



**1st Glocal Conference: Creating Cultural Synergies – Setting Intercultural  
Competence to Work in a Changing World**

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**Abstracts of Talks**



## **Intercultural Competence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Perspectives, Issues, Application**

**Dr. Darla K. Deardorff, Duke University**

Before examining synergies around intercultural competence and the ways in which we can put intercultural competence to work in our rapidly changing world, it is important to understand more fully exactly what is meant by intercultural competence and in which contexts. What are some various cultural perspectives on this complex concept? And how is it manifested in different fields such as in education, health care or even in engineering? This talk highlights some different emerging cultural themes around intercultural competence, briefly discusses what this looks like in different fields and raises some questions and issues to explore further in putting intercultural competence to work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Much scholarly effort has been invested, particularly among western cultures, in defining intercultural competence over the past several decades. (For a more comprehensive discussion, see Deardorff, 2009; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009 and Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). In fact, the concept of “intercultural” was discussed by Comenius in the 1600s when he suggested “pedagogical universalism,” or a multiplicity of perspectives, as a foundation upon which to build an education as well as to encourage mutual understanding (Piaget, 1957; Sadler 1969). More recently, various anthropological frameworks such as Hall’s three dimensions of cultural difference (1976) have sought to explain some of the difficulties involved in cross-cultural interaction.

Scholars prioritize various components as being central to intercultural competence, such as adaptability (Kim 1992, Spitzberg and Cupach 1984) and self-discovery (Alred et al 2003). Hofstede (1997) focuses on the need to understand cultural difference through underlying cultural values while Bennett (1993) presents an intercultural sensitivity model in which one’s response to cultural difference, which is developmental in nature, underscores one’s degree of intercultural competence. Magala (2005), on the other hand, stresses identity as central to intercultural competence. Meanwhile, Byram (1997), viewing attitudes as fundamental to intercultural competence, posits five ‘savoirs’ for intercultural communicative competence and explored intercultural competence from a variety of perspectives including Hymes (1972), van Ek (1986), Ruben (1989), and Gudykunst (1994), concluding that there are a number of issues that need to be taken into account when defining intercultural competence and ultimately, when attempting to assess intercultural competence. Those issues include: emphasis on knowledge of cultures and cultural practices versus the skills of “conscious analysis” of intercultural interaction, the role of non-verbal communication in intercultural competence, the breadth in which the concept of intercultural competence should be defined, the degree of focus on psychological traits versus “capacity to act,” and the influence of social and political factors on defining and assessing intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, p. 30). Imahori and Lanigan (1989) developed a model of intercultural communication competence where the focus is on both persons in the intercultural action, not just the individual, which is unique to many other definitions and models. The outcome thus becomes a relational outcome between the two participants in the intercultural interaction.



Different fields and professions also use a variety of terminology and definitions when exploring this concept. For example, the engineering field in the United States uses the term “global competence” (Grandin & Hedderich, 2009) while the field of social work often uses “cultural competence” (Fong, 2009). The health care field, where this can become a life or death matter, uses both “interculturally competent care” in addition to “cultural humility” (Anand & Lahiri, 2009, Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) cite a wide breadth of work on intercultural competence in different fields in listing some of the work on intercultural competence designed for specific contexts including: “... educational: Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006; Heyward, 2002; Kayes, Kayes, & Yamazaki, 2005; Milhouse, 1996; sales or service: Chairakeo & Speece, 2004; Hopkins, Hopkins, & Hoffman, 2005; conflict: Euwema & Emmerik, 2007; Hammer, 2005; Ting-Toomey, 1988, 2007; health care: Gibson & Zhong, 2005; counseling: Li, Kim & O’Brien, 2007; Sue, 2001; ...organizations/management: Fisher & Härtel, 2003; Torbiörn, 1985 “ (p. 3). And there are certainly many other fields that have addressed the concept of intercultural competence including linguistics and foreign languages, cultural anthropology, psychology, sociology, business, tourism and hospitality, military, international development, public administration, police/security, and even in religious organizations (Yancey, 2009). As Moosmueller and Schoenhueth (2009) note, “the discourse on intercultural competence is multifaceted and often considered confusing” (p. 209). And as Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) point out, that while “there is obviously no shortage of feasible approaches or models guiding conceptualizations...of intercultural competence”... there are some common categories including motivation, knowledge, higher order skills, macro-level skills, interpersonal skills (categorized under sub-categories of attentiveness, composure, coordination, expressiveness), contextual competencies (including identity), and outcomes.

