on "When criticizing, we communicate and raise barriers by inhibiting discussion or causing others to feel inferior, angry, hostile, dependent, compliant, or subservient". (p.6.)

Like these ones, there are many reasons that causes differences between male- female communication processes. In society and in gender roles general thoughts, there will always be communicative misunderstandings that affect communicative styles, but what is really important is to differentiate each gender capability, knowing that people, communities, group members, individuals, and cultures are different one from each other; as well as knowing that tolerance, mutual respect, avoid misunderstanding, and dialogue to solve problems are the basis of a successful intercultural relation.

Nevertheless, the individualized identity makes a significant difference between the self and the others, thus explains the socio-cultural behavior, its diversity, and the fact that women and men vary even though they share the same culture.

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