



## МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНАЯ КОММУНИКАЦИЯ И ПЕРЕВОД INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND TRANSLATION

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### INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE — A FURTHER CHALLENGE

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**Abstract.** This article focuses on types of challenge to intercultural communicators arising during communication between those with a good level of intercultural competence and those with a lower level and which relate to *communicative style*. Those with weaker intercultural competence tend to have limited awareness of variation in communicative style and its link to language and culture. As a result, they often continue using aspects of the communicative style of their first language when using a foreign language. They may even criticise ethnocentrically aspects of the communicative style associated with that foreign language. This can create specific challenges for a more interculturally competent communicator who may well understand the behaviour in question but find it hard to deal with. The key aim of this article is to analyse these challenges prior to hypothesising what underlying skills and practical strategies might help communicators to deal with them. Relevant skills are sought in existing literature and the further processes used in generating hypotheses are described. Skills are identified which include the capacities to deal with negative comments on your own communicative style, to persuade your fellow communicator of its validity, to negotiate compromises and to steer the communication towards a mutually satisfactory dynamic. Besides outlining the forms further research needs to take, the article concludes by stressing the importance of better understanding these challenges and of incorporating the development of skills for dealing with them into a variety of teaching programmes containing an intercultural component.

**Keywords:** *intercultural communication, intercultural competence, intercultural communicative competence, communicative style, pragmatics, cultural awareness*

### INTRODUCTION

Much valuable research in varied contexts relevant to the general area of Intercultural Communicative Competence has developed in recent decades drawing on a wide range of disciplines. A central aim within this research is to identify and understand the many challenges intercultural communication can involve, challenges either less present or not present at all in intra-cultural communication, and to discover how those challenges might be met. This article's primary goal is to focus on one type of challenge to intercultural communicators which has received less attention than others and to consider what kinds of skills and strategies might be needed to meet challenges of this kind. The challenges in question all arise within the context of communication between those

with a relatively good level of intercultural competence and those who have a lower level. Those with weaker intercultural competence will often have correspondingly limited awareness of both the existence and origins of cultural difference including difference in communicative style. As a result, as T. Larina points out (2015: 203—204), they will commonly transfer into their foreign language use aspects of communicative style entirely normal in their first language contexts, but which are not so in the foreign language, a common example being interrupting or avoiding interrupting. It is also not unusual for them to make negative comments on unfamiliar communicative styles associated with foreign languages, even when they speak those languages, for example on forms or levels of manners and politeness (cf. Schrobsdorff 1994: 334).

Now a person with a good level of intercultural competence, included in which is an awareness of cultural difference, may find all of this easy to understand even if, with all their experience and intercultural competence, their fellow-communicator's behaviour can still feel emotionally frustrating. But the fact that they understand what is happening does not mean that they fully possess the skills and strategies allowing them to manage that communication in a way that is satisfactory for both participants. Accordingly, the research question forming the central concern of this article will involve asking what skills and strategies might be needed to successfully manage communication with a person who is locked into the communicative style of their first language even when speaking a foreign language.

In what follows, before addressing this research question directly, the question will be contrasted with the extensive strands of existing intercultural research which place a high level of emphasis on cultural difference and the intercultural skills needed to cope with it. The distinctive and rather different nature of the intercultural challenges which underlie the research question will then be carefully explained both through the provision of wide-ranging examples and via the use of theoretical concepts linked to cultural awareness. Hypotheses as to what competences might allow a communicator to meet the relevant challenges will be described drawing partly on contextually adapted elements of existing research literature, but also partly on reflections on qualitative data. The article will conclude by looking ahead to future research in this area suggesting alternative methods for generating plausible hypotheses, the forms of empirical testing needed to confirm the hypotheses and possible implications of this strand of research for language teaching which is just one of a range of curriculum contexts in which the hypothesised competences might be developed.

