Intercultural Communication research paradigms:
Field, theory or method?

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What is known:
Culture has much influence on Communication

➢ Shared knowledge is a prerequisite to communication

➢ Much of knowledge is intercultural
- Facts, experiences, roles, behaviors, …
- Culturally determined communicative competence is crucial for ICC

➢ Two ways to improve the effectiveness of ICC
- Increase shared knowledge
  - Try to learn as much as possible about the **people** with whom you are communicating
- Dealing with misunderstandings
  - Misunderstandings are the one thing certain about ICC

What is new:
more or less new ☺

- 1. From Pragma-semantics to Pragma-Discourse
  - Discourse systems are overarching
- 2. "Intercultural" overpowers "cross-cultural"
  - Constructivist approach to communication
- 3. The universe of *Politeness*
  - But politeness is never universal !
- 4. Narrative turn
  - It is the stories that convince, not objective truths

Major Types of Discourse Systems

- Corporate culture
  - Differences between public and institutional discourse
- Professional groups
- Generational discourse system
- Gender discourse system

- Scollon 2009

What is there in a Discourse System

- Controlled communication
  - Discourse genres with a non-flexible scenario
    - Structured interviews - a control of introducing local topics
  - Institutional contexts allow only certain types of discourse
    - Court and investigation procedures
  - Less than full communicative competence of a participant
    - Speaking foreign language in organizational contexts
- Socio-cultural norms determining status of the communicants
  - Age, gender, position in the hierarchy, physical ability, hair or skin color
- Personal relations between the participants in communication
  - Background relations
  - Emerging in the process

Discourse as Pragmatics incorporated in the communication flow

- ➢ Pragmatic principles as explanations
  - Cooperative principle: Grice (1975) and the following 25 years of *relevance* studies
    - Informational dimension of communication
  - Pragmatic Control principle
    - Interactional dimension of discourse, including all politeness phenomena
  - Speech act theory
    - Having impact on the world and communication participants

From speech acts to discourse practices

Searle's speech act theory is about communicative functions of speech acts, not about communicative agenda of the interlocutors

- *- Can I get a cup of coffee*   - action-directive
- *- Milk?*   - info-request
- *- Hm?*   - signal-- non understanding
- *- Do you want your coffee black?* - info-request
- *- Oh yes, thanks*   - agreement

  - Kechkes 2015

➢ Domain of interlanguage pragmatics, methods of interactional sociolinguistics powered by the constructivist theory of situated communication

2. BUILDING INTERCULTURE IN DISCOURSE

In search of the paradise, sorry – the paradigm

➢ Linguistic knowledge is but a small fraction of competencies used in discourse

➢ There are other types of competencies, or circles of knowledge

➢ We should be able to exploit what is really used in situated communication

➢ Intercultural Pragmatics, or Interactional Sociolinguistics, or Cognitive Situated Linguistics ?

Pragmatic approach to discourse

➢ Pragmatic approach focuses on the ways the discourse is produced and interpreted in the situated communication

➢ As compared to cognitive approach where the focus is on knowledge and competences

Cross-cultural Pragmatics broadly understood

- Definition
  - The study of differences in expectations based on cultural knowledge
- Domains
  - Politeness systems
  - Speech acts
  - Grice's maxims
  - ➔ this covers 'Language in Action'
- Methods
  - Discourse and conversational analyses, contrastive analysis
  - Sociolinguistic instruments

Pragmatics and the study of culture

- Cultural underpinnings of the pragmatic meanings
  - Contrastive pragmatics
    - Traditional design
  - Cross-cultural pragmatics – differences in ways of speaking prompted by different cultural values, or hierarchies of these values
  - Positivist research endeavors; focus on speech act realizations in different cultures, cultural breakdowns, and pragmatic failures
    - Gumperz, Tannen, Scollon
    - Champion: Anna Wierzbicka (2003) - *Cross-cultural pragmatics: the semantics of human interaction*
  - Interlanguage pragmatics
    - Blum-Kulka, Kasper, Trosborg and many others
  - Intercultural pragmatics
    - As proposed by Keczkes (2013) – *Intercultural pragmatics*