The first research study to document consensus among leading intercultural scholars from a variety of disciplines and primarily based in the United States was conducted by Deardorff (2006, 2009). From this national study conducted in the United States, the consensus definition agreed upon by these leading intercultural scholars was broadly defined as “effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations.” The researcher categorized these specific agreed-upon elements into attitudes, knowledge, skills and internal/ external outcomes and placed these in a visual framework. This study serves as one way to view a more foundational framework on intercultural competence, one that is based on a grounded-research approach. As such, the specific elements of the framework will be briefly discussed here, as one example of a grounded research-based definition and framework of intercultural competence. This framework, which has found resonance in different cultural contexts, is applicable in a broad variety of fields and contexts.

Yet, there are obvious limitations inherent in any model so it becomes important to look at common themes emerging from other cultural perspectives on intercultural competence. Upon closer examination of those different cultural perspectives, several themes emerge including the following: The first theme is The importance of understanding these historical, political and social contexts, particular regarding the role and impact of colonialization on intercultural contact within societies, especially those in



African, Asian, and Latin American contexts. In fact, numerous scholars emphasize the importance of context in intercultural competence, and while western definitions and models of this concept tend to view this construct in a vacuum devoid of context, work from Latin American, Arab, and Asian perspectives of intercultural competence note to some degree how crucial it is to consider these contexts. This focus on context points to the importance of awareness in intercultural competence, another theme that emerges from these different perspectives. Another key theme that emerges from different perspectives is that of the importance of relationship within intercultural dialogue and competence. Such a priority on relationship-building has significant implications for trust-building and interpersonal communication skills as well as for conflict resolution. The discussions on relationship also lead to the focus on interconnectedness, which in turn underscores another theme running through the different cultural perspectives, that of identity, in which, for example, the African concept of *ubuntu* epitomizes both relationship and identity. In this age of globalization that often leads to politicized cultural identities, the transcendence of one's identity seeks to defy simplistic categorizations of cultural groups and strives to instead understand the fullness of who one is, moving beyond the traditional dichotomous in/out group mentality to one that embraces and respects others' differences and in so doing, keeps the focus on the relational goals of engagement. Based on the discussion and analysis of the current literature on intercultural competence from various perspectives, the following are identified as skills and competences with broader applicability: Respect, self-awareness/identity, seeing from other perspectives/world views, listening, adaptation, relationship building, and cultural humility.

So, what does all of this mean in putting intercultural competence to work in the world? There are numerous tools and methods related to intercultural competence that have been developed and successfully applied in mediating cultural difference, in combating prejudices and in strengthening social cohesion. Two mentioned at the societal level include the education systems and the legal systems. Other tools and methods include the following: Informal and formal structures in society, intercultural dialogue, intercultural mediation, project cooperation, community dialogues, fine arts – theatre, art, music, literature, mass media, and government policies. Possible methods upon which to focus particular attention at the individual level include the following: cross-cultural coaching, experiential learning, personal leadership, global (or multicultural) teams, technology, and story telling. The key to using any tool or method to further intercultural understanding is that it remains relevant and appropriate to the context in which it is used. Thus, what works in one cultural context may not be effective or appropriate in another cultural context. Therefore, best practices in applying intercultural competence can only be construed to a limited degree in other contexts and discussions on such methods and tools remain marginally useful.

*The only thing in common is our difference and once we understand that – we discover our oneness.* This statement concurs with the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity which emphasizes the common heritage of humankind within the world's diversity. As we continually search for ways to get along together as human beings sharing this one planet, the need to transcend boundaries, to bridge and transform our differences, to be in relationship with one another, to join in the oneness



of our humanity while accepting our differences - these needs will continue to drive us as we seek to overcome differences that may divide us, differences that lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, and even in some cases, to the point of war. This search for intercultural competence underscores the need for genuine respect and humility as we relate to one another, meaning that we arrive at the point of truly valuing each other and in so doing, bridge those differences through relationship-building. Indeed, *cultural humility* may contain the way forward as we strive to understand each other better. In the end, intercultural competence is about our relationships with each other and ultimately, our very survival as the human race, as we work together to address the global challenges that confront us in this century.