### **LACK OF AWARENESS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE — INTERCULTURAL CHALLENGES THIS CREATES**

A significant amount of research into Intercultural Communicative Competence is rooted in the idea that there are, in some sense, 'cultural differences', even if at times the focus is equally on other issues like cultural power (Holliday 2010), identity (Byram 2008) and stereotyping (Oakes and Haslam 1994). By 'cultural difference' I understand the idea that, however broadly 'culture' is understood, in different 'cultural groups' there often are, at a given time, different norms concerning values, behaviour, narratives etc.

The kinds of difference focused on by researchers vary hugely. Major areas include differences of value and their connection to language (Hofstede 1993, Lewis 2005, Ter-Minasova 2011), differences in the pragmatics of written or spoken discourse (Wang and Spencer-Oatey 2015, Larina 2010, Scollon and Scollon 2000, Wierzbicka 2003) and differences in working practices (Schneider and Barsoux 2003, Guirdham and Guirdham 2017). Such differences often generate ‘cognitive dissonance’, at the psychological level, and with it intercultural challenges (Leontovich 2015). This kind of research has been complemented by research aiming to describe the competences needed to cope with these differences either for the general intercultural communicator (Koester and Olebe 1988, Byram 1997, Spitzberg 2000) or for specific professional contexts like Translation or Tourism (Koskinen 2015, Cranmer 2015, Phipps 2006, Jack and Phipps 2005). The question I want to ask here, however, is whether there isn’t a common feature of intercultural communication, mentioned above and linked to cultural difference, which merits more attention than it has received, needs to be theorised, and, for dealing with which, further competences would need to be articulated.

In a Translation Studies seminar in London in 2012, a highly experienced UN and EU translator of Spanish origin made the point that serious problems of intercultural communication rarely occurred within the teams of in-house translators with which she worked in spite of real underlying cultural differences. This, she argued, was because they were almost all multilingual, highly used to transplantation and to working in multilingual and multicultural contexts. The intercultural communication she was describing was, though, extremely atypical — atypical because the levels of intercultural competence of the participants would in almost all cases have been very high. A significant proportion of intercultural communication is very different. It involves communication in which the consciousness even of the *potential* for cultural difference of both participants, or just of one, is limited. In the latter case, this might mean that one participant tends to see their own cultural norms, including communicative style, as universal, to interpret their interlocutor’s communicative style from the perspective of their own and even to denigrate their interlocutor’s different norms when they are even aware of them (Bennett 1993, 2004, Larina 2015: 196). Naturally, this can impact hugely on their communication and general interaction. But, in the context of intercultural communication, it may, for example, leave the participant who is more conscious of the potential for cultural difference having to deal with a lack of respect being shown towards their own culture and familiar communicative style and also having to deal with a lack of flexibility or accommodation in the less aware participant’s communication. In these circumstances, the more competent intercultural communicator will most likely understand what is happening and why. Their intercultural flexibility may also allow them to move to some degree towards their fellow communicator’s style. But such accommodation is likely to be one-way and can leave the more interculturally competent communicator feeling relatively uncomfortable. As a result, they may need a specific set of skills if they are to move the communicative dynamic towards something which is *mutually* acceptable. The nature of the sort of challenges involved should become clearer through the following examples which are drawn both from discourse in which one participant is a native

speaker whilst the other is non-native and from the rather different discourse context in which both speakers are non-native using the language as a *lingua franca* —