Focusing on differences

- Cross-cultural pragmatics
  - Sociopragmatic errors:
    - *Bill: Well, I have to go now. Why don't we have lunch sometime?*
    - *Dmitrij: When? Do you have time tomorrow at noon?*
    - *Bill: I am afraid not. I'll talk to you later.*
- Interlanguage pragmatics: focuses on the acquisition and use of pragmatics norms in L2
  - Pragmalinguistic errors
    - **Couldn't you tell me what time it is now*

Focusing on cooperation

➢ How language systems are used in social encounters

➢ For speakers who have different first languages and cultures and who

➢ Communicate in a common language

➢ The paradigm emerged in the early 21ˢᵗ century
  - Dissatisfaction with the cognitive linguistics inability to explain diversity
  - Reaction to the change of social paradigm
    - Istvan Kecskes. *Intercultural Pragmatics* (2013)
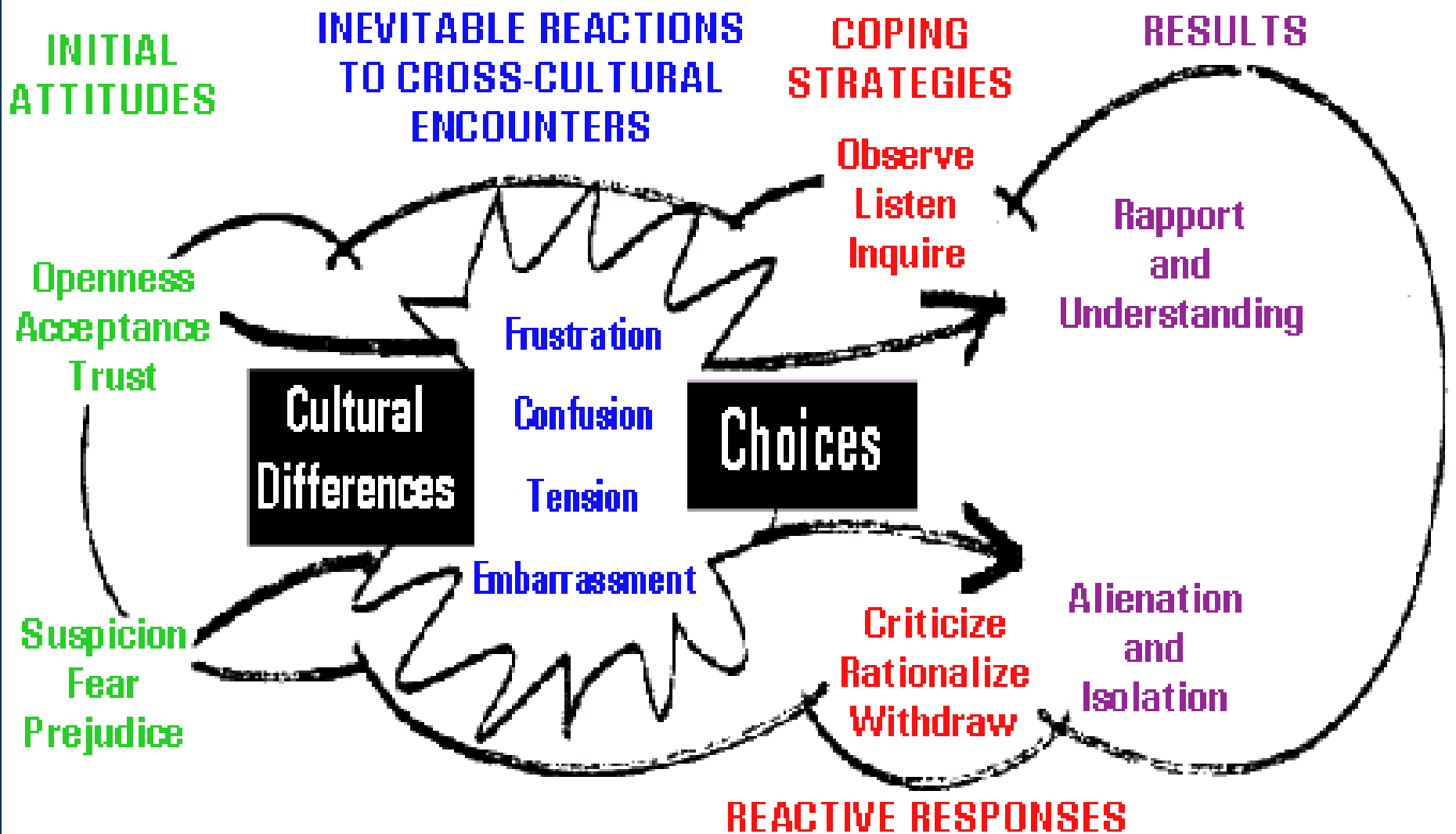
Intercultural Pragmatics

