

Intercultural Communicative Competence

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Abstract

Communication worldwide implies communication with other cultures, provision of certain customs and knowledge of peculiarities and norms of local culture that is the foundation of successful relation. Communication for business purposes needs more caution, so being competent for intercultural communication for business purposes is not easy. A lot of scientists tried to figure out main components of international communication competence (ICC). Understanding of the components will enable people in business and in general to sound decent, passable and adequate and be understood sufficiently. The article discusses development of concept of ICC and provides the latest approaches towards the issue.

Keywords: Communication, competence, intercultural

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Introduction

Communication of any purposes requires deep understanding of issue, ability to convey meaning in a proper and acceptable way, knowledge of common language and tolerance to differences. All these qualities can be expressed by one word – competence. Chen offers three aspects of conceptualization of competence. According to him, it is *“the cognitive ability to understand situational and environmental requirements, ... motivation to demonstrate the ability to understand situational and environmental requirements, ... the effectiveness and appropriateness for accomplishing specific goals in interaction”* (Chen, 2005, pp. 4-5). All aspects mentioned above are especially important for business communication and much more important for ICC.

There are many attempts to define exact constituents of ICC. Along with the development of communication studies and development of human

interaction, the concept of ICC has undergone some changes and developed further.

Development of the Concept of ICC

Xiaodong Dai, an Associate Professor at the Foreign Languages College of Shanghai Normal University, China, and Guo-Ming Chen, a Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Rhode Island, USA based on their 30-year research give the concept of ICC, its development and future prospects. According to their thorough literature review, they distinguish different models of dimensions and components of ICC concept. The most widely adopted dimensions and components of ICC appeared to be personal attributes, communication skills, psychological adaptation and cultural awareness. All of them are broad concepts involving many components itself. Figure 1 shows the exact compositions of four-dimensional ICC concept.

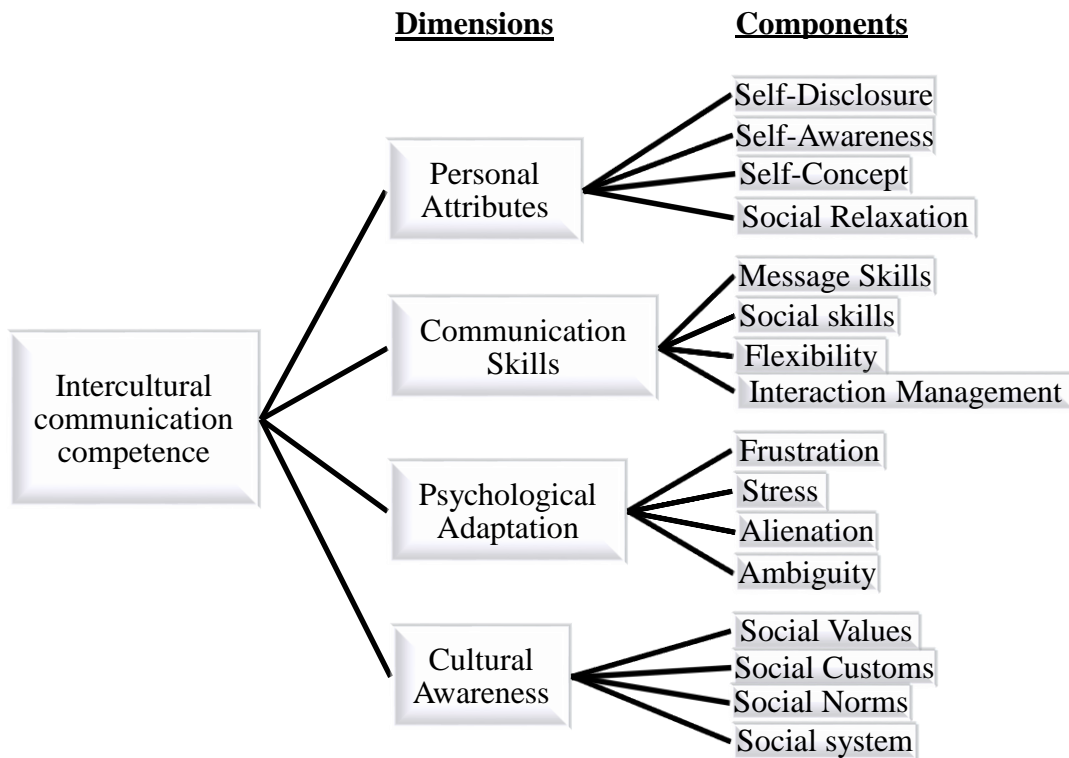


Figure 1: The dimensions and components of ICC (Dai & Chen, 2014, p. 17).