1. Interrupting, overlapping and turn-taking are all aspects of communicative style which can differ across cultures (Lustig & Koester 2003: 253—258). If a speaker comes from a context in which, when using their first language, certain forms of interruption are both acceptable and perceived as demonstrating engagement and, in addition, they have limited awareness of the potential for cultural difference, they may well when speaking a foreign language maintain this habitual practice of interruption. If, though, the foreign language concerned is your first language, and if interruption is uncommon and negatively perceived in that language and you have a good level of intercultural competence, you will grasp what is happening. But you may want in some way to modify the communicative dynamic if it is one which you don't find entirely comfortable.
2. Forms and levels of directness and indirectness are again aspects of communicative style which can differ significantly across cultures (Larina 2015: 197). If a communicator comes from a first language context in which expressing disagreement directly is not usual, and if, in addition, their awareness of the potential for cultural difference is limited, they may well transfer this aspect of communicative style (indirectness) into their foreign language use. But if both you and your fellow communicator are using this foreign language as a *lingua franca* and an indirect communicative style is not at all your preferred communicative dynamic and if, in addition, you have a good level of intercultural competence, you will most likely again perceive what is happening. But you may not be happy to just conform to your fellow communicator's indirect style, particularly as in *lingua franca* contexts communicative style is more the product of implicit negotiation than in many more norm-bound linguistic contexts, and may wish to find a way to modify the communicative dynamic.
3. The use of touch to show engagement, empathy or support is again something which can vary significantly across cultures (Lustig and Koester 2003: 190—192). A speaker coming from a first language context in which using touch is common both within the same gender and across genders might, in a foreign language context in which this is less usual, explicitly comment negatively on this terming it 'strange' or 'cold'. They are then judging this aspect of communicative style by reference to more familiar communicative contexts and patterns, denigrating the other speaker's cultural 'reality' and failing to show awareness of potential for difference. If then the foreign language in question is your first language, or for both of you a *lingua franca*, and you have a level of intercultural awareness which allows you to understand such ethnocentricity, you may still not want to let the comment just pass and may also want there to be a communicative dynamic in the realm of touch between you which seems mutually acceptable and feel challenged as to how to try to achieve this.
4. The extent to which and the ways in which emotion is shown in speaking or writing is again something which can vary across cultures (Ekman 1999). A commu-

nicator coming from a first language context in which showing emotion is relatively uncommon might well in a foreign language context in which this is more common describe native speakers of that language as 'weird' (cf. Schrobsdorff 1994: 334). Once again, they are simply evaluating the communicative style through their own cultural lenses, something which you will understand if your intercultural competence is higher than their ethnocentric stance. But, if the foreign language they are referring to is your first language, and that is the language of communication between the two of you, you may not just be content to understand why they take this view and want to set the record straight as well as wanting to establish a mutually acceptable communicative dynamic in this domain.

Examples of the types of challenge on which I wish to focus can easily be multiplied and drawn from any aspect of communicative style, from body language and discourse patterns to politeness codes and far beyond, from any genre of spoken or written discourse and using any medium, even if real-time forms of conversation will often involve some of the most acute challenges. What is common to many of the challenges is, however, that they involve aspects of first language communicative style which have become entirely habitual or 'internalised' for one of the speakers and which are then transferred into foreign language usage, internalised habits which can be notoriously hard to unlearn even when one is aware of them. In the examples cited, however, one speaker, given their limited intercultural competence, is unaware of the non-universality of the relevant aspect of their communicative style. As a consequence, the speakers involved may well be, to use M.J. Bennett's terms, 'fluent fools' (2004: 69), linguistically competent by more traditional criteria, but interculturally less competent, which is unsurprising given the limited role devoted historically, and even in much contemporary methodology and practice, within language teaching to the development of intercultural competence generally and to communicative style in particular. Examples (1) and (2) above involve, on the one hand, the consequences of limited intercultural competence on the communicative *practice* of one of the communicators. Examples (3) and (4), on the other, involve the consequences of limited intercultural competence on how they might, in '*meta-communication*', express their evaluation of unfamiliar communicative styles — they display denigration, stereotyping, dismissal, non-engagement or even non-perception of the existence or reality of alternatives. It is to briefly setting examples of these kinds in the context of existing theoretical research which we shall now turn.

### **THE NATURE OF THESE FURTHER INTERCULTURAL CHALLENGES**

In addition to the crucial research, mentioned in the last section, comparing cultural patterns and norms there are, of course, strands of research relating to Intercultural Communication with a slightly different focus. Amongst these are attempts to articulate in what intercultural competence consists. The importance of having a high level of awareness of the potential for cultural difference, if one is to engage successfully in intercultural communication, is acknowledged by many theorists.

