Contemporary Issues in Language Teaching

Edited by
Marija Stevkovska, Emin Idrizi, and Igballe Miftari-Fetishi

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CHAPTER 6

Intercultural Communication in English Language Teaching: Perceptions, Models, Concepts and Theories

Natka Jankova Alagjozovska

Introduction

Intercultural communication is becoming an essential part of the education system nowadays because of globalization, immigration and the multicultural work environments. The need for training, knowledge and research in this field is increasing because of the recent trends in education. Intercultural communication as a complex term should be explored from different perspectives in order to define it. For that reason, the terms culture and communication which are in relation to intercultural communication are to be explored further.

There are numerous definitions of culture amongst which a very interesting one is by Tylor who wrote in 1871 stating that culture is something complex- incorporating knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs and all shared customs which are shared by the social surrounding. It is difficult to define culture and it is not strange that this word has also been described as one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. A very famous scholar in this field Hofstede (2001) also essentially defined it as a kind of programming of the mind of the people who are members of a group or society. However, in his book Culture's Consequences (1980), he introduces the use of the concept of dimensions of culture: basic problems to which different national societies have over time developed different answers. National culture is what distinguishes one country from another. It is what every individual belonging to that culture is indoctrinat-

ed with. In one of his interviews, Hofstede makes the claim that the acquisition of one's national culture is an unconscious process, because we are born into a certain culture and by the age of nine or ten, we have already acquired all of the elements, language, behaviors, values, history and organizations of that culture (October 10, 2011). This is done subconsciously simply because that particular culture is the only culture we know and we are exposed to. Consequently, one is so thoroughly imbued with all the elements typical of their own culture that while growing up it becomes almost impossible to comprehend how anyone else's culture could be any different from theirs. The second level of culture defined by Hofstede is the culture we encounter as part of the working world i.e. organizational culture. The definition of this cultural subtype can be embedded in Hofstede's definition of national culture by simply replacing the terms group or category of people with organization or the programming of the mind as mentioned previously. Cultural awareness is very important when it comes to communication with people from different cultures. The reason is that people observe, assess and interpret things in another manner. Sometimes, cultural misunderstandings make the business harder to expand, develop or even make it impossible. It is by every mean essential to increase cultural awareness and knowledge of intercultural communication because of the different aspects of people's lives and this can help people further increase the awareness of their own culture. The etymology of the word "communication" can be explained with the Latin word "communicare" and its meaning is "to share/make common" (Weekley, 1967). Since communication is a process which involves the sender and the receiver of information, what is essential in communication is also meaning and understanding. In our case, the center of communication is the relationship that involves interaction between participants coming from different ethnic backgrounds which gives the definition of Intercultural Communication.

Intercultural Communication Perspectives: Cultural Identity

Intercultural communication is interdisciplinary and integrates disciplines such as: anthropology, sociology, linguistics, psychology, history, geography, arts, music etc. Intercultural communication can be understood as interactions with members of other cultures in which an individual strives to understand the cultural values, beliefs and

norms of other parties and is able to achieve successful communication with the other by understanding the differences (Sadri & Flammia, 2013, p. 26). When people have mutual experiences, it leads to deeper understandings of the group. It is not surprising that the idioms, proverbs and non-verbal gestures are very often misunderstood by people who are outside the group i.e. from a different culture. In order to communicate, if people are from a different culture, they do not just need a mutual language, but they should also try to understand the culture. No matter the fact that English language and its use as a means of communication cannot remove the need for cultural understanding between people from different cultures. Communication, as an element of culture is a symbolic process by which people pass the information to each other and create shared meanings. (Gydikunst, 2002, p. 27).

