

**Technological breakthroughs impact within the cultural communicative
process in regard to social media**

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ABSTRACT

Technological advances represent a fundamental change in the new millennium; besides, these advances has generated a great development in everything that daily works inside the world. One key change is based on the way people communicate by using technology tools; the increasingly common use puts the communication model in constant changing starting to separate each variable as a unit. At the same time intercultural, interaction and adaptation play an important role in the communication process by the use of technological advances; consequently these factors lead to increased effectiveness in measuring the success of communication.

Key words: technological breakthroughs, communication process, culture, interculturality, intercultural competence, intercultural behavior.

RESUMEN

Los avances tecnológicos representan un cambio fundamental en el nuevo milenio, debido a estos avances se ha generado un gran desarrollo en cada cosa con la que funciona a diario el mundo; uno de estos cambios resulta en la manera de comunicarse entre las personas usando herramientas tecnológicas, su uso cada vez más común hace que el modelo de comunicación este en un constante cambio, empezando a separar cada variable como una unidad. Al mismo tiempo la interculturalidad, la interacción, la adaptación juegan un papel importante dentro del proceso comunicativo dentro de los avances tecnológicos pues estos factores permiten una mayor efectividad a la hora de medir el éxito de la comunicación.

Palabras claves: Avances tecnológicos, proceso de comunicación, culturas, interculturalidad, competencia intercultural, comportamiento interpersonal

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout time cultures have evolved the way to express necessities, feelings, thoughts, and a group of elements that are innate to the human-being, apart from this, since ancient times, humankind has also changed and adapted body language the same as gesticulation conduct, in order to build interpersonal relationships, along with, improving the way an individual interacts with another either he/she belongs to the same culture or participates from other cultures, owing to the above mentioned people have established well organized societies, creating by implication the inheritance involved within cultures. Human-being have taken advantage of all the available tools to broadcast distinct behavioral patterns and knowledge by way of implementing practices over and above communicative skills.

As a result of the technological breakthroughs, people are facing drastic changes in terms of how the communication process is carried out, because this advances in technology have broken barriers among cultures, even more, with the invention of social media, which has created a total new way of communication notwithstanding this virtual world people live in nowadays is recent; taking the above mentioned into consideration, it is imperative of analysis by itemizing the influences of the technological advances within the cultural communicative process, concerning that the point of convergence is in regard to social media. With that in mind, the present literature review is going to address the reader about how the communicative process have changed owing to the technological advances but, pointing out the social media role into the cultural communicative process.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Social media has changed dramatically the way of interaction and communication within the most significant areas in peoples' life. On the one hand, technological breakthroughs have contributed to develop a new outlook, in regard to, how interpersonal relationships are constituted and carried out; hence, these tools modify the socialization method among individuals belonging to the same culture, as well as, restructuring behavior patterns with other different cultures. As (n.d) stated by Crystal "new colloquialisms spread like wildfire amongst groups on the net, the Internet is an amazing medium for languages, language itself changes slowly but the internet has speeded up the process of those changes so you notice them more quickly" (as cited in Kleinman, 2010). Forasmuch as the mentioned above, a constant communication within cultures produces new dialects; meanwhile, several words, expression, slangs, terms, among others start to appear; so that, it stands to reason that a new language has been created to make the communicative interaction process easier and worldwide.

Bearing this in mind, it is unavoidable to set aside the contemporary technological changes; throughout time, societies have had to adapt their lifestyles, depending on the culture needs, as a result of the agreement of the entire culture, which is innate specific characteristic of a group. According (n.d) to Booth "So while we're communicating more, we may not necessarily be building relationships as strongly" (as cited in Keller, 2013, Vol. 13 No. 3 P. 10). Therefore, the diverse social media has shorten distances concerning the communication act, on account of the fact that, people interact steadily than before, nonetheless, constant communication does not implies people build up the principles to constitute a solid relationship.

