

# **Cultural Awareness in Language Education**

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# Contents

- 1 – What is Culture?
- 2 – Intercultural awareness
- 3 – Intercultural theorists
- 4 – Intercultural language education
- 5 – Intercultural workplace
- 6 – Intercultural literacy

# What is culture?

*All people are the same.*

*It's only their habits that are so different.*

Confucius

- Shakespeare & Mozart
- Belief systems
- Assumptions
- Lifestyles: 'How we do things around here'
- Narratives

# Culture or culture?

- *Big C:*
  - **Achievement culture**
- *Little C:*
  - **Behavioural culture**

*from: Cultural awareness, Tomalin & Stempleski*

# 5Cs of Culture

- Cultural knowledge
- Cultural behaviour
- Cultural values & attitudes
- Cultural preferences
- Cultural adaptation

# Intercultural education

- Facilitating communication
- Not transmitting values
- Not judging by comparisons
  
- **Baseline** = Culture1, not Culture2
- First develop awareness of C1

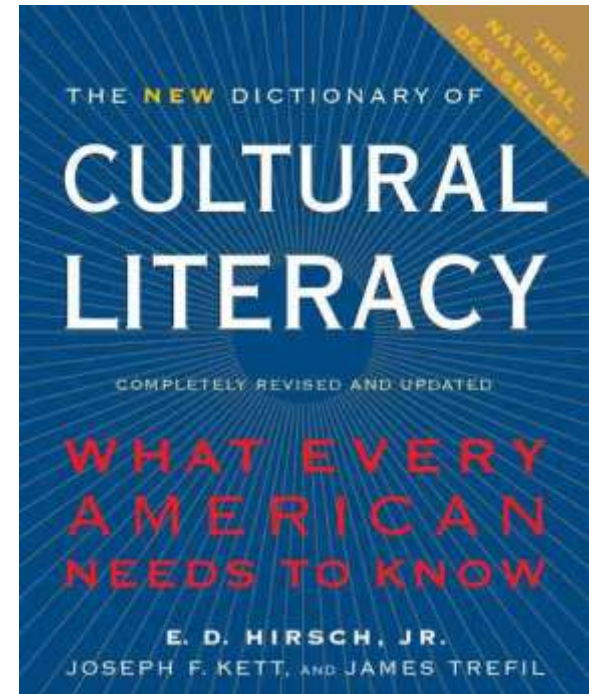
# Cultural reference



# Teaching about our own culture

## E.D. Hirsch - Core Knowledge Curriculum

- "... literate culture has become the common currency for social and economic exchange in our democracy, and is the only available ticket to full citizenship.... Membership is automatic if one learns the background information and the linguistic conventions that are needed to read, write, and speak effectively."
- "***Cultural literacy*** constitutes the only sure avenue of opportunity for disadvantaged children."



### A cultural curriculum:

- History Writers
- Music Daily life
- Politics Food
- Art Entertainment



# Cultural reference


- Lexical level
- People, places, events, jokes
- Text-oriented
- Reading/listening skills development
- International givens (Trump, Kanye, Burgers)

# Cultural reference barriers

- Did you hear Jimmy Fallon's jokes about GE on the Tonight Show on NBC?
- Geldof threatened to give his OBE back to the palace after Paxman's accusations on Newsnight

## Reflection

# Intercultural awareness



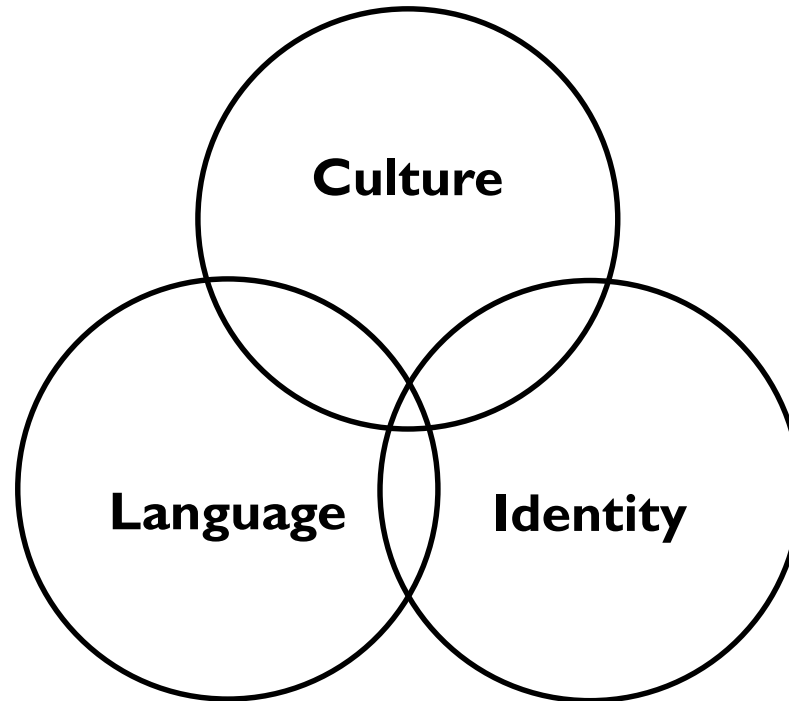
“To teach foreign culture is to introduce learners to new meaning systems and their associated symbols, to provide them with the opportunity to acquire new competences and to allow them to reflect on their own culture and cultural competence”