When communicating interculturally, it is very important to recognize people's identity and how identity affects the communication in a multicultural setting. When entering a conversation in such settings, the members of the particular cultural group share the same values, traditions, signs and meanings. Hortobágyi (2009) states that in communication and daily interactions people define who they are and negotiate their identities with people who are similar to them or different from them (p. 259). Within intercultural communication, the participants are part of a different communication system and very often the differences may lead to conflicts in a verbal or non-verbal manner. Whether we speak about undesired discrimination or making improper gestures, frustrating situations easily occur. Even though a lot of definitions about identity are found within literature, it is still difficult to find the proper definition. According to Fearon (1999), identity can be social and personal, whereas the first one refers to a social category and the second one to the personal identity which is something unique for a person who feels proud about its identity and is less changeable in connection to the previous one. Thus, identity has a double meaning in this definition i.e. refers to the categories of the society and the individual's dignity or national pride. Identity can refer to personal features in terms of social category and the idea of the social category which is bound up with the individual self-respect. According to Luoma (2005), most individuals experience personal and cultural change in order to establish mutual understanding with people from other cultures. Cultures also change in this process, because social, political, economic and historical influences affect cultural and intercultural interactions.

Discussing identities during the English language lessons using various authentic materials is very important since students can share their beliefs, values, traditions from their cultural point of view. "Knowledge about other groups is not isolated factual knowledge, but rather "relational", it is something acquired due to socialization with different and their own social groups and often compared to the essential characteristics of one's national group and identity" (Byram, 1997).

With the recent methodology of ELT, teachers are now the facilitators in learning the foreign language and students are more autonomous and are involved in the process of learning by setting their own goals, doing their tasks and self-checking their progress and acquiring the cultural awareness by interacting with students from different ethnic backgrounds. Galante (2015) confirms that the recent pedagogy entails the use of foreign language in order to criticize worldviews and to construct and reconstruct knowledge through social relations of cultures, race, ethnicity, gender, and identities. In connection to this, Foncha (2014) concludes that during social interaction, students collaborate between each other and develop critical thinking skills by observing, analyzing and evaluating information.

When the students are engaged and involved in the lesson all the time, then the classroom activities are the best way of learning the new language along with the intercultural communication competence. Task-based activities which are engaging for students and keep them active throughout the whole lesson appear to be the best way of fostering language and achieving the intercultural competence aim. Corbett (2010) points out that "typical intercultural activities combine language tasks with ethnography and critical thinking. For many language learners today, intercultural exploration blends internet research and chat room discussion with a fresh, systematic, reflective investigation into familiar aspects of one's own culture". By doing this, students appear to create awareness towards their own language and culture and to the others. Consequently, commitment, cooperation and support can be seen as an important aim in language learning and intercultural communication competence.

In today's so-called global village of the digitalized world, the differences should be negotiated and the identities would be set free from prejudice and communication without boundaries should be accomplished. Identities can be seen as kinds of projects which

consist of people´s self-told stories of themselves reflecting to their past, present and future" (Romo, 2015, p. 9). The development of multiethnic identities has been dynamic in the course of recent decades. However, teachers everywhere in the world need to create radical pedagogical ways of teaching and learning through which they will give students the chance to use their own identities and in order to accomplish successful oral and written intercultural communication. Further, during English lessons students should be able to express and reflect on their own identity, their views of culture and learn to respect the others' linguistic and cultural diversity.

Intercultural Communication in English Language Teaching

Foreign language teaching and learning has gone through major changes over the past years. Replacing the old grammar-translation approach with the communicative and audio-lingual method and the practices of real-life situations, most of the educators have moved from pedagogy to language acquisition and learning. According to the theory of Stephen Krashen (1988), the unconscious development of the target language system happens because of the usage of the language for real communication (p. 1). From here, learning should be oriented towards the natural acquisition of grammar and processes which are not spontaneous. Therefore, students who are readers of literature books can achieve better results in regard to their communicative and linguistic competence. Speaking about English language teaching, students become aware of certain culture very often through literature texts. As Corbett stated in 2003, the most essential aim of the English teacher is to be able to persuade the students to read in order to understand different contexts, improve their vocabulary and to be able to implement their knowledge in different cultural contexts i.e. cultural situations.

In the *Multidimensional Model of Intercultural Competence,* Byram (1997) puts emphasis on the attitude and uses words such as being open and curious enough to explain his opinion that one individual must be open about learning new beliefs, values and views of the world in order to have relationships of equality (Moeller and Nugent, 2014). Because culture is who we are and how we live and this process is changeable, those changes bring new challenges in the society. Globalization, migration and the mingling of cultures in one place or community has made this world highly multicultural. Global-

ization brings the need to interact and have different kinds of relationships with people from different cultures. It creates a new challenge for people who are to cross the borders of the countries altogether with their cultural boundaries. English language is studied in primary schools starting from the first grade today. This was not the case ten or twenty years ago. Students started studying English from their fifth, then from their fourth grade of primary school studies; some classes were experimental and now, even children who do not go to school start learning it.