Taking into consideration, how the technological breakthroughs have influenced the cultural communicative interaction process in relation to social media, as well as the interpersonal interaction into cultures; also the atmosphere that encourages cooperation and understanding among cultures; due to its special characteristics which allow performing this function. Such as: wish of accepting unexpected, flexibility to change or adopt alternatives and appreciation of cultural uniqueness. The aforementioned brings up to the question. ***How is the cultural communicative process affected by technological breakthroughs in regard to social media?***

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intercultural competence

The development of new forms of communication through social media has made available a high number of tools that facilitate contact, interaction and exchange between cultures, creating variables that determine effectiveness communication; besides, according to Chen (2012) social media clearly affects the content of messages and information, therefore it changes how people from different cultures communicate and understand each other; as a result, humanity faces an interconnected and complex level of communication challenging the period of the traditional one.

Owing to the aforementioned, Josef (2014) establishes intercultural competence as a manner to somehow face the interconnected communication process; hence, intercultural competence focuses on the development of certain abilities such as: attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills which results in an effective interaction and communication within cultures. At the same time Josef (2014) added that “An individual’s intercultural competence is never complete but can always be enriched still further from continuing experience of different kinds of intercultural encounter”. The abilities above mentioned allow people to keep enriching intercultural competence, creating always positive and constructive relations whereas understanding multiple cultural beliefs.

Furthermore Deardorff (2006) describes a fourth stage process that could apply to social media communication. Starting with attitudes, that means valuing other cultures and being open to cultural diversity; after that, acquiring knowledge which represents a deep comprehension of a culture, acquiring knowledge is linked to skills such as: know how to listen, observe and interpret. Consequently, desired internal outcome stage stands for the adjustment to a new cultural environment; finally, desired external outcome represents the effective and appropriate form of communication.

Interculturality in social media

Social media has turn into the most popular tool of interaction within cultures; electronic communication can keep in touch with both relatives and people in the host country; further, a 2009 review by Chen described that an online environment has social, physical and cultural components which facilitate or impede intercultural exchange and its own adaptation (as cited in Sawyer, 2011, p.9).

In order to understand interculturality inside social media, it is important to establish a definition of interculturality as a unit. Several authors have proposed that interculturality works based on the appreciation of diversity getting critical participation in communication; therefore, interculturalism has to keep an open mind regarding to different situations that build a society up. Consequently, intercultural competence has an active participation developing the cognitive environment capacity to ensure the correct communication process within cultures (Trujillo, F. 2002). Added to that, Byram (1997) introduces a list of components that intercultural competence have; even though intercultural competence is never complete and perfect components like knowledge, skills and attitudes are patterns that people can learn to operate, being able to interact with cultures that are constantly changing.

Incidentally, Van Houstein's view (2012) matches perfectly with the last two authors, saying that interculturality "... Is the demonstration of interaction between the use of language skills and cultural knowledge". Clearly, he demonstrates that intercultural competence needs a vital connection between the ability to use language and the appropriately cultural context; thus, the interaction within language (linguistic skills) and cultural competences (values, beliefs and attitudes) results in interculturality

Furthermore, a 2005 review by Chen described this transition as "...Unfolding the self is a process of transforming and moving oneself from the lower to higher level of the developmental ladder of human beings" (as cited in Sawyer, 2011, p.8). It means that interculturality in social media allows having a broadening perspective and an open mind regarding to distinctive lifestyles; consequently people should have the ability to get unknown knowledge thinking critically about various cultures.

Culture "stereotypes on/off line"

Consequent on the interculturality aspect, stereotypes are natural among communities, whilst its attributes stay afloat, for that reason Williams and Rodgers declares that "the ability to develop consensual, fixed beliefs about the nature and characteristics of human social groups appears to be universal" (Williams, Spencer-Rodgers 2010). One of the most striking features concerning stereotypes in cultures is based on how stereotypes are implicit in cultures' essence whereas cultures are the way in which stereotypes are broadcasted within a society. Although, behavior patterns vary among individuals, the

group itself works following certain acquired rules, notwithstanding if it is in a virtual environment (social media structures); throughout time, making use of the available tools; cultures have spread intrinsic principles – beliefs, knowledge, practices and communicative skills – as a general agreement of its own participants, in order to, remain in existence and evolve. With this in mind, it is evident the existing reciprocity, in regard to stereotypes on/off line into cultures.