*Michael Byram*

# Culture & Multilingualism

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart. “

*Nelson Mandela*



“Wer fremde Sprachen nicht kennt, weiß nichts von der eigenen.

[Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own]

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

***“In the knowledge society of the 21st century, language competence and intercultural understanding are not optional extras, they are an essential part of being a citizen”***

*The Languages Company*

# Multilingual identities

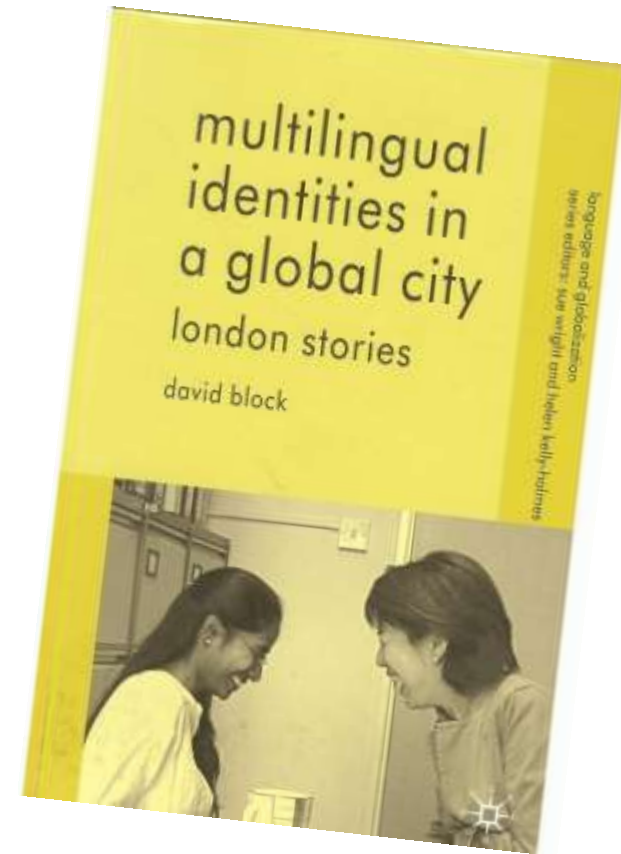
"I think I do present a bit of a different personality when I'm speaking in English and when I'm speaking in Japanese.....

....when I'm speaking in Japanese, I really have to think about all the things, what's the proper style...and try to adjust myself to the identities, what the other person is projecting on me" (*Akira*)

"And sometimes when I go back to France, in the supermarkets, for example, I say to myself 'they are so rude' because they never say 'sorry' etc" (*Laure*)

"I think I'm considered to be rather, erm, assertive in Japanese terms, but I don't really care" (*Motoko*)

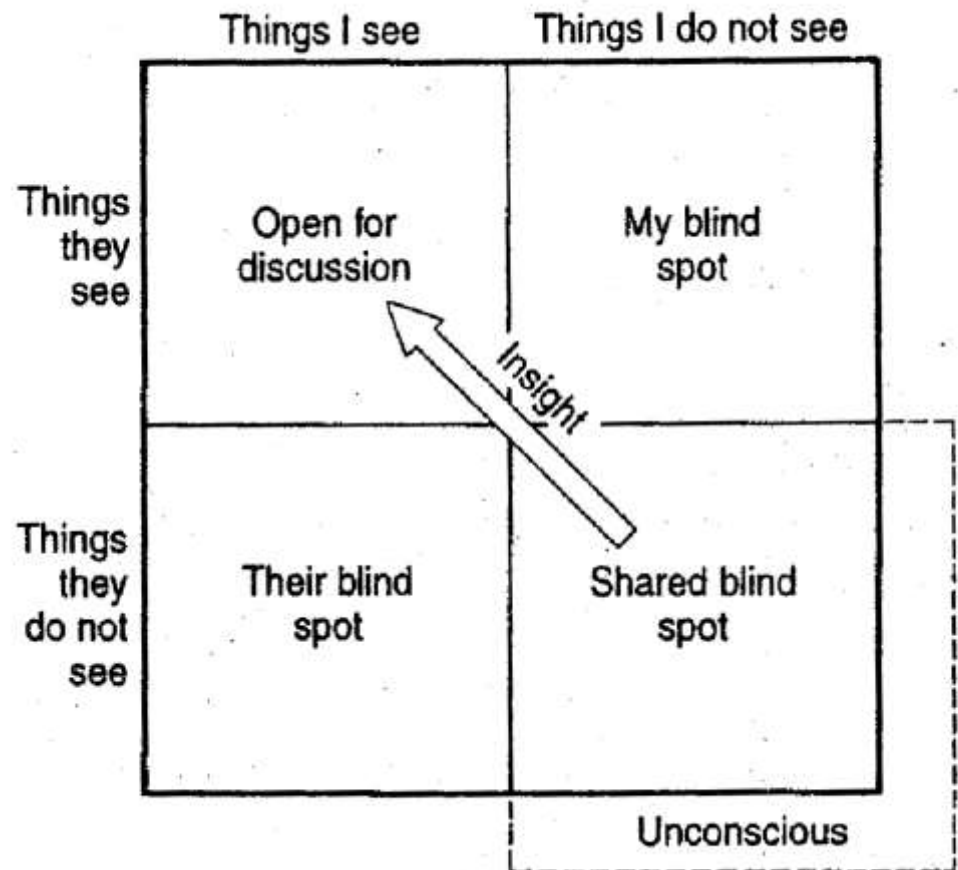
"When you speak a different language.....you immerse yourself into a completely different person" (*Lucy Liu*)