According to Byram, there are different viewpoints of studying languages: "Employers see language learning as one of the essential skills in international trade – and almost all trade is now international – and parents see the acquisition of languages, particularly English, as an important way of investing in their children and giving them the social and cultural capital they will carry forward into future generations" (Byram, p. 77). The ultimate goal of the so-called intercultural approach is not the 'native speaker competence' but the intercultural communicative competence and this means to be able to understand the language and behavior of the target community and the ability to share it with members of the 'home' community. This competence can teach learners to be diplomats i.e. able to view different cultures from a perspective of informed understanding and this aim displaces the long-standing objective of ELT – to attain 'native speaker proficiency'. According to Livermore (1998, p. 10), the intercultural competence of the teacher means to be able to facilitate the learning in cognitive, emotional and behavioral settings among students from different cultures than their own. This scholar points out the main competencies that the teacher should develop for effective learning atmosphere when teaching students from different cultures than his/her own:

a) knowledge - even though it is widely denied the meaning of theory and practice, the effectiveness of the teacher depends on his/her theoretical knowledge in the following areas: interculturalism: meaning, importance, cultural misunderstandings, conflicts, factors for effective intercultural communication, symbiosis of learning and culture; models of assessment, the needs of the students and ways of learning; even though every teacher knows his/her field very well, the broadness and profoundness in that field is very important because of the needed cultural adaptation and it must be clear what is included in the curriculum speaking about culture and interculturalism in education.

b) skills - the skills of the teacher will transform his/her knowledge in effective results which will be justified in a successful project:

- planning and design: the key word is the grade of the students as a group (behavior, history, context) of the cultural behavior they can attain during the lessons

- accomplishment: what is being planned it must be done. There should be a variety of the content especially in the methods and instruments of learning. The progress should be monitored and summative and formative assessment should be used

c) Attitude - this is a very subjective competence but it has an important meaning:

- tolerance for ambiguity: each educational element has some level of ambiguity which is raised especially in multicultural settings. If the teacher is not so open-minded and follows the lesson planning and does not allow unexpected changes and is frustrated by the students than this teacher is not effective

- maintain personal cultural identity - the biggest mistake of the teacher when having contacts with students from another culture is to become as them without staying as he/she is and rely on his/her own cultural identity.

- patience is very important about teachers. By having contacts with students from different ethnic backgrounds there are always barriers in communication and some answers on the behalf of the teacher can isolate the students or motivate them or in the worst case turn it into a barrier of communication.

- enthusiasm which turns into a powerful factor in intercultural education

- interpersonal communication: though more important among some cultures than others, strong interpersonal skills are essential for intercultural education

 - being interested in the students - the openness considering their problems, life, perspectives which should be real and not only symbolic

- empathy - understanding the feelings of the students considering learning and their own cultural orientations

- sense of humor - is precious when solving problems and lowering the pressure as a whole.

d) Behavior. A sign of acquired intercultural competence can be found in the high standard the teacher sets - career and professional development, understanding the needs of the students, sharing knowledge and experience with the colleagues, self-reflexivity and self-criticism, improving knowledge in their field and acquiring stimulus learning environment. (Livermore, 1998, p. 10).

Intercultural competence is essential when learning any foreign language and it cannot be denied that by learning a language one can only become interculturally competent. Moreover, learning any foreign language is the most effective way to understand and learn more about how the language shapes the worldview of the other and this comes to be the central aim of intercultural competence. Finally, it can be concluded that teaching any foreign language is much more than improving the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary without learning the culture explicitly. As Byram (1989) points out, culture has become a necessary tool in teaching a foreign language having in mind the following elements: raising awareness of one's identity and of the existence of difference, enhancing understanding of self and others and fostering appreciation of otherness (p. 25).