A highly influential example is M. Byram writing either singly (Byram 1997) or with collaborators, including within the framework of the Council of Europe (Byram,

Gribkova and Starkey 2002). A key component of intercultural competence, within this theoretical framework, are ‘intercultural attitudes’ which are characterised as follows —

*‘curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own. This means a willingness to relativise one’s own values, beliefs and behaviours, not to assume that they are the only possible and naturally correct ones, and to be able to see how they might look from an outsider’s perspective who has a different set of values, beliefs and behaviours. This can be called the ability to ‘decentre’.*’ Byram, Gribkova and Starkey 2002: 12.

M.J. Bennett’s influential ‘Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity’ is in many ways similar (Bennett 1993, 2004). He describes six levels of ‘intercultural sensitivity’ centring on an individual’s view of their own ‘cultural reality’ and its place in the world. The lower levels of the six-level scale are described as ‘ethnocentric’ involving attitudes which place the individual’s cultural reality at the centre of the world with unaware, insensitive or dismissive attitudes towards other cultural realities. The higher levels are described as ‘relativistic’ and involve respect and validity being accorded to other cultural realities which can show itself through engagement with, adaptation to, and learning from them.

In characterising the intercultural challenge which is the main focus of this article, I have up until now referred to ‘different levels of awareness of the potential for cultural difference’. But this corresponds closely to different levels of ‘intercultural sensitivity’ as Bennett defines them and to different levels of attainment which could be assigned to the general competences which go to make up Byram’s ‘intercultural attitudes’. For the sake of brevity in description of the intercultural challenges with which we are concerned I will term what I have been calling ‘consciousness of the potential for cultural difference’ just ‘cultural awareness’. The examples of problems in intercultural communication which were given in the previous section were all then, I would argue, rooted in the fact that one participant was operating with a relatively high level of cultural awareness whilst their fellow participant was operating at a relatively low level. In this sense their communication is asymmetrical and, again for the sake of brevity, I shall refer to intercultural communication involving such asymmetry in levels of cultural awareness as ‘Cultural Awareness Asymmetrical Intercultural Communication’ (CAAIC).

The asymmetry creates, in addition to cultural differences in, for example, communication style, another layer of challenge for a participant with a reasonably developed level of cultural awareness. In CAAIC a reasonably competent intercultural communicator will find themselves engaged in communication in which they acknowledge the validity of the other participant’s communicative style, but where this is not reciprocated and this can present major challenges either within the communicative dynamic itself or when negatively evaluative comments are made. Similarly, the more competent intercultural communicator is likely to possess both greater understanding of the communicative dynamic and greater flexibility permitting them to function according to different communicative dynamics than the less competent participant, which is likely to imply that they have more power to influence the dynamic than the less competent participant. If, therefore, CAAIC is to be *mutually* satisfactory, the more interculturally com-

petent participant will, in addition to cultural awareness, need a specific set of skills, essentially of communication management, to try to ensure that such mutuality is achieved. The research agenda which then naturally corresponds to the above need, and the central ‘research question’ for the rest of this article, will turn around what specific set of complex skills are needed by the more culturally aware participant in CAAIC if they are to make the communicative dynamic satisfactory.

### WHAT CURRENT RESEARCH OFFERS

Do existing descriptions then of the competences needed for ‘effective’ intercultural communication already provide what is needed for the more culturally aware of achieving satisfactory intercultural communication with those who are rather less aware? The scope of relevant literature is of course so vast that generalisations concerning it are problematic, but what is at least commonly observable is that attempts to describe these competences tend not to be primarily aimed at responding to communication challenges of this kind. They tend instead, for example, to be aimed at challenges generated by cultural differences, stereotyping, unexamined narratives or issues of cultural and linguistic power. But this is not to say that these competences might not, as a ‘by-product’, help in CAAIC. So let us take just a few examples of competence areas commonly present in prominent current theories and consider to what degree they might offer something when dealing with CAAIC.