# Culture at a personal level

## Johari window

- Greetings
- Space
- Register
- Timing
- Discourse content sequence

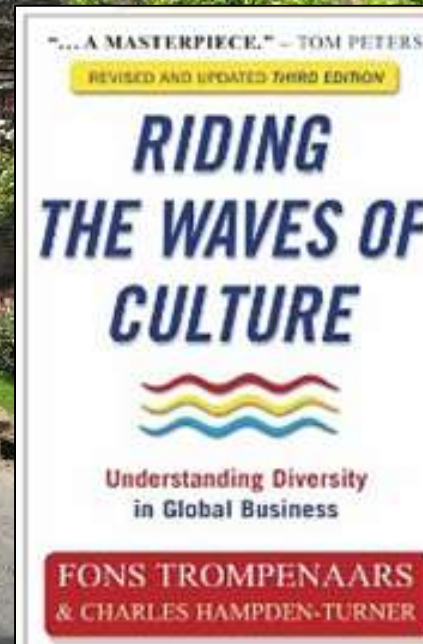
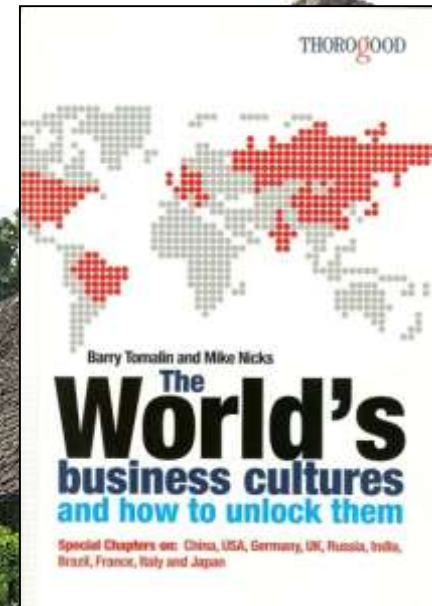
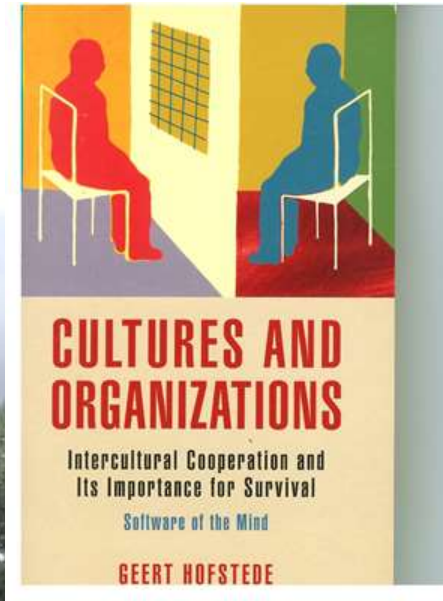


# Culture 1 believes Smoking in Restaurants is...

**Culture 2  
believes  
Smoking in  
Restaurants  
is...**

<i>Acceptable</i>	<i>Unacceptable</i>
C1 and C2 both think it's acceptable	C2 thinks it is acceptable but C1 finds it unacceptable
C2 thinks it's unacceptable, but C1 finds it acceptable	C1 and C2 both think it's unacceptable

# Culture theorists





# Hofstede's Cultural Value categories

## Individual

- Personal goals over group goals
- Values autonomy
- Few obligations to others
- Confrontation acceptable