Intercultural Communication Models, Concepts and Theories

Intercultural communication competence means to be able to communicate in an effective and appropriate way with people from different cultures. In order to achieve appropriate and effective communication, one must value rules, norms of the other culture which can be fulfilled by having a more developed sense for intercultural communication. Intercultural communication cognition of English language teachers would mean the ability of teachers to incorporate intercultural communication knowledge, attitudes and awareness towards other cultures. Chen and Starosta (1999) define intercultural communication competence as effective and appropriate communication of people with different behaviors that discuss their different cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment" (p. 28). They mention three components of intercultural communication competence: intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness and intercultural adroitness which are actually the verbal and nonverbal skills which are needed for effective intercultural communication. In order to go into details of ICC, four models are to be explained in details below along with one theory and one concept:

1.Process Model (D. Deardorff)

D. Deardorff's model of ICC is named Process Model of ICC. This model explains the process of how to become interculturally competent. The main elements needed to achieve ICC are attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal or external outcomes. If attitude means the way you feel or think about someone and one of the key attitudes are respect, openness, curiosity and discovery, then these are needed to move further for successful intercultural communication. Knowledge of culture and sociolinguistic awareness is also needed to achieve successful intercultural interaction. In connection to this are the skills to process the knowledge such as observation, listening, analyzing and interpreting. All these lead to the internal outcome which includes flexibility, adaptability and empathy. Finally, empathy plays an important role for achieving the wanted external outcomes i.e. do not do to others what you do not want to be done and vice versa i.e. the acceptable behavior and communication in different situations that are considered intercultural. Furthermore, Deardorff (2006) suggests that this model is open and allows individuals to enter at any point and they can move freely between categories, sometimes moving ahead, and at other times returning to delve deeper into a concept previously encountered:
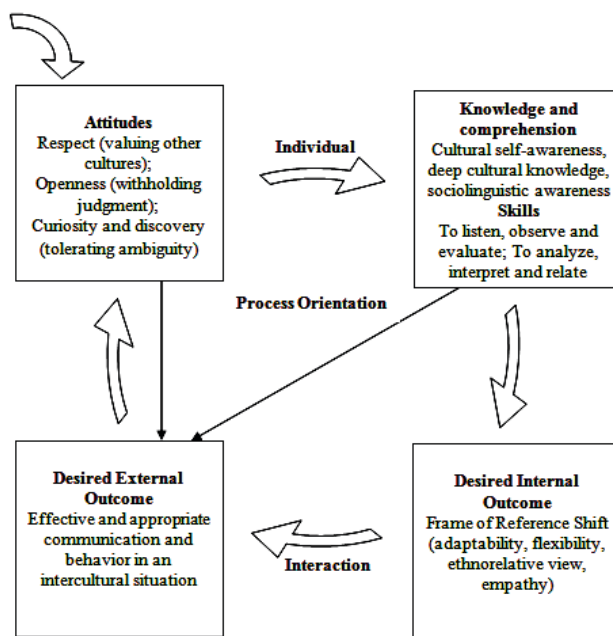

Figure 1 – D. C. Deardorff Process Model of ICC

This model proves that if an individual has the needed attitudes and the minimal acceptable behavior and style of communication it is possible to achieve the desired outcome. If the person possesses the knowledge and skills he/she will be more effective in the intercultural interaction. This model shows that ICC is not a finalized process. One cannot become completely interculturally competent because this is a lifelong process. However, language is not the only needed skill for ICC but it is only a bridge to move on and develop more and more skills and understand the others.

2. Byram's model

Byram's model in ICC whose concept is in accordance with linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence adds detailed intercultural dimension in order to move away from the native speaker model of communication. (Han & Song, 176). It also combines knowledge, skills and discovery and interaction, intercultural attitudes and cultural awareness which is considered critical into a system of intercultural competence. Thus, the role of the language is to develop skills, attitudes and awareness of values just as much as it is to develop knowledge of a particular culture or country (Byram, 2008).
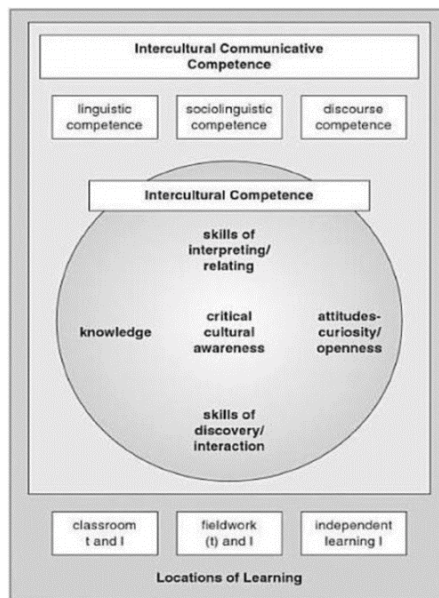