Let us first consider ‘cultural awareness’ itself which, as pointed out earlier, features strongly in many accounts of intercultural competence. Byram’s ‘intercultural attitudes’ were cited as an example of an account of this kind. But can one’s own curiosity about other cultures, willingness to relativise one’s own cultural presuppositions, to imaginatively project into other cultural perspectives and to see oneself from their perspective, help in communication with someone who essentially lacks these attitudes and even ‘denies’ one’s own reality? To a degree they undoubtedly do. They allow you to come to empathetically grasp something of your fellow communicator’s cultural framework and most probably to grasp the communication dynamic you have, and these forms of understanding will inform decisions you make on how to manage that dynamic. They may also, again as a by-product, help you defuse issues arising from disparities of cultural power and to build positive relations with your fellow-communicator given the respect you demonstrate towards their culture. But do they prepare you with the skills for re-orientating what is for you an unsatisfactory communicative dynamic or for dealing with the potentially negative emotions generated by finding the reality of your more familiar communicative style going unrecognised? Most probably not as this was not the form of intercultural challenge they were evoked to address even though possession of such cultural awareness is often a precondition of successfully managing CAAIC.

Are there then other types of competence identified by theorists which might as a by-product offer some help? There are what one might term ‘personal quality’ or ‘trait’ competences mentioned by a range of theorists, just two examples of which are empathy (Ruben 1977) and flexibility (Kelley and Meyers 1992). Where empathy is concerned what is required in CAAIC is, of course, *not* just an imaginative capacity to project into

the other participant's feelings or cultural logic, which can be amongst the concepts of empathy commonly cited as being a component in intercultural competence (cf. Byram et al. 2004: 11). What one needs to empathise with in CAAIC is rather the mind-set of someone with an ethnocentric view of communicative style, so at the very least the notion of empathy will need redefining for this context. But even understood in this way, it offers no suggestion as to the context-specific competences or strategies one might need faced with such a fellow communicator.

'Flexibility', as already mentioned, is another 'trait competence' often cited as a component in intercultural competence because cultural differences commonly require one to amend familiar behaviour and at times to do so unexpectedly (cf. Byram et al. 2004: 5). CAAIC may also require flexibility because of its potential unpredictability and flexibility may, for example, allow the more interculturally competent participant to communicate following their fellow communicator's style in a way that they couldn't reciprocate, for example, assimilating quickly to an aspect of their fellow communicator's transferred first language communicative style. Such one-sided 'flexible' cultural assimilation may feel entirely acceptable to the more culturally aware participant where the communication is taking place in the other participant's first language in which the latter's communicative style is dominant. But one-sided, non-negotiated, 'flexible' communicative accommodation or assimilation may feel unsatisfactory to the more culturally aware participant if the exchange is in *their* first language or if both are using a *lingua franca* given the relative weakness of norms governing communicative style in *lingua franca* discourse and the correspondingly larger space, in theory, for *mutual*, implicit negotiation of style. So, once again, whilst flexibility may well be a valuable competence in CAAIC, it is, as commonly defined in the literature, unlikely to offer real insights into the context-specific strategies needed if CAAIC is to be satisfactory to both parties.

To summarise, it does appear that certain competences in the literature can indirectly help in successfully managing CAAIC or even, with cultural awareness, be a precondition of success. But such competences do not look like sufficing when dealing with the important intercultural challenges specific to CAAIC.

## **METHODOLOGY – DISCOVERING HOW TO MEET THE INTERCULTURAL CHALLENGES**

### **Creating hypotheses**

How, then, is this gap to be filled or, more generally, how might the competences, possession of which could allow a communicator with good cultural awareness to successfully manage CAAIC, be identified? One obvious method involves two phases — hypothesis formation and empirical testing. Processes of empirical confirmation are relatively formal and methodologically consensual. Hypothesis formation, by contrast, often involves informal processes. Some hypotheses are the fruit of intuition, creativity or personal trial and error even if others draw on partly formalised qualitative methods (Kvale 1996). The methodology used within this research for generating the hypothesised competences for managing CAAIC was a combination of informal intuitive, reflective processes and of semi-formal qualitative processes but with a large data set.