## Group-oriented

- Group goals over personal goals
- Values inter-dependence
- Many obligations to others
- Harmony expected

# Power Distance index

## Egalitarian

- Few status differences
- Informal social relations
- Superior can be questioned
- Little respect for old age

## Hierarchical

- Many status differences
- Formal social relations
- Deference for superiors
- Great respect for old age

# Tough vs Tender

## Masculine

- Gender inequality
- Few women in powerful jobs
- Highly competitive
- Division of work from family life
- Live to work

## Feminine

- Relative gender equality
- More women in powerful jobs
- Highly cooperative
- Concern for family life
- Work to live

# Uncertainty avoidance

## Low avoidance

- Less resistance to change
- Risk-taking
- Little loyalty to employer
- Rules can be broken

## High avoidance

- High resistance to change
- Little risk-taking
- Great loyalty to employer
- Rules should not be broken

# Time culture

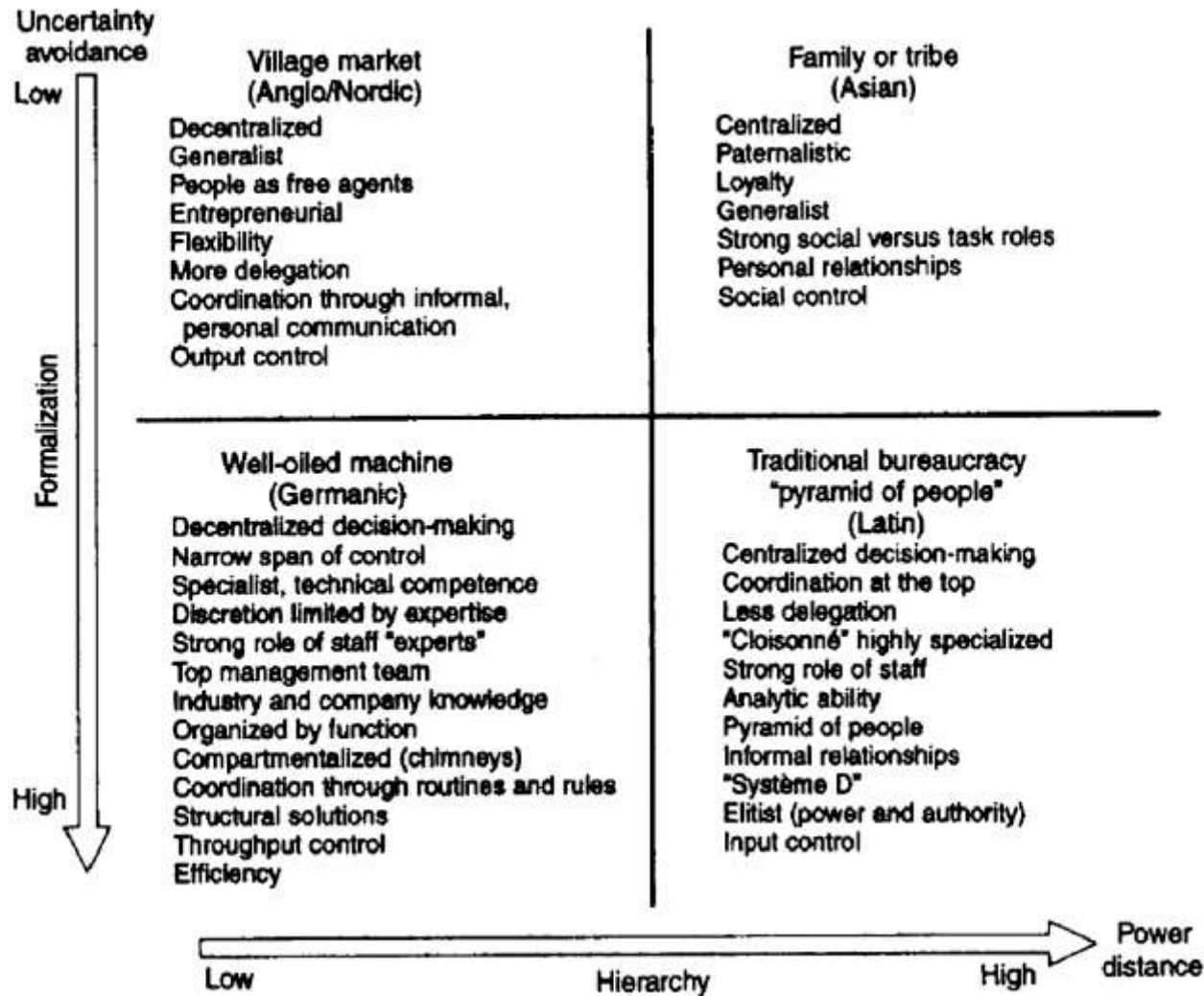
## Precise time reckoning

- Punctuality
- Rigid schedules
- Time is limited
- Time is money

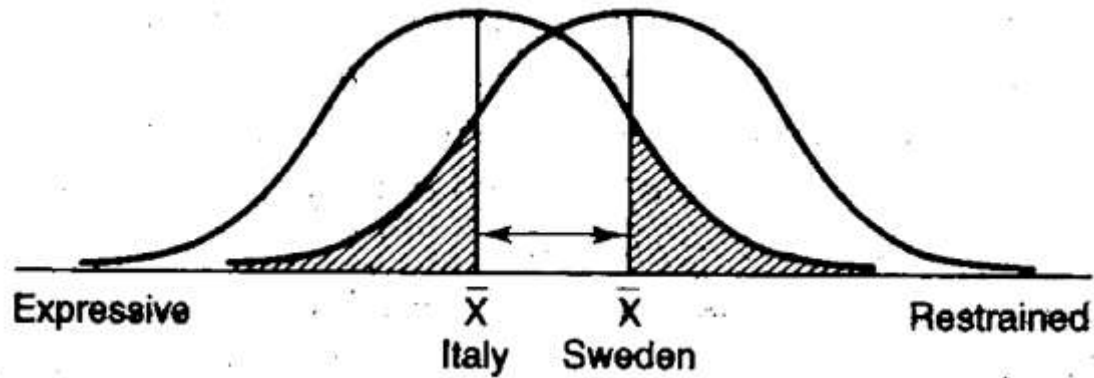
## Loose time reckoning

- Punctuality less important
- Flexible schedules
- Time is plentiful
- Social relationships more important

