北京外国语大学
BEIJING FOREIGN STUDIES UNIVERSITY

From Theory-Driven Lecturing to Self-Reflection
Teaching Intercultural Communication with Techniques

Speaker | Yang LIU | 2024-08-06

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Teaching Western Theories in A Non-Western Classroom
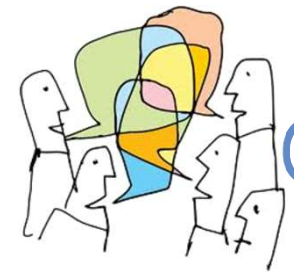
The Case of Intercultural Competence

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Teaching Western Theories in A Non-Western Classroom

Making intercultural communication relevant to students

Narrowly defined 1

IC examines interactions and/or comparison between different cultures.

Low Context   High Context

IC provides different theoretical perspectives to other similar phenomena

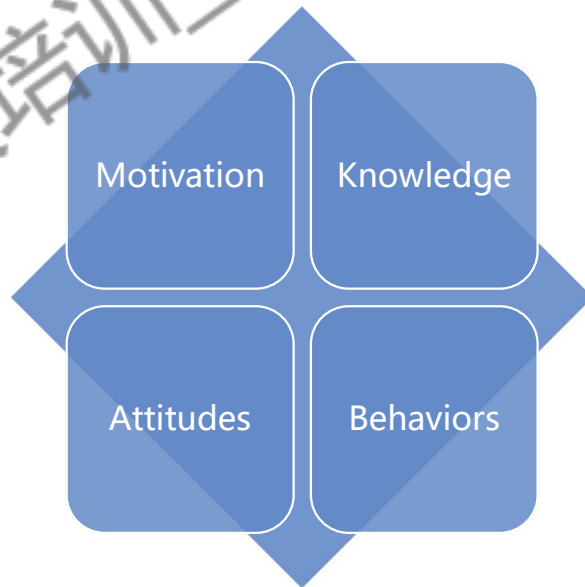2 **Broadly speaking**

College Just Ahead

Teaching Western Theories in A Non-Western Classroom

Making intercultural communication relevant to students

- The Case of Intercultural Competence
  - Scholars taking a post-positivistic perspective have identified four key components of intercultural competence: motivation, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.
  - These building blocks serve as a useful starting point for understanding this concept at the individual level.
  - By examining each of these elements, we can gain insights into the complex process of becoming an effective communicator across cultures.

Motivation	Knowledge
Attitudes	Behaviors

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  o Barrier to motivation, the first component

1 Lack of Incentive

- Members of more powerful groups often feel they don't need to learn about other cultures, as they believe their way is the default.
- This lack of incentive can hinder the motivation to engage in intercultural communication.

Motivation

2 Discomfort with Differences

- Intercultural interactions can be uncomfortable, as they require navigating unfamiliar territory and challenging one's own assumptions.
- This discomfort can deter people from actively seeking out intercultural encounters.

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  o Attitude as the second component

1

Tolerance for ambiguity
- It is one of the most difficult things to attain.
- As mentioned previously, people have a natural preference for predictability, especially in in stressful situations.

2

Empathy
- Empathy refers to the ability to know what it's like to "walk in another person's shoes."
- Empathic skills are culture bound.

3

Non-Judgmentalism
- It is much easier said than done.
- We might like to think that we do not judge others according to our own cultural frames of reference, but it is very difficult not to do so.

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  o Knowledge as the third component

Self-Knowledge
- Perhaps the most important knowledge for effective intercultural communication is self-knowledge - understanding how you are perceived as a communicator and your personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Acquiring this level of self-awareness can be a long and complex process. It may be more challenging than learning about others.

Other-Knowledge
- Other-knowledge, or knowledge about how other people think and behave will also help you be a more effective communicator.
- However, learning about other cultures in overly general terms can lead to stereotyping.
- It is essential to balance general cultural knowledge with an appreciation for individual differences within each group.

Linguistic Knowledge
- Familiarity with languages beyond one's native tongue, as well as an understanding of the challenges of learning a second or third language, can enhance one's intercultural competence

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  o Knowledge as the third component

Topics Covered by Language and Society		
Language as a sign system: The semiotic perspective	Functions of language use	Language and socialization
Types of language: Verbal and nonverbal;	Language and power	Language and Othering
Language and its users	Language and gender	Language and media

Language is full of meanings and cannot only be merely reduced into a tool

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  - Behavior as the fourth component

    - What are the most competent behaviors? Are there any universal behaviors that work well in all cultural contexts? At one level, there probably are.

