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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Abstract
After World War II new international system was established and it stimulated reduced trade barriers and formed new international economy. Entrepreneurs asked deepened analysis of culture as found intercultural communication important part of business. International tourism deserves deepened analysis as entire structure of it is intercultural communication and recent tourism trends warns against need to be prepared to revise existing organizational standards of international tourism enterprises. Aim of article is literature review identifying issues of intercultural communication related to international tourism business in the discourse of globalalized societies. It defines areas of further research to make evaluation of intercultural communication interaction to international tourism and propose issues for discussion related to new challenges of customer relations in the context of changing market situation and further growth of the importance of cultural communication in tourism.

Keywords: intercultural communication, globalization, international tourism business environment

International tourism has been benefiting from political, economical, social and technological aspects of globalization and related processes of internationalization, liberalization, universalization and westernization, in the framework of globalization, during past more than 50 years. There have been plenty of discussions both on **positive** (economical importance of tourism and tourism as global job creator (Huescar, 1997:7), form to stimulate growth of welfare (Christie 2006:37)) and **negative** impacts related to this growth (impact on local communities (Trigo 2003:22)), presently much of attention is paid to further challenges created by globalization. Among these challenges should be named also intercultural communication as a new requirement, set by changing market situation and structure of emerging international outbound tourism markets.

Interaction of globalization of international tourism business environment and intercultural business communication is comparably recently started subject, taking into consideration that contemporary tourism has developed as a typical product of Western societies (Davidson, 1993:5). Entrepreneurs of Western societies have developed international tourism, basing their ideas in classical Western philosophy, values and lifestyle (Hooker, 2009: 60). Even Europe is still expected to be main market player in terms of international travelers, international receipts and international expenditures, new emerging markets of international tourism certainly play increasing role (UNWTO, 2000). Changing structure of international tourism business environment will be challenging for destinations, current market leaders, and in particular Europe as new outbound tourism markets is expected to require alternative products, corresponding to their cultural interests and needs. In order to better understand further expectations, intercultural differences will re-gain their topicality as

they might act as a guarantee for successful operational performance. In the context of globalization, cultural aspects cannot be ignored (Kavous 2009:513)

Intercultural communication, fundamentally, is an approach to analyze how different cultures or people with different cultural background interact to each other. Even formulation of one and unique definition of culture is challenging, often there are three significances mentioned how culture can be understood: sense of excellence, integrated system of human knowledge and opinion and attitudes, values and practices describing institution, organization or group (Singer 1998:98). All the different definitions demonstrate understandings on how to understand certain action or criteria, how to analyze them. Culture includes technology, arts, science as well as moral values, also habits and behavior of individuals, groups or societies. Through culture, individuals and societies set a frame of daily routines, by implementing general understanding of categories as right or wrong, good or bad and similar (Hofstede, 1989: 390). At the same time there is emphasis on language, physical and psychological dimension, determining successful outcome of a communication. It is, however, important to highlight interdependence of these dimensions as they can be observed from either objective or subjective perception.

Considering ongoing market changes, formulation of new international business communication strategies are expected. In these strategies intercultural communication will be playing an increasing role, considering that effective intercultural communication strategy can improve company's global competitiveness (Griffith, Harvey, 2000:88). As culture in general is playing an important role on corporate organizational culture and employees as basic elements of organization when it comes to cultural analysis in an organization (Evans, 2007:2), intercultural communication difficulties arise also in international business relations.

Obviously, that increasing numbers of outgoing tourism travelers from emerging markets and so called BRIC countries in the first place (UNWTO, 2000; UNWTO 2010) and existing prognosis of increasing importance of these markets, is considered as a new business opportunity for inbound tourism business in most of destinations and Europe, as a market leader in particular. However, these opportunities are bounded with challenges, related to intercultural differences and among them following should be highlighted.

Firstly. In the future, people will have to spend more and more time with people who will be speaking different languages, related to different values and will be interacting to different principles, compared to ones currently known in Western societies. World is becoming smaller and it can be named as **global village** and can be considered as a form of future societies (Barnlund 1998: 35). Cultural relations, both in daily routines and business are expected to gain its importance. We will not be able to live only with basic knowledge of

cultural differences or learned standard phrases of different languages. Finding of ways how to enter into different cultural space, understand values and norms of this space will be an important task. Without it, societies and industries will not be able to operate efficiently as members of global system, lacking general knowledge of conditions how international business is done. Every culture expresses it through communication and cultures primary exist to defend groups of symbols, language, gestures, physical contact and importance of subjects (Barnlund 1998: 38). In a conversation, involved member seek to find information defining importance, which can be further associated to understandable things. Each culture tends to create own universe of discourse (Barnlund 1998: 45) and when different universes interact to each other, cultural shock occurs. In a global village, such interaction is unavoidable. If language can be learned, then understanding of physical contact is something requiring different knowledge and cultural understanding (Griffith, Harvey, 2001:89).