## **Organizational Structure and Cross-Culture Management: The case of Credit Suisse's Project Copernicus in Singapore**

**Prof. Nina Jacob, Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad**

This paper explores the linkage between organizational structure and cross-cultural management. It suggests that a fluid and continuously evolving structure enables effective cross-cultural management. In support of this, the paper reports on the experience of one of the world's largest financial services corporations – a Swiss Bank. The bank adopted a different type of organizational structure for one of its units. This new structure was different from the traditional bureaucracy it had used throughout the 150 years of its existence. It was observed to be an emergent structure, evolving in response to the stimulants provided by its various cultural constituents. It was also flexible; allowing it to assimilate when necessary, inputs provided by its diverse cultural constituents, and discard when necessary, structural features which no longer served any useful purpose. This paper discusses and analyses the experience of Credit Suisse Private Banking's Project Copernicus in Singapore, (October 2000 – December 2001).

The paper also examines whether what is indicated for transnational cross-cultural management applies for the management of sub-cultures within a nation as well. Sab Miller India, 99% of whose workforce is Indian, was considered for this purpose. The cycle planning forum of Sab Miller India which meets periodically, comprises managers from all four regions in India. The forum was found to have a flexible structure, to ensure that all managers felt equally empowered, regardless of sub-cultural background.

Early writers on the subject of organizational structure, including Taylor (1911), Fayol (1930), and Weber (Gerth & Mills, 1958), had stipulated an ideal-type of organizational structure for all situations. In the late nineteen sixties and throughout the seventies, the "one best form fits all" view was replaced by the contingency approach. A contingency perspective such as that of Lorsch & Morse (1974) prescribes that an alignment should exist between structure, task, technology, the environment, and people. This approach takes into account that structures can be flexible and responsive to change. Contingency theorists such as Duncan (1977), Lawrence & Lorsch (1967), Burns & Stalker (1961), Minzberg (1979), Miles & Snow (1978), and Galbraith (1973) recommended that organizational structure should be either organic or mechanistic depending on the nature of the external environment. A stable external environment called for a mechanistic structure, while a turbulent environment required an organic structure – one flexible enough to evolve. The power of the contingency theory was validated in two countries from the non-English speaking world by Boseman & Simonetti (1975), indicating that non-traditional notions of structure apply in a variety of cultural contexts. Thus we observe that through the course of the twentieth century, perspectives on organizational structure shifted from considering it in terms of durable arrangements, to viewing it as extremely flexible. This can be noted in the table given below.



**Table:** Consider how our view of structure has changed over time  
*From durable structures to flexible structures*

Theorist	Kernel of Theory	
Weber, Taylor, Fayol	One best form of structure that is largely unvarying, durable and bureaucratic. Focus was on establishing order and maintaining predictability	Early 20 <sup>th</sup> Century
Duncan, Lawrence & Lorsch, Burns & Stalker, Minzberg, Miles & Snow, and Galbraith	Structure should not be consistently unvarying. A stable environment necessitates a mechanistic structure, while a turbulent environment calls for an organic and flexible structure. The type of structure adopted should be contingent on the nature of the environment.	1960's & 1970's
Duncan, Peterson	A creative organization should have certain elements of structure that are flexible.	1970's & early 1980's
Child & McGrath, Miles & Snow	A knowledge generation and transfer organization should have a flexible structure.	1990's & early 2000's

From the 1990s onwards, several researchers have made a case for viewing organizational structure in terms of transient features rather than durable ones. Child & McGrath (2001) have noted how continuously changing structures, are de rigueur in knowledge based organizations. Coulson-Thomas (1991) has predicted that corporations dealing with complex operations would opt for “flatter and more fluid organizational structures that can develop into networks”, as well as have “greater flexibility and responsiveness to customer needs”. Pepper (1995) advanced a more dynamic perspective on structure, which incorporated such elements as working relationships, actual experiences of members, and interpretations of occurrences. Weick (1995) also postulated a dynamic view of structure. Weick talked about “enacting organizations” which are a function of organizational members’ preferences. Anderson, Finkelstein, & Quinn (1996) have recommended that hierarchies be dispensed with in certain contexts; instead, structures be organised in the form of patterns tailored to specific needs. Volberda (1999) held that the extent of flexibility of a firm’s structure should be aligned to the extent of turbulence prevalent in its environment. Additionally, a firm may on the whole be averagely flexible but have both a unit that is extremely flexible and a unit that is extremely rigid, functioning within it. Gold & Hirshfeld (2005) have demonstrated how the principles of improvisation underlying jazz music can be used to promote strategic renewal within organizations. McHugh & Wheeler (1995)



described a particularly fluid structure called holonic network. This is “a set of companies that acts integratedly and organically; it is constantly re-configured to manage each business opportunity a customer presents.” This capacity for frequent re-configuring has been termed more recently by Eisenhardt & Galunic (2001) as “architectural innovation”. Here, the different capabilities of an organization, including its structural components are re-combined in various ways to enhance performance.