    - These general behaviors seem applicable to many cultural groups and con- texts. However, these skills become problematic when we try to apply them in specific ways.

    - It is not enough to know how competent behaviors vary from culture to culture, one needs to be able to put that knowledge into practice by demonstrating those behaviors appropriately.

    - intercultural competence means being able to exhibit or adapt to different kinds of behaviors, depending on the other person's or group's cultural background.
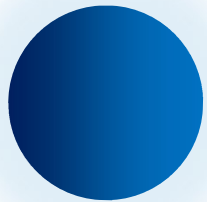
PART 02

Thinking out of the Western Box

Beyond Eurocentric Intercultural Competence

Thinking out of the Western Box

Contribution of interpretivism and critical approaches

- Context and power structure matter

	Positivism/Post-positivism	Interpretive	Critical
Assumption of reality	External and describable	Subjective	Subjective and material
Assumptions of human behavior	Predictable	Creative and voluntary	Changeable
Research goal	Describe and predict behavior	Describe and explain behavior	Change behavior
Relationship of culture and communication	Communication influenced by culture	Culture created and maintained through communication	Culture a site of power struggles

- It identifies cultural variations and recognizes cultural differences in many aspects of communication.
  BUT
- It reifies culture and doesn't consider context.

- It claims the constructive nature of reality;
- It recognizes people's subjectivity;
- It highlights the value of context;
- It underscores the importance of power and historical context to understanding IC

Thinking out of the Western Box

Contribution of interpretivism and critical approaches

- What you can see is determined by your past experiences or context
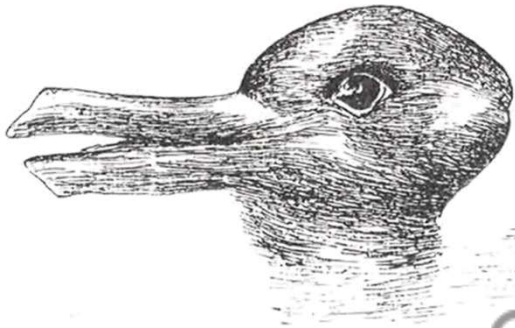
Contextual Limitations
The application of intercultural competence can be limited by the specific context. What constitutes competence in one setting may not be effective or appropriate in another, highlighting the need for context-specific approaches.

Ethnocentric Bias
Some critiques suggest that certain intercultural competence models may reflect the values and perspectives of the culture from which they originated, rather than being truly inclusive of global perspectives.

Thinking out of the Western Box

Contribution of interpretivism and critical approaches

- Unspoken power structure

One reason is that members of large, powerful groups often think they don't need to know much about other cultures; there is simply no incentive. In contrast, people from less powerful groups have a strong incentive to learn about and interact with more powerful groups. For example, female managers in corporations are motivated to learn about and adjust to the dominant male norms, Latinos/as are motivated to learn European American norms, and visitors overseas are motivated to learn about and adjust to the norms of foreign cultures. The survival of these less powerful groups often depends on members' motivation to succeed at intercultural interaction (Johnson, 2001).

Limitations of Adaptation

There is a concern that intercultural competence may be perceived as a one-way street, where individuals from minority cultures are expected to adapt to the dominant culture, rather than fostering mutual adaptation and respect.

Thinking out of the Western Box

De-westernization of intercultural competence

- Introducing research conducted outside Western contexts

Kim, M. S. (2010). Intercultural communication in Asia: current state and future prospects. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *20*(2), 166–180. https://doi.org/10.1080/01292981003693351

Peng, R.-Z., Wu, W.-P., & Fan, W.-W. (2015). A comprehensive evaluation of Chinese college students' intercultural competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *47*, 143-157. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.04.003

Dai, X. D. & Feng, H. R. (2024). Dai, X., & Feng, H. Redefining intercultural competence using the Delphi method. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *0*(0), 10283153241266967. https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153241266967

Thinking out of the Western Box

De-westernization of intercultural competence

- Introducing research conducted outside Western contexts: Extending IC in the Asian context

Process Model of Intercultural Competence
Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241-266.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002

