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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SENSITIVITY – A PREREQUISITE FOR DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

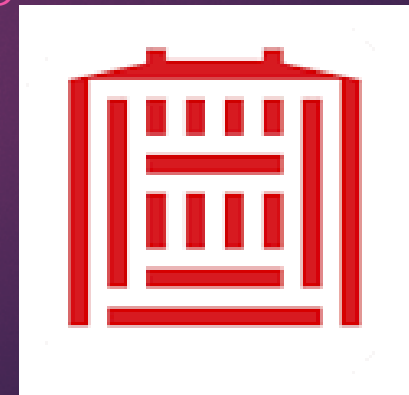
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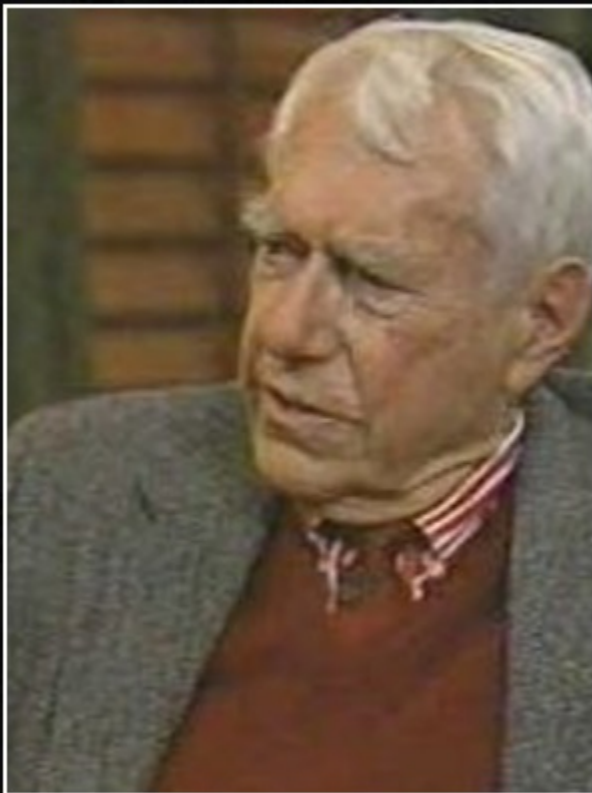
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



Outline

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Intercultural Communication Concepts
- ▶ Bennet's model of ICC
- ▶ Hypotheses
- ▶ Results
- ▶ Conclusive statistics
- ▶ Conclusion

INTRODUCTION



The essence of cross-cultural communication has more to do with releasing responses than with sending messages. It is more important to release the right response than to send the right message.

— *Edward T. Hall* —

Aspects of ICC according to Byram (2008):

- ▶ be aware of your own cultural identity;
- ▶ to be able to define your own independent position, knowing that it is culturally influenced;
- ▶ to strengthen confidence in yourself and from such a position to seek a variety of interaction with others;
- ▶ to create interest and active curiosity about otherness, as well as a sense of personal enrichment;
- ▶ to maintain tolerance and equality in your interactions;
- ▶ the ability to communicate effectively and adequately with minimal loss and distortion of understanding;
- ▶ the ability to reach agreement and cooperation with others.

Aims of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication takes place between nations and governments rather than individual to individual and it is quite formal and ritualized. Knowledge in IC can help in:

- ❖ Correcting ethnocentrism
- ❖ Dealing and avoiding stereotyping
- ❖ Increasing tolerance for anxiety and uncertainty when meeting "strangers"
- ❖ Maintaining dignity and respect for strangers
- ▶ The aim of the study is to prove that teachers in R.M. are not interculturally trained