However, according to Dai & Chen, US scientists tried to figure out the exact implication of ICC so they conducted empirical research, where representatives of 63 countries took part. Based on the research, five-dimensional model of ICC concept was created, which claims that self-

disclosure, self-consciousness, social adjustment, communication competence and interaction involvement along with their components are the inevitable part of ICC. Figure 5 shows the development of ICC concept.

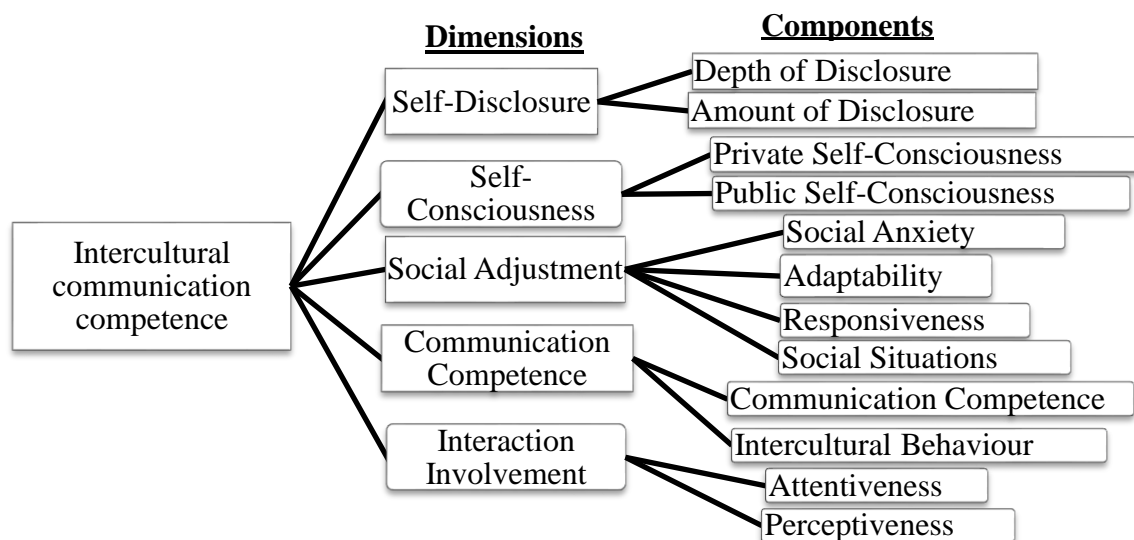


Figure 2: A new model of ICC (Dai & Chen, 2014, p. 18).

In the globalized world, many other scientists tried to define the concept and implication of ICC. Different models were created. Some of them manage to give more sophisticated features of ICC in comparison to the previously existed models; some others fail to do the same. In 1996 Chen and Starosta in their work “*Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Syntheses*” introduced a triangle model of ICC which shows that ICC is the combination of affective, cognitive and behavioral competence. Affective aspect of ICC is represented by intercultural sensitivity (motivations and emotions), cognitive – intercultural awareness (knowledge about the

different cultural patterns) and behavioral – intercultural adroitness/effectiveness. Figure 6 shows the model. According to Dai and Chen, compared with some other further extended detailed models, that model is “*more precise, rigorous and heuristic*” (Dai & Chen, 2014, p. 19). The concepts are broad, weighty and connotative so the model can imply delicate components of ICC, which can be exposed by further conceptualization of composing components of the model. In other words, model gives broader opportunities of interpretation and a lot of fine components can be assigned to it because of further development of ICC concept.

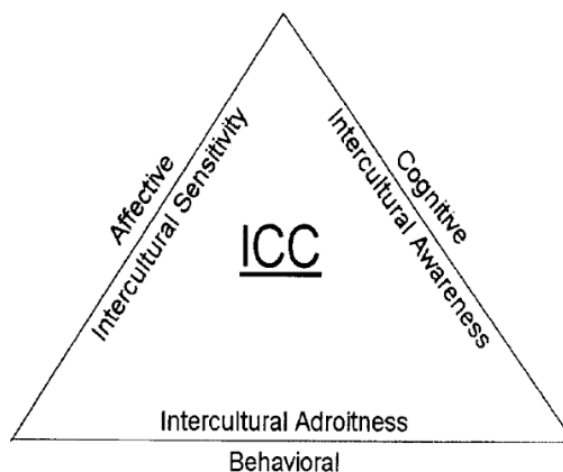


Figure 3: A new model of ICC (Dai & Chen, 2014, p. 19).

Byram in 1997 introduced the model of ICC with five dimensions which are interdependent to each other and the extent of their meaning and importance can vary in terms of communication. He argues that preconditions for good intercultural communicator are knowledge of social processes and attitude towards self and others, which seems

to define proper development of skills of interpreting and relating along with the skills of discovery and interaction. However, without education or cultural awareness, which is the central part of Byram's ICC model, competence of intercultural communicator is rather imperfect. Figure 4 shows Byram's ICC Model.