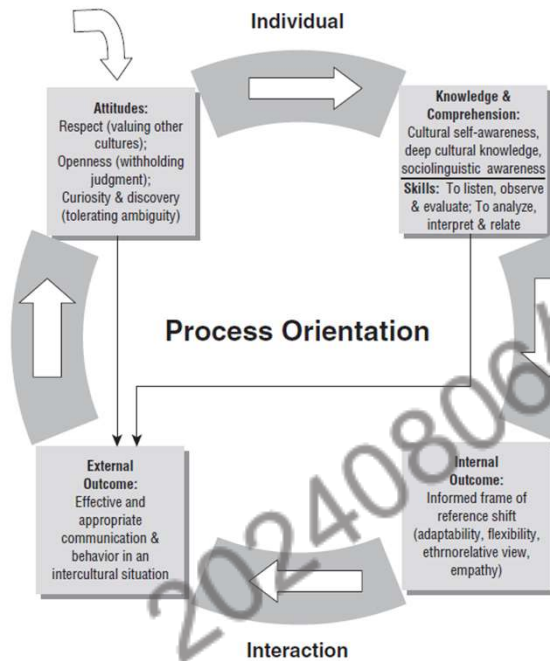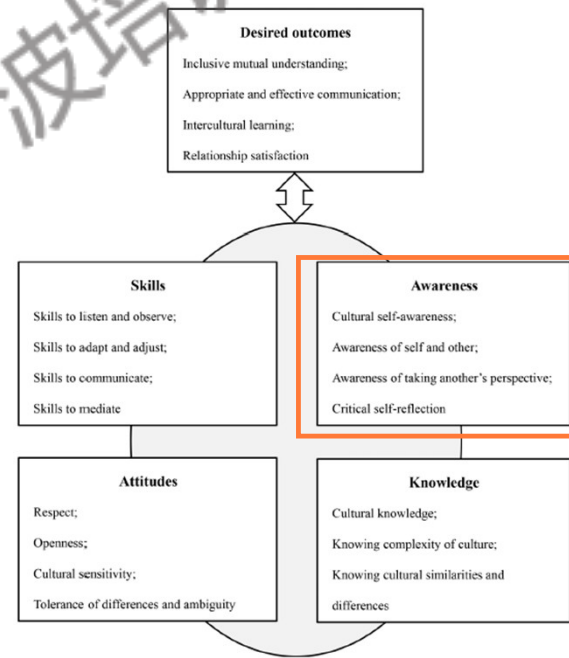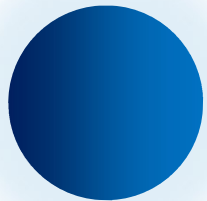**Multicultural model of intercultural competence (MMIC)**
Dai, X. D. & Feng, H. R. (2024). Dai, X., & Feng, H. Redefining intercultural competence using the Delphi method. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *0*(0), 1028315324126667.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315324126667

PART 03

Teaching with De-Westernization

Techniques to Foster Self-Reflection

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Teaching with De-Westernization

Encouraging students to criticize by engaging them in analysis

- Longitudinal assignments to foster self-reflection

  o Regarding cultural differences: The first assignment at the beginning of the semester

- Please reflect on a representative cultural difference you have experienced and answer the following questions within **200** words:
  o Describe the experience with details
    ✓ What happened?
    ✓ Why do you think this experience could exemplify cultural differences?;
  o Describe how you reacted to the perceived cultural difference
    ✓ How did you perceive the difference? Feeling shocked, uncomfortable or okay?
    ✓ How did you deal with the difference?

❖ Transition from High School to College

❖ The Neighborhood Connection in Lao Jia

❖ Different food prepared for Chinese Lunar New Year's Eve

❖ Intergeneration Conflict concerning Hair Color

❖ Social protocols on Winter Olympics

❖ Different meanings of silence in Serbia

❖ Table manners in different cultures

Teaching with De-Westernization

Encouraging students to criticize by engaging them in analysis

- Longitudinal assignments to foster self-reflection

  o Regarding cultural differences: Reflection paper at the end of the semester

❖ *Please apply the theories or theoretical frameworks that we have already discussed to the intercultural experience you described in your first assignment and present an insightful analysis*