Against this background, this paper suggests that cross-cultural management is yet another imperative that necessitates the use of organic, flexible structures. The cases presented lend support to this contention.



## **Interculturality and Interreligiosity: Conceptual Clarification with Reference to Intercultural Competence**

**Prof. Ram Adhar Mall, University of Munich**

The central thesis proposed, discussed and defended here is the following: Whoever believes in the total purity of cultures or total identity or radical difference between them lacks the ability of cultural competence. Whoever, on the other hand, believes in the presence of overlaps between cultures recognizing fundamental similarities and illuminating differences among them are destined to develop intercultural competence in theory and practice. With the wake of modernity and post modernity, cultural encounters today take place in an atmosphere of reciprocity, which is neither pre-colonial nor colonial but post-colonial. This gives the encounters an unprecedented 'intercultural turn'.

The paper attempts to address the following points: (1) to clarify the two terms *interculturality* and *interreligiosity*, (2) to delineate the salient features of the renewed cultural encounter in a global world, (3) to work out the concept of an interculturally oriented *analogous hermeneutics* and (4) to outline the preconditions for the possibility of a theory and practice of *intercultural competence* of the first and second order in understanding cultures, religions and other related matters. Any intercultural competence worthy of the name must steer clear between the two extremes of a monolithic absolutism and a radical, unbinding and provincial relativism. All that ultimately matters are the 'overlaps' between cultures let them be as fragile, small and formal.



## **Intercultural Competence in Understanding Religion: Building Intercultural Competence in Understanding Religion through Cooperative Learning**

**Prof. Giuseppe Milan and Marialuise Damini, University of Padova**

Nowadays understanding religion is certainly very important and has close connections with Intercultural Competence. Etymologically, the word "religion" contains the idea of "relation" (from Latin: *re-ligo*). In the term "intercultural" we can also recognize the prefix "inter", that means "being between" two or more different cultures or situations or ways of life. "Intercultural" contains idea of "relation" as well.

It is important to clarify a shared meaning of "intercultural competence", since there is a vast literature about this concept. The paper examines the historical and philosophical contributions that led to its definition. Therefore, our pedagogical and philosophical framework is the "dialogical philosophy" (Buber, Levinas, Mounier; Milan, 2007). Moreover, as reference models it accepts the definitions of "intercultural competence" provided by Deardorff (2006; 2009). As pointed out by Deardorff, intercultural competence is a multifaceted phenomenon: its acquisition moves from an *individual level* to an *interaction level*. Relevant key skills include: listening, observing, evaluating, analysing, interpreting and relating. Intercultural competence also includes (Lonner & Hayes, 2004): emotional aspects (Goleman, 2005), contextual items (Sternberg, 1988) and the development of interpersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1993), to form a caring person, sensitive to interpersonal dynamics and capable of living in a complex society. Therefore, the key word linking intercultural competence and understanding religion could be "dialogue". Among the objectives of intercultural education there is the identification of an educational approach and didactical proposals, oriented toward teaching in culturally (Baur, 2008) and religiously diverse environments. There are not in fact abstract cultures and religions in dialogue, but dialogue, discussion and exchange between people of different religions and cultures.

It is important to identify a "minimal vocabulary" for understanding religion (Salvarani, 2003) building intercultural competence. These words are seven: a) identity/otherness; b) empathy/passion; c) listening; d) knowledge; e) "de-centralization"; f) welcome/hospitality; g) story-telling.

The challenge for educators is to build pathways that promote an intercultural education really attentive and open to the plurality of ideas, traditions, experiences, even religious ones. The paper focuses on the use of *Cooperative Learning* methods in the classroom to promote intercultural competence in understanding religion. For some time now *Cooperative Learning* has been regarded as an adequate approach in establishing contexts of attention and respect (Batelaan, 1998). Through *Cooperative Learning* students work in small groups to achieve a common goal. The teacher creates the conditions for them to experience directly positive interdependence and promotional interaction. Meanwhile, through direct teaching of social skills (Johnson & Johnson, 1991) and a reflection on their importance, they can achieve necessary skills to "stay in" and "promote" diversity, even religious diversity



(Dal Corso & Damini, 2011), first of all within the class, then, presumably, in a broader context.