Secondly, emerging international tourism markets represent different cultural type and communication context. In analysis of culture and elements different societies are encompassing into their cultures two cultural types can be distinguished, based on psychological studies and studies concentrating on individual relationship to group (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, 1988:324,326). Two cultural groups can be named: **individualist** (USA, Canada, Europe – UK, Germany, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand, individual goals are primary versus collectivist) and **collectivist** cultures (Asia (Japan, China, Korea, India), Africa, Mediterranean countries, Middle East, Central and South America (Brazil, China, Argentina), goals of individualist are subordinated to collectivist; in collectivist cultures it is considered to be important – how my own action interacts with entire group) (Watkins, Liu, 1996: 69).

Individualist and Collectivist cultures also represent different approaches how emotions, also towards service supplier are express. Individualists are concerned only about personal concerns, while in collectivist cultures the worth of entire group is considered; in collectivist cultures emotions signal internal, subjective feelings, while in a individualist culture emotions signal changes of reality (Mesquita, 2001: 69).

Alternatively is offered categorization of cultures from communicational perspective and they are observed and named respectively **low context** and **high context** communication. Cultures with Western European roots rely in **low context communication** when details are specified and context must be explicit in the message. Message itself means everything. Low context cultures are German-Swiss, Scandinavian, English (both American and British); in contrast, **high context communication** when all is understood from context, where Verbal messages have little meaning without the surrounding context. These are such cultures as

Japan, China, Arab Countries, Latin American countries; In these cultures relations are close and personal, like in a family (Hooker, 2008: 250). Practically, classical international tourism market leaders and core markets can be considered as low context, while current ongoing market changes means that high context cultures are expected to enter to these markets.

Third, conceptual challenges are packed into language and importance of competences. In a globalized world international trade is new form of global economical order. In 1960 international trade was only 136 billion USD, compared to 9 trillion in 2000 (EFMD). Growth of international trade stimulates further growth of global interdependence. Globalization requires managers to become intercultural competent. This competence includes **nature of work, worker and management process.** Any business conducted across national borders is different from business run in domestic market only (Saee 2007:56). Through occurring changes affecting modern societies in forms of market liberalization, political democratization and technological development, globalization obviously has created new challenges for international tourism and it can be named a product of globalization. It has also stimulated emergence of intercultural communication as a phenomena of a modern society involving interpersonal communication between people from different socio-cultural systems and/or communication between members of different subsystems (ethnical or racial groups) (Saee 2007: 57). However, these relations are accompanied with wrong assumptions, where among most important is that efficient communication between cultures is **solely based on linguistic competences**; much of knowledge that people have about different cultures is not based in language (Bloch 1991: 184) and assumption that communication is mechanical, unrelated to emotional and other interpersonal factors (Saee 2007:57).

At the same time undeservedly less attention is paid to the fact that misunderstandings come from existing stereotypes and unneeded ethnocentrism and intercultural differences are embedded into values and priorities of different cultures. Five competences needed to become intercultural competent 1) cultural awareness: understanding the differences, 2) communicative competence: communicating across the differences, 3) cognitive competence: acknowledging stereotypes, 4) valuing differences, 5) gaining synergy from the differences;

Fourthly, Barna M. LaRay gives an overall summary supplementing some of previously mentioned issues, naming them *stumbling blocks* (LaRay 1998:173). The ones deserving more attention are 1) assumption of similarities, based on own assumption of proper way of living, not considering biological and social expectations; 2) non-verbal interpretations of people representing different cultures; 3) previously formed assumptions and stereotypes creating misleading image reducing effectiveness of communication; 4) wish to evaluate and compare individual, group or cultural perception to one owns; 5) disturbance, as any

intercultural communication is closely related to interaction with unknown, creating wish of defense.

Summarizing, it can be concluded that globalization has helped to develop contemporary tourism and at the same time created new challenges with further global integration. Discourse of intercultural communication, its importance and competences is among key issues to be noted. Overall literature analysis of intercultural communication highlights conceptual cultural differences of emerging markets and content of these differences is challenging to business. Integration of basic principles of intercultural communication should be respected into international tourism business as they respect important elements of the industry (**individual relations to group**, **perception** and **language**)

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