### **Examples of successful communication**

The starting point involved locating instances of apparently successful CAAIC and asking what behaviours made them successful. Important within this process was use of an extract from the 2001 American film *Tortilla Soup* in which a young, multilingual, Brazilian man living in the US first encounters a more elderly first generation Mexican American during a meal at the latter's house, a meal to which the Brazilian has been invited as the new boyfriend of the youngest daughter of the house. The Brazilian is operating with a high level of cultural awareness and the Mexican American at a lower level. The Brazilian arguably copes well. Although various aspects of his Brazilian culture are insulted he doesn't take offence, retaining a factual and neutral communicative style and eventually re-orientating the conversation towards what both participants have in common, showing his interlocutor and his cultural origins respect and engagement and establishing a mutually positive communicative dynamic. Over several years the extract in question was shown to some fifty groups of students from all over the world studying language-related Masters' degrees in London or participating in exchanges — students were asked to assess whether the Brazilian's communication management was successful and, if so, why.

### **Methods of Analysis**

It was almost universally admitted that the communication was successful in spite of the subjectivity and partially culture-bound element involved in the concept of 'success'. In articulating what made it successful students drew in part on existing theorists, but given the limited applicability to CAAIC contexts, as previously explained, of most competences articulated by such theorists, students also tried to analyse themselves what made the communication successful. The hypothesised competence areas which follow were influenced by the students' analysis even though, given that the purpose of showing the film clip was pedagogical and not research-motivated, their analyses were not formally recorded. Equally, as with many such attempts to articulate intercultural competences, a significant factor was also a continued informal cycle of experience, analysis and reflection followed by further trialling on the part of the researcher.

## **RESULTS — HOW TO COPE WITH THE INTERCULTURAL CHALLENGES**

### **Areas of competence**

Five general competence areas possession of which, it is hypothesised, can help the more culturally aware participant in CAAIC are presented in summary form below. The competence areas identified are not at all intended to be exhaustive or the only way in which relevant competences could be categorised, but they do provide a possible initial framework for discussion and even for empirical testing. I use the word 'help' advisedly because CAAIC is inherently difficult for the more interculturally competent of the participants and no 'successful' outcome is guaranteed — in a sense, CAAIC involves communication in which one participant is open to negotiation, accommodation and compromise over communicative style whilst the other either is not, or may be so

to only a limited degree, and this may limit how mutually satisfactory the communication can be. But this is not of course to say that the communicative dynamic might not be improved by the exercise of the hypothesised competences. Some of these areas have to an extent been identified by other researchers even if they have been modified to the demands of CAAIC. Others general areas of competence are much more specific to the demands of CAAIC. The areas are as follows —

1. Capacity to deal emotionally with the non-recognition of the validity of your preferred communicative style
2. Capacity to move your fellow communicator towards seeing the equal validity of their preferred communicative style *and of yours*
3. Capacity to explicitly negotiate a mutually satisfactory style or dynamic for your communication
4. Capacity to orientate the communicative style or dynamic towards something mutually satisfactory without recourse to explicit negotiation
5. Capacity to manage and structure the communication so as to maximise the chances of its communicative style being mutually satisfactory

#### **Rationale for each area of competence and sample strategies linked to their exercise**

A fuller explanation of what each competence area amounts to and the rationale for each combined with sample communication strategies for each competence are presented below —

1. ‘Capacity to deal emotionally with the non-recognition of the validity of your preferred communicative style’. No matter how intercultural competent one may be, one can feel offended, defensive or frustrated when one’s culturally familiar, and often preferred, communicative style is either explicitly denigrated or in the communicative practice of one’s fellow communicator devalued. Such feelings, if not appropriately managed, may negatively interfere with the achievement of a mutually satisfactory communicative dynamic driving it instead in the direction of mutual defensiveness. Effective strategies might include the avoidance of evaluative language in relation to either communicator’s style (Ruben 1977), giving purely factual correctives concerning the logic and rationale of one’s preferred style etc.

