

BASIC THEORIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

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Abstract: The competence of intercultural communication in teaching a foreign language is formed on the basis of knowledge about the customs and traditions of the country where the language is being studied. Intercultural competence is of great importance in establishing relations between representatives of two cultures. This article discusses the theories and factors that have gained importance in the history of the development of intercultural communication competence, the stages and objects of the implementation of each theory.

Key words: Intercultural competence, modeling, theory, factors, ethnocentrism, cultural difference, cultural level

MADANIYATLARARO MULOQOT KOMPETENSIYASINI RIVOJLANISHIDAGI ASOSIY NAZARIYALAR

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Annotatsiya: Chet tilini o'qitishda madaniyatlararo muloqot kompetensiyasi tili o'rganilayotgan mamlakatning udumlari, an'analari haqidagi bilimlar asosida shakllanadi. Ikki madaniyat vakillari o'rtasida munosabatlarni to'g'ri yo'lga qo'yishda madaniyatlararo kompetensiyani ahamiyati katta. Mazkur maqolada madaniyatlararo muloqot kompetensiyasining rivojlanish tarixida muhim ahamiyat kasb etgan nazariyalar va omillar, har bir nazariyani amalga oshish bosqichlari va obyektlari muhokama qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Madaniyatlararo kompetensiya, modellashtirish, nazariya, omillar, etnosentrizm, madaniy tafovut, madaniy daraja

ОСНОВНЫЕ ТЕОРИИ РАЗВИТИЯ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ

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Аннотация: Компетенция межкультурной коммуникации при обучении иностранному языку формируется на основе знаний об обычаях и традициях страны, где изучается язык. Межкультурная компетентность имеет большое значение в установлении отношений между представителями

двух культур. В данной статье рассматриваются теории и факторы, получившие значение в истории развития компетенции межкультурного общения, этапы и объекты реализации каждой теории.

Ключевые слова. Межкультурная компетентность, моделирование, теория, факторы, этноцентризм, культурные различия, культурный уровень

Introduction

Intercultural competence is commonly defined as an individual's skill in effectively communicating with people from diverse cultures and adapting to various cultural settings (Whaley, Davis, 2007). Researchers (Leung et al., 2014) have observed that there are now over 30 different models of intercultural competence and more than 300 related constructs.

The first model that will be discussed is Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence. This model is discussed for three reasons: 1) it is one of the most widely cited models, and one with the most recognition outside of the academia (see Byram, 2014 for an overview of the influences of his model, for example his work for the 10 Council of Europe); 2) the model was specifically designed with foreign language teaching contexts in mind; 3) although Gerlich et al. (2010) drew on other models as well, Byram's (1997) model served as a basis for their study of ICC in bilingual preschools. The other three models that will be discussed vary with regards their influence and recognition in the field of ICC, and were chosen because each of them approaches intercultural communicative competence from a different perspective, and each has particular strengths that may not be present in other models.

Materials and Methods

Byram's (1997) model consists of four competences: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and intercultural. The definitions of the first three competences are borrowed from van Ek's (1986) model of communicative ability, which was designed to describe the aspects of competence in a foreign language. Byram adapted the definitions to fit his model, in particular the aspects of definitions that reflected a native-speaker model, which he was highly critical of.

The amended definitions are shown in Table 2. Byram criticised the assumption that a competent L2 speaker would possess the same kind of communicative competence as a native speaker of the target language, and in his view, a more desirable outcome of language learning would be that of a learner with the ability to see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviours and meanings, as expressed in a foreign language, and those of their interlocutors, expressed in the same language – or even a combination of languages – which may be the interlocutors’ native language or not. In his model, intercultural competence is only one of the components of intercultural communicative competence. Intercultural communicative competence requires linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence in a foreign language. Intercultural competence, on the other hand, is concerned with cultural, rather than linguistic, knowledge and skills, and can refer to the ability to interact with people from different cultures in the interlocutor’s own language. The inclusion of competence in a foreign language is a major strength of Byram’s model, as many other models focus only on intercultural competence. Intercultural competence consists of five components, outlined below:

- Attitude (*savoir être*) of openness and curiosity, characterised by willingness to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality. Readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others’ meanings and behaviours, readiness to suspend belief in one’s own meanings and behaviour.

- Knowledge (*savoirs*) about social groups in one’s own country and the interlocutor’s country; knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal level. The latter includes declarative knowledge about how social identities are acquired, and how they shape people’s worldviews, as well as procedural knowledge of how to act in specific circumstances. Procedural knowledge is therefore linked to the next component, skill of interpreting and relating.

- Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*) documents or events based on one’s knowledge of own and interlocutor’s culture. This includes the

ability to identify ethnocentric perspectives and areas of misunderstanding, and to explain them in terms of cultural differences. Skill of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*).

- The skill of discovery is a skill of acquiring knowledge and understanding of cultural elements present in documents or interactions, in case of lack of or incomplete knowledge. The skill of interaction is related to the skill of discovery, as discovery can often take place through interaction. The skill of interaction relies on knowledge, attitude, and skills of interpreting and relating which need to be operated in real time.

- Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) of one's own and interlocutor's practices and products. Critical cultural awareness allows one to identify and evaluate explicit and implicit values in documents and events from different cultures.

In the previously mentioned study with ICC experts, Deardorff (2006) proposed a model of intercultural competence based on the highest rated components of ICC by the experts, as well as a review of the existing literature. Two alternative representations of the model were developed – a pyramid version (Figure 3) and a process version (Figure 4). The pyramid version illustrates how the development of certain aspects of intercultural competence is dependent on other elements being in place. Starting from the bottom of the pyramid, attitude is the foundational component which knowledge and skills build on. Possessing the desired attitudes, knowledge and skills results in particular internal outcomes which in turn allows for the desired external outcome to occur. The process visualization allows for a more complex representation of how intercultural competence is acquired. The cyclical arrangement of the components illustrates how the acquisition of intercultural competence is a continuous process, and how each of the elements can improve, but perfect competence can never be reached. The arrows reaching from attitude, knowledge and skills to the external outcome illustrate how the external outcome is possible with limited competence. However, the appropriateness and effectiveness of the outcome increase when the individual

continuously develops all of the subsequent components of intercultural competence.