- In the focus: context, dynamics of interaction
- Topics:
  - Limited role of target language cultural norms and conventions
  - Conscious cooperation in ICC
  - Role of individual factors:
    - Building frames bottom-up in the interaction
  - Context-sensitivity works different
  - Role of preferred ways of saying things is less important in ICC – formulaic language
  - More emphasis on certain communicative strategies
    - Explicit negotiation of meaning development and use of trouble avoidance strategies

Intercultural pragmatics

- ➢ Joining two seemingly antagonistic approaches
  - Cognitive-philosophical approach:
    - Considers intention as an *a priori* mental state of the speaker
  - Sociocultural-interactional approach:
    - Intention is *a post factum* construct created by both S and H through conversation

- ➢ Merging the two approaches forms the socio-cognitive approach central to the field

Applied in such concepts as:
Culture Shock

INITIAL ATTITUDES

INEVITABLE REACTIONS TO CROSS-CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

COPING STRATEGIES

RESULTS

Openness Acceptance Trust

Observe Listen Inquire

Rapport and Understanding

Cultural Differences

Frustration

Confusion

Tension

Embarrassment

Choices

Suspicion Fear Prejudice

Criticize Rationalize Withdraw

Alienation and Isolation

REACTIVE RESPONSES

And key intercultural skills

- Cultural Due Diligence
- Style Switching
- Cultural Dialogue
- Cultural Mentoring

Most of it falls under the idea of mediation

The "third culture" perspective of intercultural pragmatics

➤ In ICC participants are creative on a discourse level rather than on the utterance level

➤ Sentences may be clumsy, and utterances contradictory, but the message is clear

➤ Discourse level of understanding in intra-cultural communication:

      A. Ты умеешь водить машину?
      B1. Да. Меня папа учил

  vs.

      A. Ты умеешь водить машину?
      B2. Не бойся, поехали

Another perspective: Cultural Linguistics

➢ A modern incarnation of *Лингвокультурология*

➢ But with a focus on *Cultural Cognition* as interaction

➢ Cultural cognition is a form of *enactive cognition* that is formed as a result of interactions between individuals across time and space
  - Not-equally shared, unevenly distributed, dynamic and constantly negotiated

➢ This understanding of cultural cognition is entirely different from the essentialised notion of 'culture' that is often associated with linguistic relativity.

➢ Cultural Linguistics explores cultural cognition as a complex adaptive system that emerges from the interactions between agents (members of a speech community) across time and space.
  - *Покажите мне чайник …*

Sharifian 2017

4. Narrative turn

- It is impossible to teach communication across the cultural borders relying only on objective truths and hard evidence
- Personal stories are more trustworthy
- But they demand knowledge of context
- Context is created in hundreds of ways

聖方濟各斜巷
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CALÇADA DE
S. FRANCISCO XAVIER

What does it take to tell a good story

Narrative Paradigm of Walter Fisher

- All communication is narrative.
  - Our beliefs and behaviors are grounded in values, emotions, and aesthetic considerations
  - We are more persuaded by a good story than by a good argument

- Humans are naturally storytellers

- Decisions about a story's worth are based on "good reasons"
  - Good reasons are determined by history, biography, culture, and character
  - We experience the world as filled with stories, and we must choose among them

Stories: Narratives that affect

➢   Stories interpret reality, NOT describe it

➢   Understanding a story means interpreting this interpretation in order to:

1.   Understand the coherence
2.   Understand the point of the story

➢   Interpreting is based on

- 1. => Characters and causal connections (SAE); OR

- 1. => Culturally salient topics & functions

- 2. => Evaluations

➢ How much culture we need to figure out misunderstanding ?