# Cultural profiles



# Cultural continuum



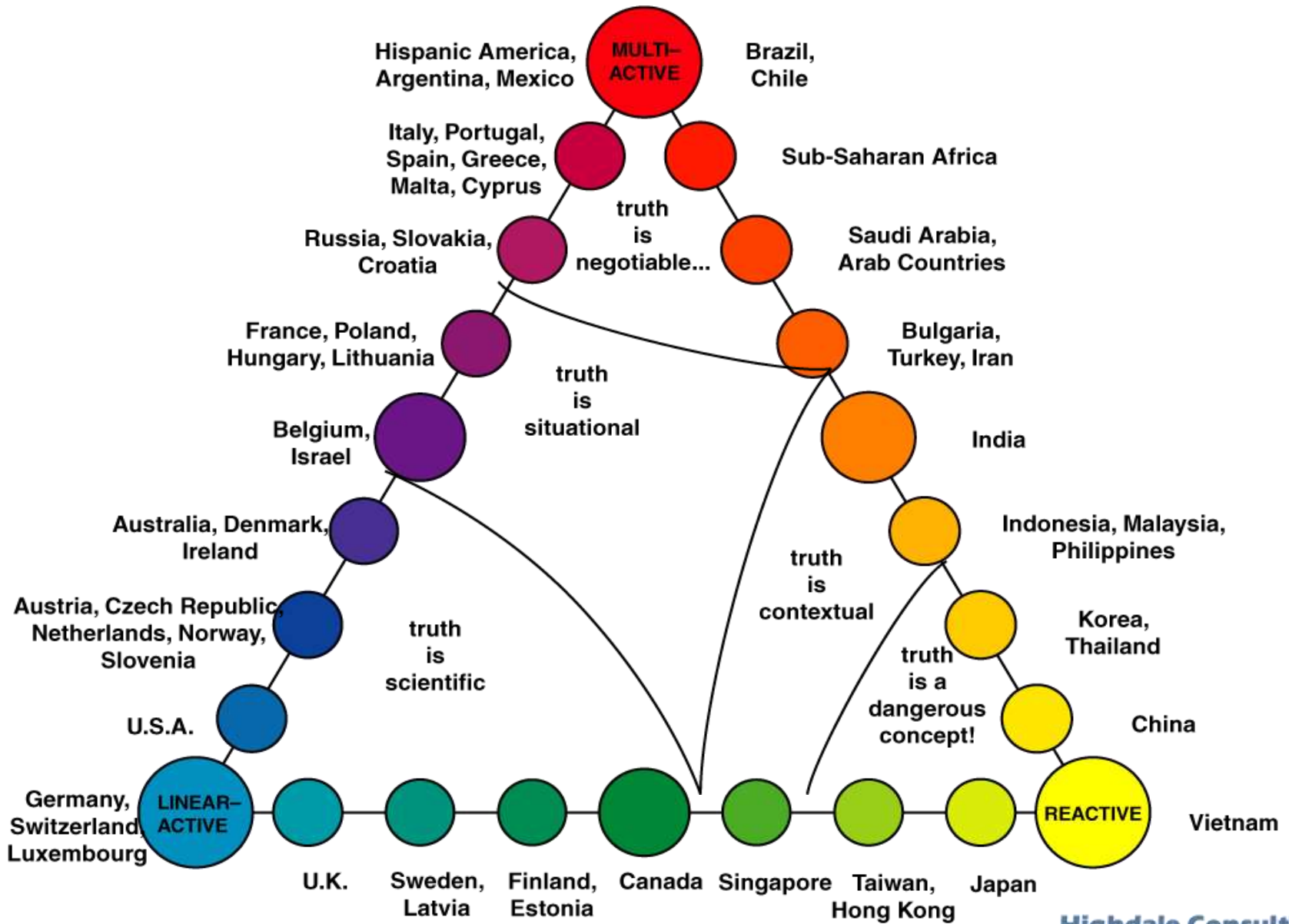
# Trompenaars

“Once you are aware of your own mental models and cultural predispositions, and once you can respect and understand that those of another culture are legitimately different, then it becomes possible to reconcile these differences”.

*Business across Cultures*



# Intercultural groupings - Lewis



# Intercultural language education

## **Culture is the 5<sup>th</sup> Language Skill:**

- Speaking
- Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- ***Culture***



# Language & culture

**“between the grammar of my language and its expression in audible speech lies the filter of the social system in which I live”**

*Peter Farb*

**“the only way to understand the world view of another culture is through its language”**

*Sapir-Whorf*

# What is culture in ELT?

- Landeskunde
- Cultural reference
- Intercultural awareness input & activities

## **A cultural curriculum:**

- History
- Writers
- Music
- Daily life
- Politics
- Food
- Art
- Entertainment

# Classroom research

Researchers in Intercultural language education (ICLE) or Intercultural language teaching (ICLT) include Byram, Liddicoat, Gudykunst & Moody, Kramsch, Liddicoat & Scarino, Yu et al, etc

Yu et al (2014) outline the '**Pedagogical principles of intercultural language education**' including research applied to:

- Policy
- Methodology
- Principles of ICLT syllabus
- Materials
- Student motivation
- Testing
- Teacher training & qualifications

# Curriculum change

- Change teacher education
- Train teachers to be cultural trainers
- Change language curriculum
- Change textbook contents
- Change assessment domains
- Educate society - intercultural training, intercultural seminars for parents, employers

# An intercultural language curriculum

...a regular language curriculum consisting of linguistic goals complemented by other skills such as:

- Knowledge of the self and one's own cultural context
- Skill of how to interpret meaning in texts and media
- Development of critical thinking skills
- Skills of discovering cultural information via observation, description
- Reflection on the values and beliefs of the self and others