Figure 2 – Byram's Model of ICC

According to Byram's model as shown in Figure 2 above, intercultural competence is made of knowledge, skills and attitudes and all these are accompanied by five values: intercultural attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2002). Byram gives explanation of ICC consisting of interaction with the "other" using the one's native language or interpretation of documents that have been translated into one's native language. Hence ICC is about combining the ideas of self-awareness when communicating in a foreign language as a needed component to the intercultural case.

3. Bennet's model

A very important approach connected to this issue is Bennet's model of cultural competence. According to Bennet (1993), "Cultural competence is the process by which people learn to value and respond respectfully to people of all cultures." (p. 245). It is crucial for teachers to develop intercultural communication competence which has two prerequisites:

- intercultural communication awareness

- intercultural communication sensitivity

According to Bennett's model (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity) individuals with intercultural sensitivity tend to transform themselves from the ethnocentric stage to the ethno-relative stage. Bennett's model known as the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) consists of a continuum of six stages moving from "ethnocentrism" to "ethno-relativism." From one hand, the ethnocentric stages are denial, defense, and minimization. On the other hand, the ethno-relative stages such as acceptance, adaptation, and integration are distinguished. This model is organized in six levels identifying the cognitive orientations of individuals in understanding cultural difference. Each level describes the perception of the cultural difference which is connected to the experiences of other cultures. By identifying the certain differences in culture and perceiving the attitudes and habits what can be easily done is the development of an intercultural model of education.
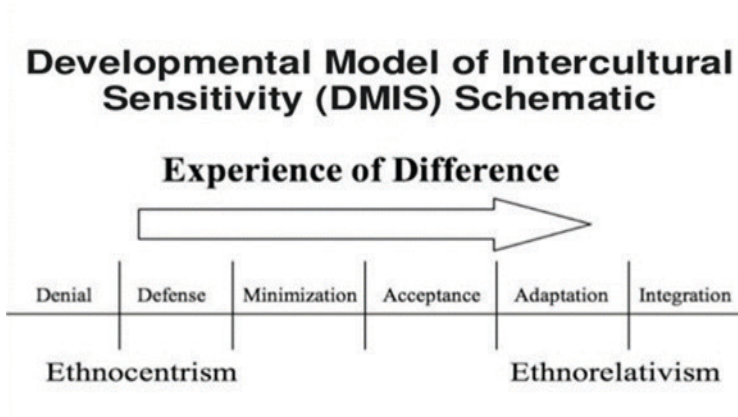
Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) Schematic

Experience of Difference

Denial	Defense	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation	Integration

Ethnocentrism   Ethnorelativism

Figure 3 – Bennet's Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

The figure shows how moving from "ethnocentrism" i.e. the feeling that your individual culture is central in reality, towards "ethno-relativism" which means that the individual's culture has experienced the context of other cultures by acceptance, adaptation and integration. The six stages will be explained in details below:

i. *Denial*

This stage represents the lowest rate of openness for other cultures. In this stage the individual is not aware of the existence of the other culture and it happens due to physical and social isolation from such differences. This kind of a person is the ultimate ethnocentric one and as such, the state of mind of this person has a limited degree of contact with different cultures (Bennet, 1986). At some point they are even not aware that the other cultures exist, and their own vision of the world is not challenged to see other cultures as they are.

ii. *Defense*

In this stage the person perceives the different cultures as threatening by forming negative stereotypes and different types of discrimination such as race, gender as a form of denigration of a particular group of people. According to Jenkins and Morgan (2002) this phase strengthens the relationships between the members of a certain group and

establishes a 'boundary' between the two seemingly opposing categories. Sometimes it can be about cultural superiority assuming that the culture of your own is better than any other according to some evolutionary projections. Or in the ultimate stage of defense it is about feeling that "the other cultures are quite simply inferior to ours, on a continuum of which we are the apogee" (Chodzkienė, 2014, pg. 218).