On the one hand, UNESCO (2013) affirms that “Culture is the sum of assumptions and practices shared by members of a group distinguishing them from other groups”. Therefore, culture is a whole which is composed of different branches that make it unique; furthermore, those branches keep a clearly difference from another. On the other hand, stereotyping is the action of building a typical snapshot or opinion inside our thinking, for instance aspects such as: religion, race lifestyles and so on, take a fundamental part regarding to a specific social group; moreover, it takes part of our subjective interpretation to reflect a relationship between what arbitrary people believe, and what truly people generalize in a society (Czopp, Kay, Cheryan 2015).

Thence, stereotyping on/off line process in cultures has been introduced across generations, due to the value judgements a group of people has and expresses, as well as, transfers, from other distinct cultures. One such example is, through the act of communication (verbal and non-verbal). From another point of view, stereotyping is inherent in the individual (regardless the environment –real or virtual-) an individual who undoubtedly belongs to a general and structured organization (relative to culture). Consequently, to stereotype is an innate specific characteristic a culture develops by interacting with other cultures along with the instinctive conduct of acquiring knowledge aside from exchanging information.

INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR

Communication process and social media

a 1964 review by Berelson and Steiner establish that Communication stands for a process of transmitting information, ideas, feelings, desires and knowledge from a source to a receiver by the use of several mechanics like symbols, words, figures among others (as cited in International Communication Association, 2005). Actually communication etymology gives a brief perception of its meaning; it means that communication makes reference to “something that can be explore”. In other words communication takes place when a sender displays a set of symbols or messages to a receiver interacting inside a social context (Velentzas, n.d.).

Figure 1 a 2011 review by Chen illustrates the communication process highlighting the important elements inside the process (as cited in Lunenburg, 2010).

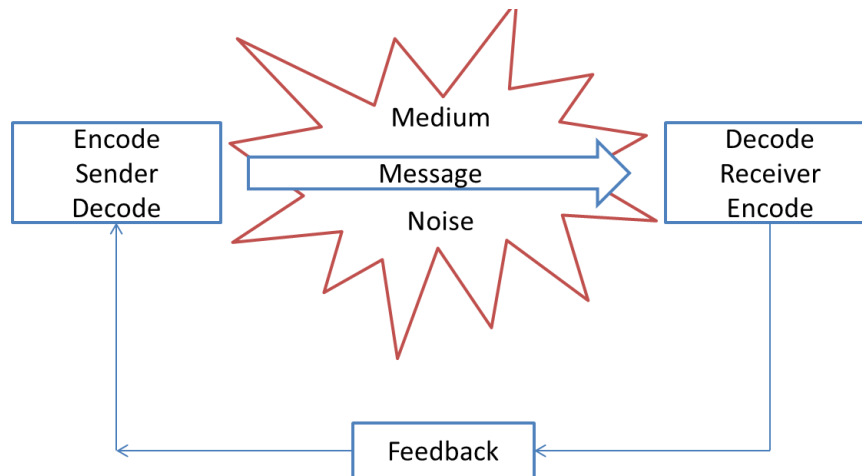


Figure 1: The communication process.

The figure above represents how communication works when two individuals are transmitting ideas. According to Lunenburg (2010) the main elements in every communication system are: on one hand the sender who is the source of ideas, needs, intention and information that builds a message; on the other hand, the Receiver is the target of communication or the one to whom the message is sent. The message is the translation of the ideas proposed into a code which can be verbal, nonverbal or written. Then the message is sent through a medium between the sender and the receiver used to convey the information, for instance a telephone call or an email. After that, the receiver is

the one in charge of decoding the message into information. Lunenburg (2010) also noted that “noise” means any variable that deteriorate the message; for example, language barriers, interruptions, emotions and attitudes. Finally feedback happens when the receiver answer the message, realizing if the message has been clearly received.

This model has been a longtime explanation to understand how communication works; bearing this in mind, Maggiani (2014) said that the common use of social media has radically changed how we communicate. Before, tools like voice messages, e-mails, talk through headphones, online video calling and instant messenger appeared, people used to communicate with mail, physical line telephone and in person; therefore those new instruments have bring new effects causing a revolution in communication. Putting it in other words, the past communication model (individual-individual) has been reestablished into a wide model (individual – multidimensional) which is commonly known as web 2.0 or social media.

Figure 2 represents the effectiveness of communication process using the five C’s of social media by Maggiani (2014).