*(Subkowiak, 2017)*

# Intercultural language activities

Subkowiak posited a broad set of intercultural exercise types for the language classroom, such as:

- Exploring foreign cultures
- Doing ethnographic projects
- Comparing and contrasting cultures
- Investigating critical incidents
- Exploring learners culture
- Reflecting on values, attitudes, beliefs

*(Subkowiak, 2018)*



# Lesson activity change

- Research-read-roleplay: via Internet
- Compare C1/C2 daily lifestyles, behaviours etc
- Compare lifestyles via YouTube clips/movies
- Explore stereotypes in texts/roleplays, & discuss
- Get C2 informant to discuss issues with class
- Write a guide for people coming to C1:  
what they need to know, people, places, food, customs
- Write reverse guide for other Anglophone countries/C2: based on student research & imagination

## Reflection

List 5 cultural features a newcomer should know about living or working in your country:

- What s/he should always do
- What s/he should never do

Compare with your partner's list

# Interculture at work



“If I’m selling to you, I  
speak your language.

If I’m buying, dann  
müssen Sie Deutsch  
sprechen!”

*Willy Brandt*

# The MOLE Map



# Business Cultures

<b>Relationship-focused</b> Does business depend on building good relationships?	<b>Deal-focused</b> Is getting the job done the prime criterion?
<b>Formal</b> Are business relationships formal and respectful? Is the business style top-down? Are reporting lines strict and respected?	<b>Informal</b> Are business relationships informal and casual? Is the business style egalitarian? Is a matrix system of reporting in operation?
<b>Monochronic</b> Strict timekeeping Tight scheduling Long-term planning	<b>Polychronic</b> Unpunctuality Flexibility Crisis management
<b>Reserved</b> Don't show emotion	<b>Expressive (emotional)</b> Show emotion

# Cultural skills for work

## Competencies for managing differences

- Interpersonal (relationship) skills
- Linguistic ability
- Motivation to live abroad (cultural curiosity)
- Tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity
- Flexibility
- Patience and respect
- Cultural empathy
- Strong sense of self (or ego strength)
- Sense of humour