iii. *Minimalization*

The final stage of ethnocentrism is the last attempt to bury the differences and it is presumed that humans are governed by common principles that guide values and conducts in their surroundings. Minimalization suggests that individuals disregard and/or trivialize differences by burying them under the 'weight of cultural similarities' (Bennett, 1986, pg. 183). If people are in an intercultural situation at this stage they will deem that a simple awareness for interaction will be needed for successful communication. Somehow this is still an ethnocentric view because for these individuals' differences are just some variations of different cultures. Between the stages of minimalization and acceptance there is a transition which is marked by a new way of perceiving the different cultures as dynamic and fluid and not as static and rigid.

iv. *Acceptance*

At this stage people do not have the expected behavior for acceptance but they start to behave as such. More precisely, they begin to give values to other cultures and begin to be co-creators of their own reality (Berger &Luckman, 1967). People in this phase start to seek some options to explore differences of other cultures and do not feel that they are threatening to them. They begin to accept that people can have their own cultural norms and rules different from theirs and they feel some kind of an amusement in that. This stage can be taken as the stage of marking openness in the way they perceive the differences.

v. *Adaptation*

This stage is essential for the acquisition of intercultural communication. The process of acceptance of different cultures is a process of changes in behavior and perception of the world and it is the heart of intercultural communication. The initial feeling of adaptation is empathy. Bennet defines it as a temporary change of the frame of reference where

we perceive situations as if we put ourselves in the shoes of the other person. Adaptation comes after acceptance and it is a change of behavior in terms of empathizing with people from another cultures.

vi. Integration

This is the last stage of openness to other cultures. In this stage the multicultural person is a one who is constantly in the process of becoming an integral part of a culture. This is being developed only after certain periods of living in different locations whereas the person contacts with different cultures. According to Bennet (1986), "Integration indicates that individuals are able to become a part of and apart from a given cultural context" (p. 186).

Another approach for developing intercultural competence connected to Bennet's model is present in recent literature and that is the extended learning model with implications from cultural neuroscience. This model suggests that the intercultural training programs among workers from different ethnic backgrounds are often taken as unsuccessful or very often cause even more cultural issues within the institution. According to this model, only the regular intercultural theoretical training is not enough to accomplish the desired outcome. Bennett's model of the developmental process for intercultural competence moving from ethnocentrism toward ethno-relativism gives another dimension for intercultural trainings. Recently, the field of cultural neuroscience has emerged and exposed new ways of combining theories and methods of cultural psychology with neuroscience (Ames & Fiske, 2010; Fiske, 2009). A lot of research has been done about people's backgrounds, practices, and beliefs which have shaped the psychological and neurobiological processes underlying their different behaviors (Chiao & Ambady, 2007; Kitayama & Cohen, 2007; Park & Gutchess, 2006). Based on the extended learning model, three suggestions are provided. These include activating change, mitigating egocentric biases, and integrating organizational interventions and are open for further research.

4. Gudykunsts's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory

This theory is based on the prediction that effective intercultural communication is essential for developing intercultural communication competence. Gudykunsts's theory

introduced the terms anxiety and uncertainty when encountering strangers. Spitzberg (2010) defines ICC "as an impression that behavior is appropriate and effective in a given context." Along with this is mentioned the effective communication in intercultural context which is central to this theory. AUM was constructed in the shift from the emergence of ICC studies (Yoshitake, 2002, pg.178). Gudykunsts's theory is named Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (AUM) whereas the desired result is not the reduced anxiety and uncertainty but effective communication. This theory focuses on encounters between cultural in-groups and strangers (Griffin& Bone, 2017, pg. 426). This theory applies in any situation where one person in an intercultural situation feels as a stranger. However, it is not necessary to travel to a foreign land in order to feel as or be a stranger.

AUM theory points out that when interacting with strangers, there will always be a sense of uncertainty and anxiety. In intercultural cases, uncertainty and anxiety are present due to cultural differences and a lack of understanding of cultural rules. From one hand, uncertainty is a cognitive phenomenon and means the inability to predict what strangers feel, believe, what are their values, attitudes and behavior. On the other hand, anxiety is the affective equivalent of uncertainty. In the AUM theory there are 94 axioms (Gudykunst, 1995) and one of the main axioms of that theory is actually Axiom 39, which states:

> An increase in our ability to manage our anxiety about interacting with strangers and an increase in the accuracy of our predictions and explanations regarding their behavior will produce an increase in the effectiveness of our communication (Gudykunst, 1995).