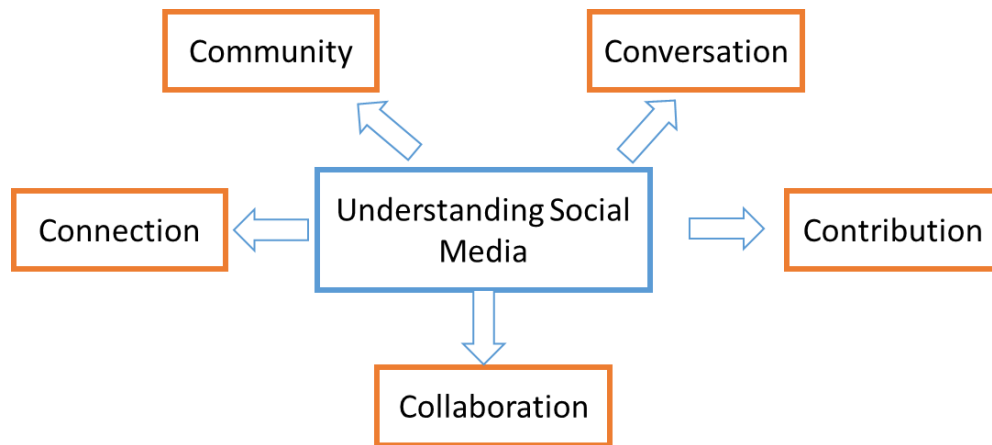


Figure 2: Understanding social media.

Reestablishing communication process, social media takes into account several features and separates them on their own understanding the importance that each one of them have in order to get effectiveness at the time to communicate; for that reason, these features are collectively called by Maggiani (2014) as the five C’s of social media. First of all, conversation in social media works with a two-way conversation and sometimes with a

multidimensional conversation implicating everyone. Secondly, contribution seeks for a positive or negative reactions from everyone involved. Thirdly, collaboration encourages participation exchanging the information within the audience. Then connection refers to the promptness of accessing information using web vehicles. Finally, community creates a fellowship with a group of people who share common attitudes, beliefs, behavior and feelings.

Interaction

Cultures are an established social structure conformed by individuals, executing determine roles in function of the organization, agreeing or repelling certain behaviours and practices on account of the fact that each of its participants follow the stipulated rules, whereby, this premise is pertinent of applicability in a virtual environment -social media- by virtue of, in that context whether the group or the administrator must have settled certain rules of behavior, allowing determine material to share and rejecting specific contents along with unsuitable conducts, as it works inside of a society in the real world . A 2001 review by Berners-Lee, Henler and Lassila defined social media as a “software toolset that allows individuals to share information, interact and build community” (as cited in Kazaka, 2012, p.142). In conformity with what the previous authors said, users employ these resources (facebook, twitter, youtube, instgram, blogs ... and so on) with the purpose of expressing ideas, feelings, moods, thoughts, interests and a group of elements some of which are content and situations that take place in real life, leaving bare the widespread connection between the real life and the virtual world.

Likewise, in order to express accurately the prior mentioned frames of mind, which are intrinsic of human beings, it is unavoidable the implementation of the personal (face-to-face interaction) communication act. “In fact, it is generally accepted that 70% of communication is nonverbal, 23% involves the tone of voice, and only 7% of communication occurs by the chosen words. Nonverbal communication provides a clue to a person’s inner thoughts and feelings” McCorry, Mason (2011). The prior mentioned lead people to contribute with the understanding of what the transmitter expects to broadcast straight to the receiver which following authors statement is 7% of the spoken or written chosen words;

As opposed to what McCorry and Mason declares; Yaffe (2011) suggests that the “7% rule” is not a rule, Yaffe says that it is relative to significance the quantification of verbal or non-verbal communication, clarifying that verbal communication (what someone says) dominates over the non-verbal conduct. Making clear the aforementioned, these authors found that verbal, as well as non-verbal communication are relevant but taking into account the context a person is, each communication act prevails over the other one in determine situations; nonetheless, authors agrees that written way of expression is taken as a differential act of connection due to the absence of body language behavior –facial expression, gestures, eye contact, rubbing- and so forth. Taking this into account, it is reasonable to think that, the transmitter must give as many clues as he/she can, so as to the communication process has components enough for the receiver to get the conception, and at the same time a better understanding of what the person who speaks or writes wants to broadcast.