2. ‘Capacity to move the interlocutor towards seeing the equal validity of their preferred communicative style *and of yours*’. Intercultural competence, most agree, is not quickly acquired. It is not, therefore, to be expected that a short exchange with a communicator with a modest level of intercultural competence will leave them significantly better able to relativise and to accord your preferred communication style equal validity. But any move in that direction is likely to make it easier for elements of your preferred style to be present in communication rather than your fellow participant’s dominating. Effective strategies which might help move your fellow communicator in that direction could include explaining the logic of your own communicative style in accessible terms, showing a high level of respect for, curiosity about and engagement with their communicative style and other forms of relativizing and decentering which encourage their reciprocated respect (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey 2002).

3. 'Capacity to explicitly negotiate a mutually satisfactory style or dynamic for your communication'. Practical CAAIC may at some point need to be switched to a form of 'metacommunication' between participants in which some aspect of their communicative styles or combined communicative dynamic is itself discussed. This skill is often needed by the more interculturally competent participant since, given the lack of awareness or respect of the other participant concerning your own communicative style and the deeply habitual nature of their transferred style, it is the latter style which is likely to predominate in the communicative dynamic, something to which you may wish to negotiate some form of modification. Such negotiation is inherently challenging since it is negotiation over an area in which one party respects the other more than vice-versa and is, at the same time, asking for that respect to be reciprocated. Possible strategies might include expressing respect for the interlocutor's style and using that as a basis for requesting respect for one's own, expressing how and why you feel uncomfortable with the communicative dynamic which currently exists, exploring differing forms of compromise etc.

4. 'Capacity to orientate the communicative style or dynamic towards something mutually satisfactory without recourse to explicit negotiation'. Meta-communication over the communicative dynamic may feel 'clumsy', 'heavy' or just difficult and unsatisfactory if it doesn't generate increased recognition of the validity of your preferred communicative style. As a result it may just seem best to try to modify that dynamic 'from within' as the communication proceeds. For you this will not be fully satisfactory if it just involves further linguistic accommodation on your part and forms of strategy may be needed in which you assertively incorporate aspects of your preferred communicative style probably in a repetitive way so that they become norms of the re-orientated communicative dynamic.

5. 'Capacity to manage and structure the communication so as to maximise the chances of its communicative style being mutually satisfactory'. The more interculturally competent participant will most likely be aware of the communicative dynamic playing out and of its origins in ways that should at least give them a starting point for making informed choices on how the communication can be managed and structured in a way that leads it towards something more mutually satisfactory. Relevant strategies could involve what S. Kvale terms 'structuring' the communication (1996: 134), so that it focuses on issues, including ones of communication, where there is similarity rather than difference, 'relationship role behaviour' which involves allowing bonding to occur making subsequent negotiation over difference easier (Ruben 1977), or appeals back to meta-discussions in which agreements had been made about communicative behaviour if, as will commonly happen, one's fellow communicator lapses back into habitual behaviours in practice.

A person, therefore, to some degree possessing these capacities, it is hypothesised, will cope better with CAAIC. If confirmed empirically as genuinely 'performance enhancing', or if just trusted, these competence areas can be incorporated into a range of forms of teaching programme incorporating intercultural elements. Naturally, the teaching of these kinds of intercultural skill presupposes that students already possess a cer-

tain level of cultural awareness, and, commonly, foreign language competence, and as such would not be appropriate in a very low level foreign language programme or at the beginning of an introductory module dedicated solely to intercultural communication. But given how frequently CAAIC occurs and the frequency with which it is problematic, these are not competence areas which, I would argue, should long be neglected. Pedagogically speaking, these competences can, in addition, easily be reformulated to yield course learning objectives and linked assessment criteria and be built systematically into course content in whatever curriculum context this aspect of intercultural skills development is to be included.