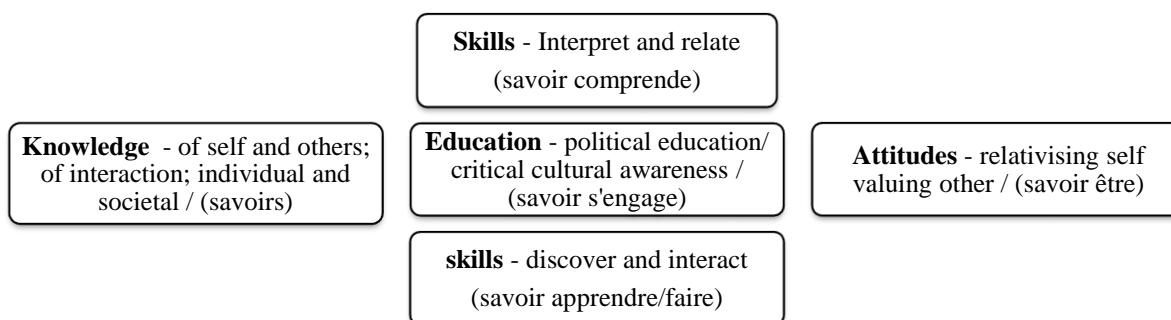


Figure 4: Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997, p. 34).

Byram, apart from giving broad dimensions of ICC, claims that the model is imperfect without implication of **linguistic competence** – ability of speaker to produce or create linguistic patterns in accordance of language rules and ability to understand interlocutor's meanings conveyed by language;

sociolinguistic competence – proper choice of words, good knowledge of relationship between the language signals and context; and **discourse competence** – “the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an

interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes" (Byram, 1997, p. 48).

The development of ICC study and changing world led the scientists to think differently about ICC.

The new terminology related to ICC appeared. More and more scientists tried to use Global Communication Competence (GCC) in search of globally competent communicators who would be *"equipped with the ability to acknowledge, respect, tolerate, and integrate cultural differences in order to be qualified for*

enlightened global citizenship". One of the pioneers is Chen who in 2005 offered detailed description of GCC. It gives detailed components of GCC dimensions. They are global mindset – appropriates to global demands, unfolding the self – continuous development, mapping the culture – knowledge about the culture and tolerance, aligning the interaction – sufficient linguistic and behavioral cognition. The other delicate details can be seen in Figure 5.

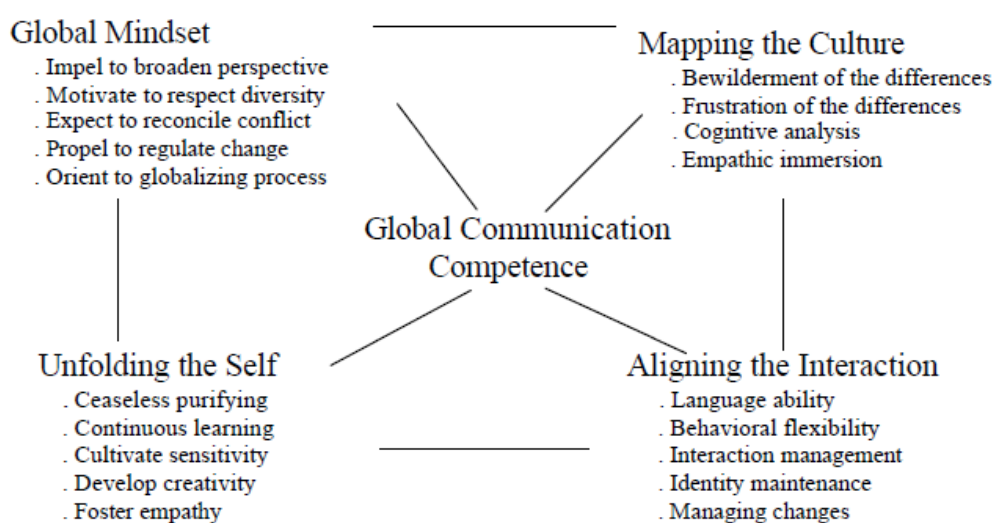


Figure 5: A Model of Global Communication Competence (Chen, 2005, p. 5).

Conclusion

To sum up, holistic analyze if ICC concept lets me say that ICC is an ability to communicate productively on the basis of intercultural awareness, be tactful, have acceptable linguistic command, be capable of making appropriate judgment and produce sufficient behavioral interaction. The qualities above are the key features for international business communication. Moreover, the offered models of ICCs may need further perfection and provision of some peculiarities related to business communication. However, tight bonds between doing business and

culture are questioned, or underestimated by business people themselves.

References

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