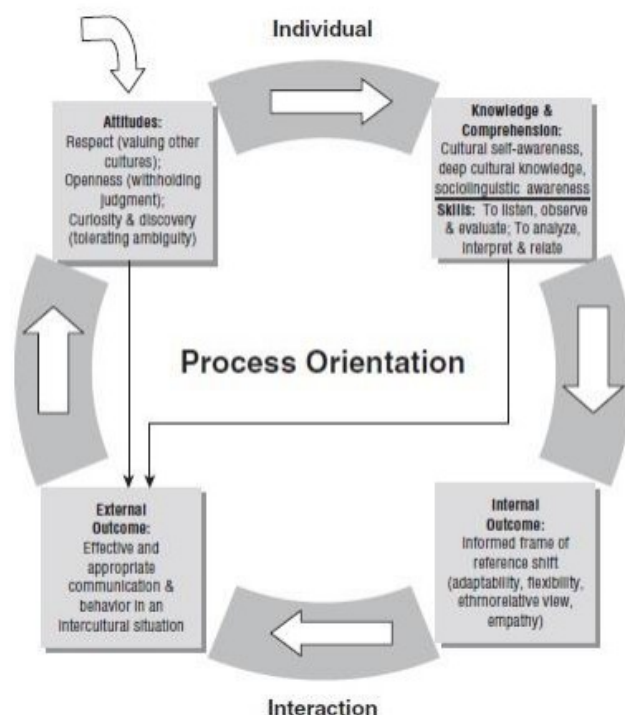


Figure 1. Process visualisation of Deardorff's model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006, p. 256).

There are several advantages to Deardorff's (2006) model. Firstly, it is the only model of ICC that incorporates multiple scholars' perspectives on what constitutes ICC. Another advantage of the model is that it includes the desired outcomes of ICC, both internal and external, rather than just describing the intercultural competent individual's traits. The model also illustrates the relationship between the components, and the different stages of acquiring intercultural competence.

The Intercultural Competence Assessment project (INCA, 2004) was a European Union project aimed at developing a framework of intercultural communicative competence similar to that of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). The framework was developed with working adults in mind, in order to provide a basis for training and assessment of ICC in professional settings. It was based on the work of Byram (1997), as well as Torsten Kühlmann (1996), Bernd Müller-Jacquier (2000) and

Gerhard Budin. While Byram's and Deardorff's models outline the desired attitude, knowledge, and skills, the INCA framework approaches intercultural competence from a slightly different angle. It identifies six characteristics of an interculturally competent person: tolerance for ambiguity, behavioural flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for otherness, and empathy. Within each of those characteristics, the desired motivation, skills or knowledge, and behaviour are outlined (Table 3). Based on the desired motivation, skill/knowledge and behaviour an assessment framework with descriptors of three levels of intercultural competence ('basic', 'intermediate', and 'full') was created. Such a framework provides a very precise description of the desired components of ICC at different stages of development, although it does not show the relationships between the different components. Another advantage of this model is that it is based on several scholars' perspectives, rather than just one scholar's perspective.

Based on the analysis of the students' assignments, Holmes and O'Neill identified several phases of the process of acquiring intercultural competence in interaction: - acknowledging reluctance and fear prior to engaging in interaction with the Cultural Other - foregrounding stereotypes in which the Cultural Other is seen as different from the person who holds the stereotypes - moving beyond stereotypes and re-evaluating them based on the experience of interaction with the Cultural Other - monitoring feelings of self and the Cultural Other, in an effort to please the Cultural Other, build trust and friendship - working through confusion with regards to one's own and the Cultural Other's identity; working through frustration with the difficult process of acquiring intercultural competence - moving from complacency to complexity when evaluating one's own intercultural competence - acknowledging limitations to competence, for example conversation topics that might be very difficult to discuss due to cultural differences, such as politics. A crucial characteristic of Holmes and O'Neill's model is that these phases are non-linear and are often interconnected: they do not necessarily occur in the order outlined above, the phases can overlap, and the learner can move back and forth between the different phases. Based on this model, the authors proposed

the following definition of intercultural competence: “Critical awareness of Self and Other in an intercultural encounter, with appropriate attention to relationship building, monitoring and managing emotions, empathy, and facework” (p. 716).

Conclusion

Together, the four models show how ICC might be described and represented. Byram’s (1997) model describes the attitude, knowledge, and skills of an interculturally competent person, as well as the different competences in a foreign language, and the role of the foreign language classroom in acquiring ICC. Deardorff’s (2006) model portrays attitude, knowledge and skills in a hierarchy, with attitude being the most basic component. It also shows the process of acquiring ICC, and its desired internal and external outcomes. The INCA framework (2004) specifies six different components of ICC, each of which consists of the desired motivation, skills/knowledge, and behaviour. The framework also specifies three different levels of development, with indicators of each. Holmes and O’Neill’s model (2012) model outlines the developmental phases of acquiring ICC, focusing on how the learner experiences and manages the process. The models also represent different ways in which a model might be created: Holmes and O’Neill’s model (2012) was empirically-derived; the INCA framework (2004) and Deardorff’s (2006) model was designed based on the insights of multiple ICC scholars; Byram’s (1997) model was based on his own previous work, and on various existing studies from different disciplines.

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