Despite the fact that social media are considerably for written purposes the evident lack for a person to transmit emotions throughout body language has been attempted to solve by creators of these virtual media, due to the necessity of expressing what words cannot; emoticons were the solution to fulfill the emotional gape. A 2013 review by Jibril, T. A. and Abdullah, M. H. declared that “Emoticons substitute the missing human emotional touch in electronic communication, emoticons also act as clear communicator of a current mood or mental state, providing additional cues about the author” (as cited in Quintana, 2014, p.7).

On the contrary, a 2008 research conducted by Lo confirmed “that using emoticons affects the reception of emotions, attitude and attention differently than not using them” (as cited in Youssef, A. & Youssef, H, 2011, p.23). That is to say, although emoticons try to imitate human emotions in a virtual environment, that emulation attempt impoverishes the communication act discernment, which is not comparable with human gesticulation; leaving in such a way that, a considerable lack of information on the receiver's perception, these sequence of characters cannot replace the mental state not either human feelings a person can express when interaction face-to-face is carried out.

Social media affecting communicating process

Social media have transformed how people communicate in real time; in the background, communication could take days or even months; however, it can take now just seconds with the technological breakthroughs that social media has created. Although technological breakthroughs represent a powerful tool and it has become an essential part of communication, a lot of times people do not know how to use it; that is why it is worth nothing the question; technological breakthroughs are positive or negative?

On one hand a negative effect propose for Turkle (2012, 7:00) during her speech at Ted Talks was comparing a real conversation with an online one; the result was that in real time conversation people cannot control what they are about to say, it means that posting, texting, chatting, email present people as they want to be, not as they actually are; as a consequence, people can shape and reshape communication adapting and editing information not too little, not too much, just right; thus people tend to choose communication by technological breakthroughs more likely. Furthermore Guenther, B & Zehnder, A (n.d.) establish that “the use inappropriate of social media can, and often does, lead to embarrassing and unsafe situations”. Therefore, through the usage of social media tools in an unsuitable way lead people to some situation that is not expected, needless to say that most of the times those situations are adverse and out of individual’s control.

However, a positive effect is how information takes just seconds to get inform people from all over the world transmitting information at the same time that is happening; for instance Shirky’s Ted Talk (2009, 5:32) uses the 2009 earthquake in China to explain how technological breakthrough helped to understand what was happening at that time; first of all, people started texting, they were taking photos and videos of the building trembling; then Chinese people uploaded those videos, so that as the quake was happening news was reported around the world. The right use of those tools head off the effectiveness in transmitting information.

Social media offers a bench of technological tools; moreover, they are both valuable and useful. Technological breakthroughs can whether save lives or make up lives as it was shown in the examples above; nonetheless people have to understand how to use those tools, because social media is not something that is going to go away; but something that people must take advantage of.

CONCLUSIONS

Technological breakthroughs have changed the way people perceive the world, in regard to the communicative act in terms of interacting among individuals belonging to the same culture, as well as cultures relationship in connection with other cultures, strengthened ties and making less widespread the broadcasting information process among different cultures. Therefore, social media have impacted drastically the conventional way the communicative process takes place, owing to this, the new model takes into account several concepts that the old model did not take and study each one of them as a unit, being aware that every new part gives a special contribution and generates a certain response from the individual in order to get effectiveness in the process of communications inside technological breakthroughs.

Bearing in mind the prior mentioned, there are grounds for believing that communication is variable and it remains within the constant evolving of the interpersonal relationship and the individual behavior patterns, in conjunction with the general cultural necessities; both the act of communication is adaptable to changes and the individual must be adaptable to what the culture requirements, thus the mutual reciprocity concerning the individual as a fundamental link of the culture, the same as the culture as a togetherness of individuals sharing identical intrinsic principles.

On the other hand, the lack of comprehension given by the written act in terms of body language and gesticulation, is a differential aspect that lead people to have gaps as well as misunderstandings, in regard to the way individuals communicate with each other throughout social media; being aware that the usage of emoticons does not delivers all the information the receiver needs to understand the transmitter's idea, so that, the transmitter have to give as cues as possible, in order to carry through the communication act as precise as possible, for the receiver to be able to get the perception of what the transmitter expresses.

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