## **European Voluntary Service and Intercultural Competence in Understanding Islamic Culture**

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Fahri ÇAKI, Balıkesir University**

The concept of “intercultural competence” – defined as “acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural context (world view), including one’s own, and developing greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts as both an immediate and long-term effect of exchange” – gained great attraction among both scholars and practitioners during the last few decades. It is usually assumed that intercultural contact plays an important role in developing intercultural competence, which involves a deeper understanding of, tolerance for, and respect to, the culture of “the other”. Although it is an important aspect of culture, culture cannot be reduced to religion only. However, contrary to this fact, religion most usually is the first thing to come to the mind when middle-eastern societies are at stake. In a sense, the culture of all middle-eastern societies, including Turkey, is equated with Islam – a world religion currently echoing with “oppression” and “terrorism”. It can be assumed that this is most probably true for the perceptions of European young people too. To see whether this is the case, this paper will explore what kinds of perceptions European young people have regarding religious life in Turkey. Additionally and more importantly, the present paper will question if European youth’s perceptions of religious life in Turkish society get significantly changed after living in this society for about a year. Such an examination is believed to generate significant insights in regard to the effects of intercultural contacts on intercultural competence. The data for this paper comes from a qualitative/ethnographic research conducted to examine major effects of European Voluntary Service Program. The sample (a snowball/purposeful one) consists of 30 European young volunteers who volunteered in Turkey for about a year between 2007 and 2011. Prior to the voluntary service, more or less a similar line of thinking on Islam is expected to be found among European young volunteers while a diversity of perceptions is anticipated to be arising from an experience of living in Turkey, a finding that would partially confirm the literature.



## **Intercultural Competence- the Missing Element in European Integration Policies and Discourses?**

**Dr. Bernhard Perchinig, University of Vienna**

Since the Treaty of Amsterdam the European Union has become an important actor in the field of “integration” with regard to immigration. In its June 2003 Communication on immigration, integration and employment, the European Commission stressed that integration was “a prerequisite to allow migrants to fully develop their potential for the economic development of Europe” and called for “increased efforts to allow migrants to fully participate in the economic, social and cultural life of their countries of residence”. Integration was defined as “a reciprocal process based on equal rights and obligations of legally resident third country nationals and the host society, which aims at the full participation of immigrants.” Further to publishing several communications, the EU has set up an European Network of Integration comprising the responsible state actors in the field, established an “European Funds for the Integration of Third Country Nationals” and developed an “European Webpage on Integration”.

Despite its support for cultural diversity in the fields of education and culture, the understanding of “integration” in the migration policy field is limited. In particular, the issue of intercultural competence is not addressed, giving the impression that EU integration policies lack an understanding of diversity. This impression is further supported by the developments in several member states, where compulsory integration measures have been implemented, which most focus on a reduced understanding of “integration” as acquisition of the dominant language of the country. The paper argues that the EU thinking on integration needs take account of the concept of intercultural competence in order to overcome the stalemate of the prevailing assimilationist understanding of integration.



## **Tracking the Cultural Gaze: Acts of Looking and Learned Plots of Identities in Austria**

**Dr. Birgit Breninger and Thomas Kaltenbacher MSc., University of Salzburg**

In this study we try to visualise and decode the culturally different gazes and reading patterns of cultural images. We are going to demonstrate how, depending on the cultural background of subjects, selective vision influences the interpretation of culturally coded images. Eyetracking technology [individual 30 min. recording sessions/eyelink 1000] is used to test our hypotheses in regard to the 'cultural gaze'.

Cultural studies have long been concerned with the multiple viewpoints that move beyond the single-perspective of Western rationalism in order to create new places and spaces from which to look and be seen. Such multiple viewpoints have not only been theorised to change the way in which people see themselves, but have also begun to have an impact on the host culture, especially in relation to changes in perceptions and conceptions of 'national' identities. But what are the images that 'culturize' us into national subjects and how does this cultural literacy construct a visuality that is able to exclude others and demarcate identities?

The method of eyetracking allows a 'gaze contingent' analysis as well as the analysis of fixation and eye movement patterns. The interpretation of the latter are supposed to reveal acquired acts of looking and plots of identities which are re-enacted and/or dismissed. With the help of such data we intend to show differences and changes in the various selective perceptions of cultural codes and analyse them in regard to the concept of 'national' identity.