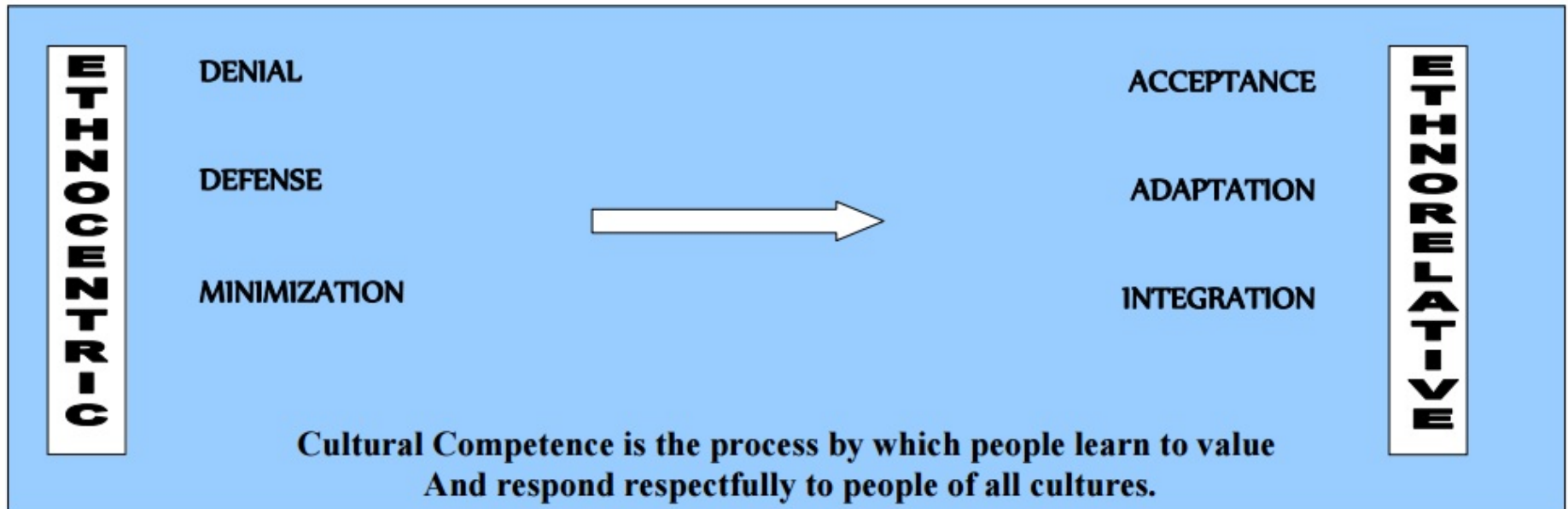
ICC Concepts

1. **Chen and Starosta** outline three key components of ICC: intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness and intercultural skills defined as verbal and nonverbal skills needed to act effectively in intercultural interactions.
2. **D. Deardorff's** model known as the Process Model of ICC goes into details of the process of becoming interculturally competent where the main elements needed to achieve ICC are attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal or external outcomes.
3. **Bennet's model** of cultural competence Bennett's model consists of a continuum of six stages moving from "ethnocentrism" to "ethnorelativism."
4. **Gudykunst theory** – Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory – effective communication

Why is ICC a needed component in teaching/learning any foreign language?

- ▶ 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. The model includes 6 stages →

BENNETT MODEL OF CULTURAL COMPETENCY



STAGES OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE

DENIAL: Unaware of the existence of cultural differences.

DEFENSE: Acknowledge cultural differences but feel threatened by them. Methods used to defend against uncomfortable feelings are:
Denigration *Superiority* *Reversal*

MINIMIZATION: Minimize cultural differences in order to protect one's own cultural identity.

ACCEPTANCE: Recognize and value cultural differences without judging them as positive or negative.

ADAPTATION: Adapt cognitively and behaviorally to cultural differences; Operate successfully within another culture.

INTEGRATION: Interact comfortably with a variety of cultures; Integration of cultural awareness into everyday interactions.

Bennett, M.J. (1993). Towards Ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R.M. Paige (Ed.) *Education for the intercultural experience*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Research questions

1. To what extent is intercultural communication sensitivity developed by English language teachers towards students from different ethnic backgrounds?

H: Those who have a higher level of intercultural communication sensitivity tend to have a lower level of ethnocentrism and appreciate the student's different cultures.

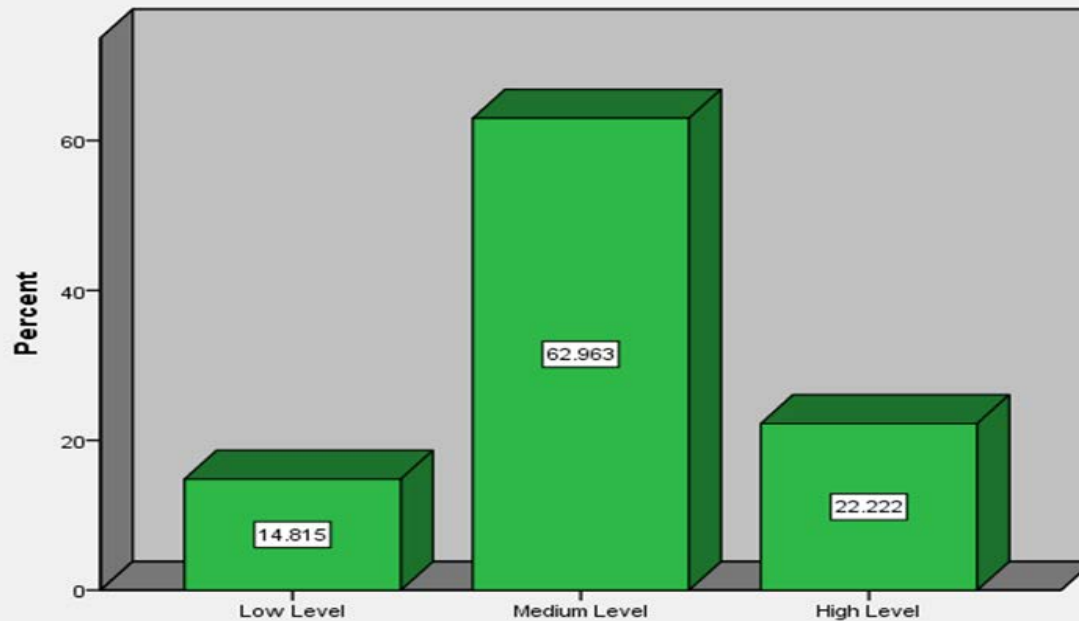
2. Which factors limit or increase the cultural awareness of teachers?

H: The lack of knowledge in Intercultural Communication limits the English language teachers' awareness of other cultures.

Participants: teachers from high-schools in Strumica (R.N.M) and Ruse (Bulgaria)

Research methods: questionnaire for the teachers

Results – the overall picture



Graph 2. Level of intercultural awareness of teachers

Conclusive statistics

- ▶ 63% of the participants - teachers have medium level of intercultural awareness, 22% show high level of intercultural awareness and 15% show low level of intercultural awareness.
- ▶ The intercultural level is higher in R.Bulgaria if compared to the teachers from R.N.Macedonia in this research.
- ▶ There is a significant statistical difference of the two countries: in R. Macedonia where the teacher's age determines the level of intercultural awareness in this research (50-59) show lower level of ICC in connection to the other age groups.

CONCLUSION



- Follow the recent trends of intercultural communication of teachers all the time
- Teachers should make the students become aware that stereotypes should disappear and the system of values will have some potential of making the students understand that this world can be a peaceful place to live in
- Skillful teachers are crucial for the achievement of this proposed framework of intercultural competence
- Start from ourselves



Thanks for your attention!

Q/A