According to this axiom, in order to communicate effectively we need to manage appropriately our uncertainty and anxiety. This axiom may be appropriate only if one is careful of the communication process whereas anxiety and uncertainty are between its minimum and maximum. In spite of saying that, uncertainty and anxiety will not necessarily move towards effective communication. What he says is that in these conditions one can mindfully try to understand strangers and how strangers are interpreting the messages. In that case one can reply in such manner that will lead to effective communication. Hence, the management of uncertainty and anxiety is actually the desired effec-

tive communication which depends on what is being done and in what circumstances. However, there are a lot of critiques of the AUM theory and one of it is the critique by Griffin and Ting-Toomey. In connection with the above-mentioned axiom Griffin and Ting-Toomey point out that effective communication and the closest meaning to incoming messages will not minimize misunderstanding and the problems of this thesis are the definition of effective communication and effective communication as the goal of ICC (Yoshitake, 2002, pg. 182). In conclusion, considering effective communication as the closest meaning of the intended meaning reduces communication to a linear and mechanical activity i.e. this theory only explains the mechanical aspect of communication.

5. Chen and Starosta's Concept

These were the critics of intercultural communication studies considering the intercultural competence and stated that the previous studies have conceptual ambiguity. That is the reason why Chen and Starosta (1996) developed a model of intercultural communication competence that integrates features of both cross-cultural attitude and behavioral skills models. The model has three conceptual dimensions of intercultural communication competence, including intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural adroitness. Based on this conceptual model, Chen and Starosta (2000) exposed the nature and components of intercultural sensitivity and developed an instrument to measure the concept. They created a questionnaire which measures intercultural sensitivity that includes the following factors:

1. Intercultural Engagement: the degree of participation in the intercultural communication;
2. Respect for Cultural Differences: to realize, accept and respect for other cultural diversities in the communication;
3. Interaction Confidence: how confident the interlocutors perform during intercultural communication;
4. Interaction Enjoyment: the level of delight interlocutors feel in the intercultural communication;
5. Interaction Attentiveness: the ability of receiving and responding to the messages properly during the intercultural communication.

This instrument of assessment of intercultural sensitivity consists of 24-items comprising the above-mentioned factors. Studies which have used this instrument suggest that the usage of the concepts in the instrument can be improved, but the instrument is acceptable and a culture free scale for measuring intercultural sensitivity can be developed further (Pourakbari & Chalak, 2015).

Conclusion

In summary, it can be emphasized what are the most important areas to focus on considering intercultural communication competence. In addition to the final theory of Gudykunst, who points out that effective communication is essential for successful ICC implementation, when doing training for ICC the following areas should be considered:

1. Developing self-concepts for self-identities and social identities
2. Correcting ethnocentrism
3. Dealing with and avoiding stereotyping
4. Increasing tolerance for anxiety and uncertainty when meeting "strangers"
5. Increasing empathy
6. Maintaining dignity and respect for strangers
7. Developing mindfulness

Therefore having and acquiring knowledge of intercultural communication is not enough in order to develop our intercultural competence; it is necessary to transform our attitudes and views of the world as well. Experience is difficult to transfer; it is through our personal experience that we learn best. As the AUM theory points out "if uncertainty and anxiety are managed, successful and effective communication takes place. They are the primary causes of intercultural misunderstanding (Griffin& Bone, 2017, pg.428). In addition, the field of neuroscience exposes findings that are connected to people's behavior and should be considered in further research.

Finally, it can be concluded that the intercultural approach trains learners to be diplomats i.e. they should be able to view cultures from a perspective of informed understand-

ing and this aim displaces the long-standing objective of language teaching - to attain native speaker proficiency. One can become more interculturally competent by traveling, mixing with people of different cultures, learning about different cultures, and accepting every culture as it is because each culture is special and worth respecting and this leads to ending disputes and provides mutual understanding between people all around the world.

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