Thereafter the data [n=30] is interpreted with the help of a hybrid 4 step analysis which is needed to decode cultural data in a relevant way and in order to use the visual stimuli in intercultural trainings.



## **Discourse Theories and Cross-Cultural Pragmatics Awareness Rising Through Authentic Materials**

**Dr. Azzoung Omar, University of Tlemcen**

Most of the literature on interlanguage pragmatics focuses on SLA. In this paper we not only propose that ILP field inquiry should be extended to include FLA .but also argue that pragmatic knowledge as such must go beyond the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic abilities for understanding and performing speech acts to include their cross-cultural investigation .all this is done with a close reference to the Algerian context of foreign language teaching . in fact, the latest reforms that Algeria witnessed in this field ,and the use of new EFL textbooks have put foreign language teaching , English in particular ,at the core of the pragmatic relevance of the foreign language debate ,are our new textbooks following the mood? Is there any discrepancy between what is grammatically relevant and distinctive of the target language and what is taught in the classroom? can we through the use of authentic material , find an adequate solution and achieve cross- cultural pragmatic proficiency?

The quantitative and qualitative investigations of the EFL middle school textbooks that we undertook revealed that the authentic materials and their associated tasks, allowed learners to notice a wider range of discourse features than those generally available in traditional textbooks .they also indicated that learners have found these new textbooks more interesting ,varied and challenging ,and better able to meet their perceived future language needs .

However ,though there is willingness to take into account the sociopragmatic dimension of language ,there is somehow still a lot of work to be done .the semantic formulas and speech acts taught ,to mention only these ,do not correspond to those used by native speakers and most of them are not accompanied with metapragmatic explanation that makes their interpretation easy and their use appropriate ,furthermore ,we have noticed that there is a misconception between giving insights about the cultural distinctiveness of the target language (tl) that make learners aware of its sociocultural appropriateness and avoid thus any pragmatic communication failure and teaching culture as a set of facts ,taught as such , this cultural information is unable to provide the necessary sociopragmatic choices needed

These issues and others related to the field of interlanguage pragmatics ,(tlp) together with some of its pedagogical implications for English language teaching are discussed and their practicality tested.



## **Coping with Intercultural Challenges in Global Business: An Ethnographic View**

**Prof. Alois Moosmüller, University of Munich**

In order to survive in the global market, multinational companies have to reinvent themselves as "globally integrated enterprises". The consequences will be manifold especially on the personnel level: "global literacy" and "intercultural competence" have to be developed, not just by managers and international transferees but by the entire staff. This can only be accomplished if companies, as "learning organizations", utilize the implicit intercultural knowledge of their internationally experienced employees. Ethnographic research is best suited to locate this kind of knowledge, explicate it and make it accessible for organizational learning. I will discuss cases concerning international projects within and between multinational companies as well as cases concerning global transferees in multinational companies.



## **Chinese intercultural communication in the global setting, as reflected through contemporary key words in the Chinese multimedia**

**Dr. Adrian Tien, National University of Singapore**

It is very well to espouse the importance of intercultural competence as a core skill in the context of globalisation, yet it remains to be seen *with what* and *how* precisely intercultural competence could be best researched, articulated and accessed. In this paper, I present preliminary findings from an ongoing project, based on the argument that a vital way of tapping into intercultural competence is via key cultural concepts or “cultural key words” which can be identified in the language and “which reflect the core values” of the culture (based on Wierzbicka 1991: 333). Through such key words, it is possible for a given culture and its mentalities, ethos, attitudes etc. to be “revealingly studied, compared, and explained to outsiders” (Wierzbicka *ibidem*).

The question remains what “key words” *really* are. According to Wierzbicka (1997: 15-17), a word may be culturally “key” if it (a) occurs with a remarkable frequency in the language and/or (b) is difficult to translate into another language and/or (c) its meaning(s) encapsulate(s) important cultural notions reflecting speakers’ ideas, attitudes, mentalities, ethos, social practices etc.

Chinese language and culture is the focal point of interest in this paper, demonstrating how the identification and analyses of cultural key words in one language is a feasible way of subsequently carrying out intercultural comparisons etc. with other languages. Chinese has been chosen because, among other things, it is one of the official languages of the United Nations; there is a continued fascination with things and themes Chinese, including the ways in which Chinese speakers live, think and behave; and, last but not least, the fact that the Chinese-speaking population have come in contact with other linguistic populations and *vice versa* at an unprecedented scale means that, for us all living in this rapidly changing cultural landscape and in the current environment of globalisation, some understanding of intercultural communication involving the Chinese might be called for.