## **DISCUSSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

### **Future research — testing and refinement of hypotheses**

The only way to show convincingly that possession of these competences enhances intercultural communication is to test them empirically. Broadly speaking, one would need to specify what were to count as criteria of success in CAAIC and then assess the correlation between exercise of the competences and the level of success. Hypotheses could be altered in the light of results and testing repeated. Alternatively, the processes by which hypotheses were generated for this article could be formalised in the direction of more canonical forms of qualitative research methodology.

### **Future research — Applied Linguistics**

The competence areas provided above are, of course, general and de-contextualized — the language in which the intercultural communication might be occurring and the participants' relationship to that language are not specified. It is not specified, for example whether the communication involves a *lingua franca* exchange or whether one speaker is speaking their first language whilst another is speaking a foreign language — and many other comparable facets of context are also not specified. Such contexts could, of course, affect the communication hugely and refinements of the competences would be required to make it appropriate to the educational context and the likely linguistic and cultural context of the intercultural communication for which learners were being prepared. None of this is difficult to achieve. Having made such adjustments, and if the competences were being refined so as to be incorporated into language teaching, as opposed to the many other curricular contexts in which the teaching of intercultural skills takes place, a needs analysis could be carried out to establish the precise more conventional *linguistic* learning needs linked to each of the competences. For each competence identified, in addition to the communication management skills to be taught, there would be a need to develop in students a confident grasp of relevant grammatical features and a mastery of structures, collocations or formulaic language frequently used in such communication management.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article has presented the case for paying serious attention to the challenges of making intercultural communication successful when one's fellow communicator has a lower level of cultural awareness than oneself. It has also suggested forms these

challenges can take and made hypotheses regarding the competences and strategies needed to cope with them. The competences will need some ‘localising’ to the communication situations for which students are being prepared and to the cultural/educational context in which they are learning and their effectiveness will need empirical testing. But intercultural challenges of this type are frequent, potentially frustrating and difficult and, in my view, well deserve our attention as researchers and teachers.

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## МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНАЯ КОММУНИКАТИВНАЯ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЯ — НОВЫЕ ВЫЗОВЫ

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В статье рассматриваются типы сложностей в межкультурной коммуникации, возникающие в процессе общения между собеседниками с разным уровнем межкультурной компетенции — высоким и низким — и относящиеся к *коммуникативному стилю*. Участники коммуникативного процесса со слабо развитой межкультурной компетенцией, как правило, не имеют достаточного представления о вариативности коммуникативного стиля и его связи с языком и культурой, в результате чего они используют коммуникативный стиль, присущий их родной лингвокультуре, когда говорят на иностранном языке. Кроме того, основываясь на этноцентризме, они могут даже подвергать критике некоторые аспекты коммуникативного стиля иной культуры. Коммуниканты с более высоким уровнем межкультурной компетенции сталкиваются с проблемами, суть которых им понятна, но которые сложно преодолеть. Цель данной статьи — проанализировать данные проблемы и наметить основные пути и стратегии, которые могут помочь их решению. Отбираются необходимые навыки, уже описанные ранее исследователями, и обсуждаются стратегии преодоления коммуникативных неудач на разных уровнях межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции. Выделяются навыки, позволяющие адекватно реагировать на негативные комментарии по отношению к собственному коммуникативному стилю и убеждать собеседника в его правильности, искать компромисс и оптимизировать коммуникативный процесс. В статье намечены перспективы исследования, делается вывод о важности понимания существующих проблем и разработке тренингов по их решению. Подчеркивается необходимость включения задачи формирования коммуникативных навыков в различные обучающие программы, содержащие межкультурный компонент.

**Ключевые слова:** *межкультурная коммуникация, межкультурная компетенция, межкультурная коммуникативная компетенция, коммуникативный стиль, прагматика, культурная осведомленность*

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