❖ *You are expected to illustrate how to re-perceive your intercultural experiences through the chosen theoretical framework. Analysis is about showing and telling.*

| Points	Criteria
15	Is organized well, with a clear introduction, conclusion, and logically structured paragraphs
10	Adheres to the word limit
40	Presents an insightful analysis of the issues identified or questions raised by you, with reliance on course concepts and material
15	Is formatted correctly, including the citation of material from any sources
20	Has clear and concise language, free of grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors
100	Total

Teaching with De-Westernization

Encouraging students to criticize by engaging them in analysis

- Movie analysis was adopted to concretize their understanding of the theory

  o Cultural dimension theory as the example
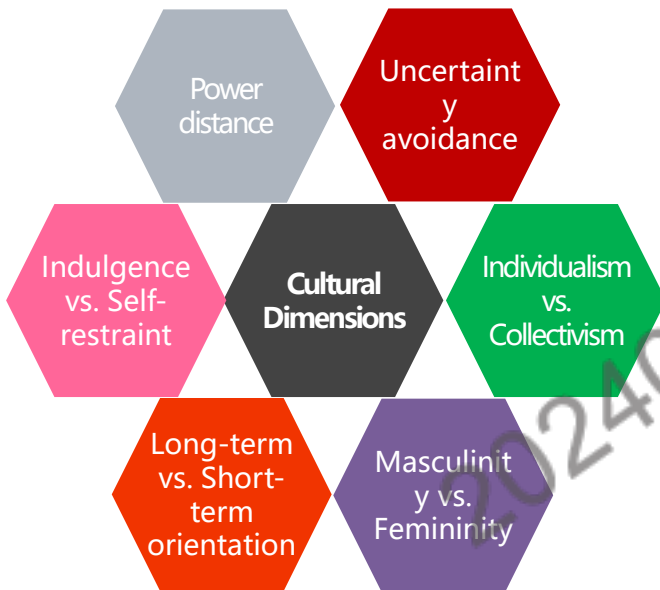
■ Cultural dimension theory: Power distance
- The power distance index focuses on ways of coping with inequality across cultures.
- It is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally."

High power distance index	Low power distance index
• Follow authority; • Hierarchical structure; • Concentrated & centralized; • Such as Malaysia, Philippines , Mexico, South Korea, China.	• Avoid concentration of authority; • Fewer layers of management; • Decentralized; • Such as Demark, New Zealand, Austria, United States.

■ Cultural dimension theory: Power distance in 推手

Teaching with De-Westernization

Encouraging students to criticize by engaging them in analysis

- Group research project to elicit the critique based on solid analysis

  ➤ Requirement: Discuss with your group members and think about how to apply what we have already discussed in this course to analyze or interpret a specific intercultural communication-related case or phenomenon.

Criteria	Comments	Points
Introduction – 4 Points		
Thesis Statement (Central argument)		/2
Preview Statement (Brief introduction of your structure)		/2
Content – 13 Points		
Why the Chosen Case or Phenomenon is Relevant to IC		/3
What IC Concepts or Theories are Used and Why		5
Quality of the Structural Application of the Chosen Concepts or Theories		/5
Conclusion – 4 Points		
Restate Thesis Statement		/2
Review Main Points		/2
Delivery – 4 Points		
Enhances the Presentation (with supplementary materials, pictures or something else)		/1
Presented without Manuscript Aid		/2
Completion on Time		/1

Teaching with De-Westernization

Encouraging students to generate their meanings

- Visualization as a way to help them understand complicated concepts

  - Intercultural personhood as the example

    - The creative-arts method allows participants to 'project' their thoughts and feelings about their personhood in various creative endeavors.
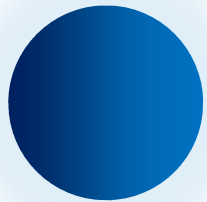

Huang, Z. M. (2020). Intercultural personhood: A non-essentialist conception of individuals for intercultural research. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *21*(1), 83–101. https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2020.1833898

PART 04

Concluding Remark

Toward A More Inclusive Future

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Concluding Remark

Why to teach intercultural communication?

IMPORTANCE OF IC

International **conflicts** are generated in the end

Negative evaluation of cultural differences (stereotypes, prejudice and bias)

Ethnocentrism comes to play

Why different?

If we are **not mindful** of these differences

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谢谢聆听

Email: vivian.liu@bfsu.edu.cn