The main source of data for this study is contemporary Chinese multimedia which, presumably, best reflect the contemporary Chinese language and culture especially when it comes to intercultural communication involving the Chinese. Trawling through such domains as websites, blogs, TV programmes and newspapers in Chinese, a selection of contemporary Chinese key words is to be presented for discussion and analyses. For the purpose of a rigorous framework for analysing cultural key words, the current study has adopted a semantic framework called the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) (e.g. Wierzbicka 1996, Goddard and Wierzbicka Eds 2002). The central claims of the NSM are that, in principle, there exists a set of 64 semantically irreducible and universal “primes” whose lexical counterparts can be identified in all world’s languages. Among its other advantages, NSM primes allow us to rigorously analyse and scrutinise the meanings of cultural key words, thus making it possible for the Chinese culture and its mentalities, ethos, attitudes etc. to be “revealingly studied, compared, and explained to outsiders”.



Preliminary results indicate roughly three types of cultural key words in Chinese warranting intercultural awareness. First, there are key words that have always been around in the Chinese language and culture since ancient times (despite possible changes to their meanings some of these words may have undergone). Secondly, there are key words that have been newly created in contemporary Chinese. Finally, there are key words that were originally loan words or calques from other languages and that, as a result of assuming new, culture-unique meanings in Chinese, no longer identify with the original words in their source languages. The implications for intercultural competence will be discussed.



## **Intercultural Competence in Business Negotiation**

**Dr. Jitka Odehnalová, University of Economics, Prague**

It seems almost impossible to overlook trends deepening international cooperation on various macroeconomic and microeconomic levels within the recent economic activity in the world. Economic internationalization, together with increasing intensity of international trade activities requires a higher sensitivity to existing cultural differences.

Good interpersonal relations with business partners seem to gain more and more importance in order to reach and maintain successful business relations in all the economies in today's globalized world. Business failures direct among others to the insufficient intercultural competence in business negotiation.

The paper mainly focuses on fundamental cultural determinants which influence the business behaviour, and thus cultural differences which might cause misunderstandings and troubles while members of different cultures are interacting, mainly focusing on the aspects reflected in business communication and negotiation.

Since the states' borders and thus their markets are being opened to the rest of the world, an enormous necessity to negotiate with business partners from different cultures has arisen. Businessmen from all over the world face counterparts from different cultures more and more often. Business relations are becoming deeper and appropriate negotiating skills play one of the key roles in the successful process of entering foreign markets. Good interpersonal relations with business partners seem to be of a great importance for creating and maintaining long-term business relations. What are the critical points every negotiator should be aware of in order to create and maintain successful business relationship with a partner from a different culture?

Critical interviewing existing relevant literature enabled the author of this paper to introduce the studied specifics of cross-cultural business behaviour and define areas requiring further research. Specifically the work of authors, whose research has been so far discussing fundamental cultural determinants influencing the cross-cultural business behaviour, especially cross-cultural business negotiation while building a framework for potential misunderstandings and conflicts, were taken into account.

According to the analysis of methods being used in managerial research and the aim of the research the author designed her own research to exploring the above mentioned areas in detail.

The key findings came out of the own research which was based on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with Czech businessmen oriented on Czech -Chinese business negotiation analyzed by using the grounded theory.

The goal of the research was to identify the core cultural factors which might cause misunderstandings or even conflicts in cooperation within any Czech-Chinese business negotiation. This paper brings among others a model of interaction of members of different cultures and a model of the own rules of the game to be discussed.



The paper offers a well structured overview of most crucial cultural aspects being studied and examined and defined as being connected directly to culture clash within business negotiation.



## **Software of the mind at play in the software industry – Study of interculturality and leadership in the software industry in India**

**Dr. Sumedha Desai, University of Mumbai and University of Pune**

Software industry as a business sector can be called a true representative of globalization because more organizations in the software industry have presence in multiple countries than perhaps in any other business sectors.