*“Managers who readily accept that the cuisine, the literature, the music and the art of other countries run parallel to one another, must also learn to accept that the art of management differs in other countries”*

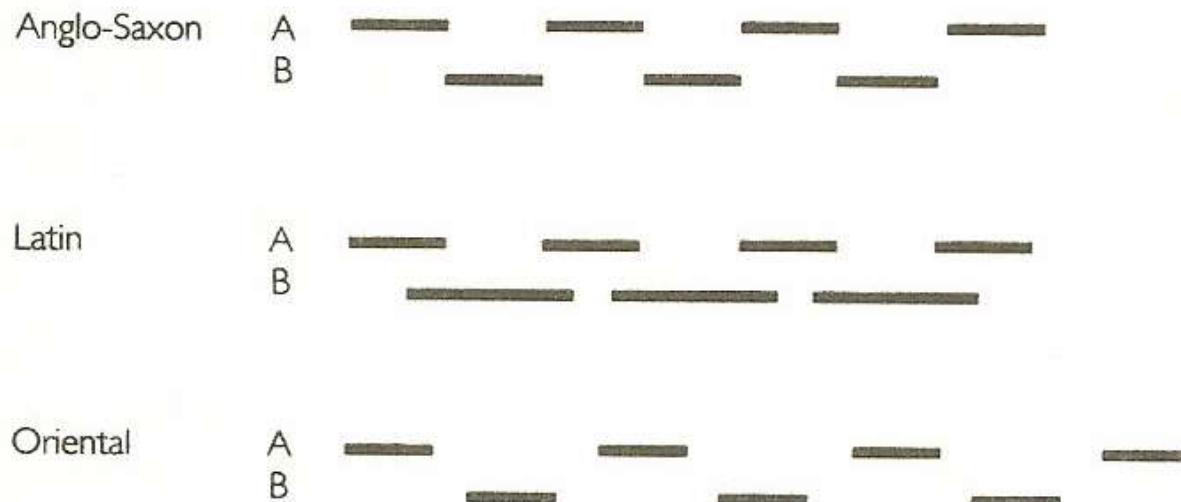
*Andre Laurent,  
Professor INSEAD*

*“Japanese and American management practices are 95 percent the same, and differ in all important respects”*

*Takeo Fujisawa, cofounder  
Honda Motor Company*

# Cultural Turn-taking

Figure 6.2 Styles of verbal communication



• *Trompenaars, F. Riding the waves of Culture*

# Cultural Language - US sports metaphors

## Baseball as a Foreign Language:

- That idea is way out in left field
- She threw me a curve
- He batted a thousand
- You're way off base
- She fielded my questions well
- We need to touch all the bases
- What are the ground rules?
- He has 2 strikes against him
- It's just a ballpark estimate



# Intercultural literacy



# Intercultural Competence Framework

Cambridge English

CULTURAL LITERACY FRAMEWORK

Draft

CATEGORIES	FOUNDATION	DEVELOPING	PROFICIENT	EXPERT
CULTURAL AWARENESS SKILLS	1 Shows curiosity and interest in learning about students' cultures and the culture of the local environment	2 Can respond appropriately to cultural issues in a clearly defined context, such a greetings, leave-taking, gift-giving and hospitality	3 Can recognize areas of possible difficulty caused by cultural differences and can respond appropriately to avoid or repair the situation.	4 Is able to evaluate and improve own intercultural competency and can support others when required
	5 Deals with students and colleagues from different cultures with openness and respect without judging.	6 Is flexible and patient in dealing with different approaches in cultural communication or behaviour	7 Is able to operate successfully and sensitively in different cultural and diverse minority environments	8 Is able to use ideas from other cultures creatively, while showing appreciative enquiry, empathy and understanding
APPLICATION OF CULTURAL AWARENESS TO LANGUAGE EDUCATION	9 Understands the cultural difficulties experienced by students and their effect on language learning	10 Incorporates information taken from world cultures into language education	11 Systematically includes an intercultural component in the exploitation of dialogues and texts.	12 Is able to compile and exploit intercultural information for students and clients
	13 Shows knowledge of and interest in student's countries of origin, festivals and name days	14 Can recognize and exploit intercultural information included in texts and dialogues under study by students	15 understands and responds empathetically to language and cultural difficulties experienced by students, colleagues and clients.	16 Selects and develops culturally appropriate language teaching material for delivery to students.
KNOWLEDGE OF PRINCIPLES AND THEORIES OF INTERCULTURE	17 Develops self awareness of own cultural background and identity	18 Builds knowledge of students' countries of origin and cultural backgrounds and identities	19 Understands and can use the key theories of intercultural relations.	20 Can apply understanding of cultural differences to study of other disciplines
	21 Can relate this awareness of students' and colleagues' cultures to teaching	22 Understands and applies the principles and practice of assessment of cultural knowledge and skills.	23 Can interpret current events in the light of cultural theory and practice where appropriate	24 Can apply the understanding of cultural principles and theory to the resolution of difficulties in class or in students' and client's professional lives, if requested.
UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURAL SYSTEMS	25 Understands the difference in principle between national, regional and organizational cultures	26 Understands and can respond empathetically to gender, race, religion and other issues affecting students and language learning	27 Is sensitive and careful to avoid national stereotypes and to deal with students and colleagues as individuals	28 Is able to evaluate and interpret the intercultural concepts and ideas behind documents and events
	29 Can understand the differences in individual students' cultures and relate these differences to own culture	30 Is sensitive to potential intercultural issues between students	31 Understands and can teach the law and practice of cultural diversity regulation to students and teachers	32 is able to reconcile apparent differences between conflicting interpretations of intercultural events

