INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND MISCOMMUNICATION: HOW LANGUAGE SHAPES PERCEPTION

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Intercultural communication involves interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds, where language plays a central role in shaping perceptions and understanding. Miscommunication often arises due to linguistic and cultural differences, highlighting the importance of cultural competence in effective communication.

One common source of miscommunication is the use of idioms and expressions that do not translate well across cultures. For example, the English phrase "break a leg" may confuse non-native speakers unfamiliar with its meaning as a wish for good luck. Similarly, humor and sarcasm can be misinterpreted, leading to unintended offense.

Cultural norms also influence communication styles. In high-context cultures, such as Japan, communication relies heavily on implicit cues and nonverbal signals. In contrast, low-context cultures, like the United States, prioritize direct and explicit communication. These differences can lead to misunderstandings if not navigated carefully.

Language barriers further complicate intercultural communication. While translation tools can help, they often fail to capture cultural nuances. For instance, a word in one language may have multiple meanings or connotations in another, leading to confusion or misinterpretation.

To improve intercultural communication, individuals must develop cultural awareness and sensitivity. Learning about different communication styles, practicing active listening, and being open to feedback

are essential skills. Additionally, fostering empathy and respect for diverse perspectives can bridge cultural divides.

In conclusion, language is a powerful tool that shapes perceptions in intercultural communication. By addressing linguistic and cultural differences, we can reduce miscommunication and build stronger connections across cultures.

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