Typology of intercultural failures

- "Mind your grammar!"
- Standard mistakes due to physical context
- Non-standard pronunciation
- Non-standard variety of the targeted language
- Turn-taking, pauses, and intervals
- Mismanagement of cultural schemas
  - Deals with background knowledge

Intercultural bumps in story telling demonstrate mismanagement of cultural knowledge

➢ Cross-cultural bumps are discourse examples "under asterisk"

➢ They represent other-initiated self-repair

➢ Identification of a cultural schema
- Non-matching models
- Inferences

➢ Contents and structure of a model
- Itemization
- Focusing

Non-matching models

- N: I didn't want to hit him anyway .
- V: It was in spring /
- M: Ah . in spring you can't shoot them?
- V: <yeah . you can>
- N: <they are kind> of skinny by that
       time .
- **meat is no good** ..

Wrong inference on the basis of the cultural model

- M: When was your first time flying out from here to the town . to Anchorage?
- J: ... Oh . Iditarod ... seventy three ... that's the time . th= . they started . eh . Iditarod through here ..
- M: And you mushed ..
- J: Yeah .
- M: So you took part in it .
- J: No ..   (....................)
- J: Oh . that's~ . that's the time I . did started . an Iditarod trail . that .. I am talking about ..
- M: U-ha ...
- J: I used to make . breaking trail for them / .. I used to do . with the . snowmachine .. to . eh . Farewell station ..
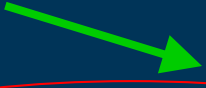
Wrong inference – SCHEMA

- M: 'Iditarod' =>

- COMPETITION

  - PARTICIPATION

  - (=> 'SO YOU TOOK PART IN IT')

- J: 'Iditarod' =>

- COMPETITION

  - PROWESS

  - (=> 'MUSHED; STARTED AN IDITAROD TRAIL; BREAKING TRAIL FOR THEM)

Wrong Focusing

- J: Snowmachines . yeah …
- I drove my fourwheeler that winter .
- in December .
- from McGrath to here .. one day .. I had it …
- They couldn't flew airplane .. too . too wide ..

- M: Was it too cold for airplane?
- J: Yeah . too wide for airplane .. ………
- M: Why not snowmachine? Snowmachine is better on snow .
- J: Yeah . snowmachine is better . fourwheeler is not that good …
- no way to get it up here . I had to drive

Wrong focusing – SCHEMA

- LOCAL TRAVEL model
  - *that winter . in December .*

'Very cold'

What is in the focus?

M: '*Airplanes don't fly below – 40 C'*

J: '*I am a competent and skilled representative of my culture'*

Wrong itemization

- J: Telida chief? Karl Sesui?
- M: Yeah
- J: **That's my uncle** ..
- M: Yes . on mother's or father's side?
- J: Eh . their . their mother . eh . **used to be living in Telida** _too ..._
- I remember . eh . we used to live in Telida . and eh ..
- we got . our own house ..
- my uncle lived eh . at two houses ...
- he get _big house_ .. he lived in _good house_ .. _from log_

Conclusions

➢ Intercultural communication is an activity

➢ This activity is based on certain knowledge and skills

➢ They are studied with a variety of methods within a bunch of approaches using multidisciplinary models and paradigms

➢ The buzz words are: discourse, interaction, context, building trust, creating knowledge, and constructing interculture

➢ It all starts with language, so

  • Learning and teaching languages are in the heart of it

Message to take back home

➤ Teaching foreign languages is like flying a three-headed dragon:

- One needs to know which head to stick to