# Intercultural fluency - BC

By the end of the course participants should be able to:

- understand what makes the cultures that they are familiar with distinct and compare these with less familiar cultures
- adjust how they communicate to make others feel more comfortable in new cultural situations
- understand the complex influences that make up cultural identity
- use greater awareness of self and others to better understand the different perspectives present in multicultural situations
- examine how cultural and other influences have shaped their workplace communication preferences and how these may be viewed by others
- describe the effect that cultural and other influences can have on the dynamics of multicultural teams
- adapt to earn trust in multicultural and global teams



- examine how cultural and other influences have impacted their leadership style and how others may respond to this
- adapt their leadership style to successfully earn and build trust, motivate team members and create optimum conditions for team performance in a range of situations

# The intercultural role of language teachers

We can make learners more interculturally aware by:

- Developing **Cultural Literacy** in C1, to better understand C2
- Teaching language with links to its **Cultural Context**
- Teaching language with explicit **Cultural Reference** work in texts
- Teaching **Intercultural Awareness** to students as part of communication strategies, alongside language content
- Helping to avoid **Intercultural Tension** by teaching the awareness that builds tolerance

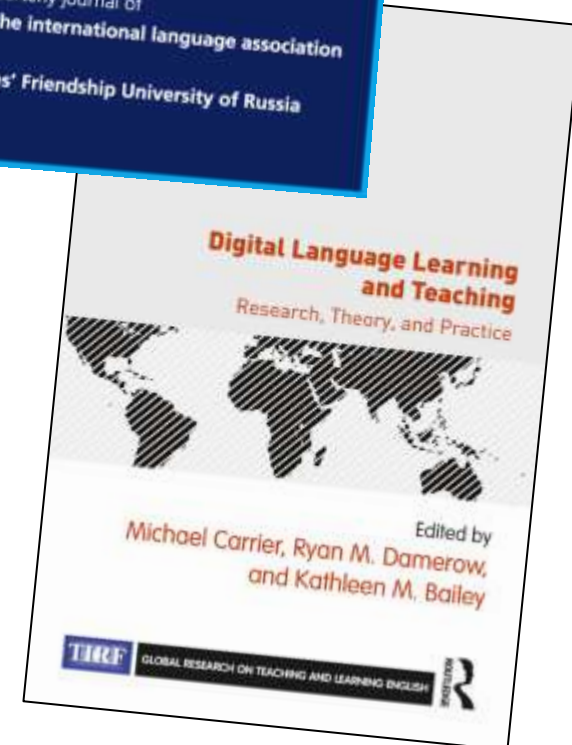
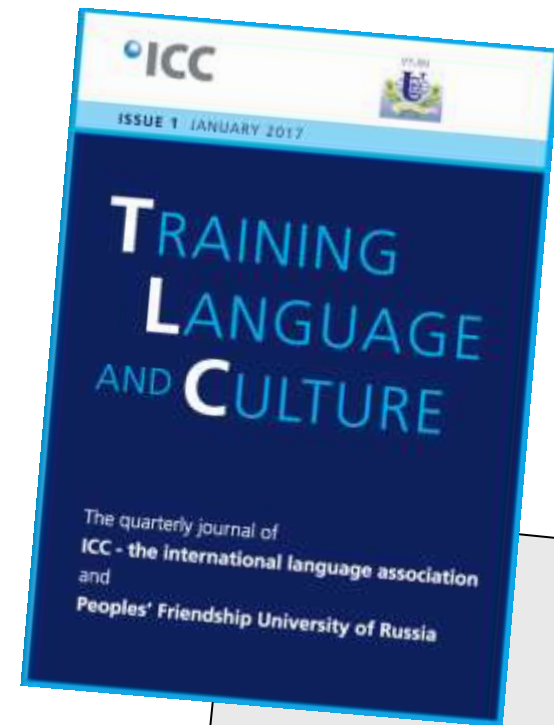
# Thanks!

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If you would like a copy  
of the presentation  
& references:

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