Although software development is originally said to be a US concept, globally India is perceived as the hub of the software development industry. However this industry sector in India has a very complex nature with several organization types ranging from Indian organizations serving Indian customers, similar organizations serving foreign clients, foreign organizations, mostly US organizations with software development centers in India, which serve Indian as well as foreign clients and many other variations of these organizations. The workforce in many of these organizations is multinational. Therefore these organizations are a converging point of employees from varied cultural backgrounds making these vibrant sites of interculturality and intercultural communication.

Various aspects of intercultural business communication in these organizations have been or are being investigated like the cultural orientation of the employees, their approach to decision- making, their attitude regarding conflict to name a few. This paper deals with one such aspect and that is the dimension of interculturality and leadership in this industry.

The Indian software industry is to a large extent oriented to the western world be it in terms of clients or be it that the Indian leaders of software organizations are often armed with foreign management degrees or interact closely and frequently with their counterparts in the western world. This situation puts the Indian software industry leaders in a peculiar position. They are products of the Indian culture and value system, which is significantly different from the western cultures. So it is interesting to find out the extent, to which there are cultural differences and a cultural synthesis in the leadership styles of these “Indian, international” leaders.

This paper describes in brief the software industry in India in terms of its orientation, organization structure and leadership. Various leadership theories like the transformational and transactional theories and leadership styles like authoritarian, democratic, collaborative etc. and their cultural perspective are discussed with examples from the software industry to create a theoretical base. Then the cultural orientation of the leadership in the Indian software industry is investigated on the basis of examples of the leaders of organizations from this industry. This will through light not only on how cultural differences persist in the leadership styles of these leaders when compared to their western counterparts but also how a cultural synthesis is evident too in their leadership styles reflecting the interculturality in the leadership of the software companies in India.



## **Guanxi competence as intercultural competence: A Chinese perspective**

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Trotz einer großen Anzahl von Konzepten und Ansätzen zur interkulturellen Kompetenz aus unterschiedlichen Fachdisziplinen steht in Hinblick auf ihre Bestimmung noch ein inhaltlicher Konsens aus (Deardorff 2004; Fischer 2005; Johnson et al. 2006; Bolten 2011). Im Kern dieses Konstrukts wird allerdings beibehalten, dass interkulturelle Kompetenz die allgemeine Handlungsfähigkeit in einem fremdkulturellen Kontext bezeichnet (Gertsen 1990) und häufig aus affektiven, kognitiven und behavioralen Aspekten betrachtet wird (Chen & Starosta 1996). Wie Thomas darauf hingewiesen hat, sei in der Diskussion um das Thema interkulturelle Kompetenz viel zu viel vom westlichen Diskurs determiniert (Thomas 2003).

In einem Literaturreview (Spitzberg & Changnon 2009) wurde zwar ein Facework-basiertes Model von interkultureller Kompetenz (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi 1998) aufgenommen, welches anscheinend ausgehend von und gezielt auf asiatischen Kulturraum entwickelt wurde, ist das Konzept letztendlich der westlichen Kategorisierung verfallen, indem es die interkulturelle Kompetenz als „a set of knowledge, skills and personal attributes“ (Johnson et al. 2006) auffasst, die eher kulturübergreifend funktionieren.

Im Vergleich dazu hat die Literatur in der interkulturellen bzw. internationalen Managementforschung über kulturspezifische und indigene Theorien und Konzepte in der vergangenen Zeit drastisch zugenommen. Als Beispiel hat sich die Diskussion über Guanxi sowie seine Anwendung in der Managementpraxis sowie der Wirtschaftskommunikation im westlich-chinesischen Kontext seit den 80er Jahren zu einem festen Diskurs entwickelt (Hwang 1987; Kao 1993; Wang 2007). Genauso wie im Forschungsprozess der interkulturellen Kompetenz, dominierte die westliche Perspektive in der Anfangsphase der theoretischen Entwicklung von Guanxi. Seitdem immer mehr Forscher aus chinesischem und asiatischem Raum sich mit diesem Thema beschäftigt haben, werden nicht nur kulturimmanente Eigenschaften zunehmend offenbart, sondern großes Denkpotehtial wird auch zur Ergänzung sowie zur Bereicherung westlicher Theoriebildung freigesetzt.

Mit dieser Tendenz besteht das Ziel der vorliegenden Arbeit darin, aufgrund eines Literaturreviews Guanxi-Kompetenz als interkulturelle Kompetenz für Zielkultur China zu konzipieren, die sich durch holistische Perspektive, Paradox, Dynamik, Interdependenz, Flexibilität und Reziprozität auszeichnet.