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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWO DEVELOPMENTAL MODELS – RELATED TO DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS/STAGES

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Abstract

Intercultural competence is currently an area of research in which new approaches and perspectives appear in large numbers every year. Given the importance of intercultural competence there is a need for a conceptual consensus within a multi-disciplinary approach. This contribution presents recent developments of Reflective Intercultural Competence Assessment (RICA) model, whose main goal is the development of intercultural skills in a second language and culture. The presentation focuses on first data analyses of the applied RICA model, with the aim to discover guidelines and directions for current and potential extended use of the model.

The comparative analysis within the current developed RICA model and a model with long years of experience, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), gives particular attention on stages of development in order to find guidance on practice and functioning.

Keywords

Intercultural Competence, Culture, Intercultural Developmental Levels, Reflective Intercultural Competence Assessment (RICA), Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on two developmental models, one with many years of experience and significant research background and the other one currently being introduced. Through a theoretical comparative analysis this paper searches for the reasons why and how a model can function properly, what steps can be used to improve a model still being introduced, and how a yet unknown model could show anything new. The study focuses on the interpretation of the Reflective Intercultural Competence Assessment (RICA) model, which can be listed among the developmental theories of intercultural competence. It will be compared with an already well-known developmental model of intercultural competence, which has been applied for many years, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The study presents the first data analyses of the RICA model, which might be useful either from the perspective of further research or as a way to improve the model itself. This analysis gives particular attention to developmental levels and stages.

2. Intercultural Competence and Culture

More and more research has arisen in the subject of intercultural efficiency in different fields, such as education, business, work, and family. However, this research has been relatively isolated, as there was no consensus either on the notion of intercultural efficiency or on its measurement. There are currently more than one hundred definitions of intercultural competence in the literature. The first detailed comparative analysis of these different definitions is associated with Deardorff (2006), who sought unity between the various concepts and their characteristics in her research. The concept she proposes includes effective communication and appropriate behavior in intercultural situations, based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes (where effectiveness means that an individual is able to achieve his/her goals in such interactions, and appropriate indicates that the interaction does not violate cultural rules and norms). As explained by Byram and Nichols (2001) these components (knowledge, skills and attitudes) are complemented by values related to one's belonging to a number of social groups, to a given society. There is a flexibility of belongingness which follows globalization and in this way, globalization affects

cultures and diversity of their components (Rouhvand, 2017). Bennett (2015) highlights that in order to develop intercultural competence; individuals need to cultivate curiosity, as one of the key elements, cognitive flexibility, and nonjudgmentalness.

Intercultural competence is a complex concept that is much more than simple knowledge or communication skill. Different intercultural competence definitions vary according to disciplines, and differing approaches are used by education, business and other fields. As stated by Fantini (2009), the use of a variety of terms also proves the lack of consensus. There are many different concepts such as biculturalism, multiculturalism, communication competence, intercultural adaptation, intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, transcultural communication, global competence, intercultural interaction. The same diversity can be found in measuring instruments as well.

Beside intercultural competence, there is a common use of cultural intelligence (CQ) concept. Ang and Van Dyne (2015) suggest that CQ is another complementary form of intelligence that can explain variability in coping with diversity and functioning in new cultural settings. Cultural intelligence is a multidimensional concept (Earley and Ang, 2003) including metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural dimensions.

As mentioned by Bennett and Salonen (2007) although there is no ideal way to remove cultural misunderstandings, despite differences we can still develop the competence to communicate. Barret (2013) interprets the concept of intercultural competence from a psychological point of view, but at the same time presents a sort of comprehensive multidisciplinary approach. He emphasizes the role of meanings and sub-concepts, where the definition of culture is primarily important in terms of material, social and subjective culture. It is important to distinguish intercultural encounters from the interpersonal encounter, where we perceive the other as a member of our own culture. This difference can be expressed in the context of lifestyle, gender, social class, occupation, sexual orientation, age group, but we can also talk about ethnic, religious or linguistic differences (Barrett 2013). Intercultural learning (Bennett 2009) is a matter of increasing awareness of the subjective cultural context, and the ability to interact and increase interaction competence in cultural contexts, where contents of culture may change constantly depending on time and place (Gunduz, 2017).

Defining the basic concepts, Bennett (2012) distinguishes a “Big-C” culture and a “little-c” subjective culture. The “Big-C” culture is characterized as a kind of objective culture based on the institutional, political and historical contexts from which it has emerged and which is maintained by an interactive group of people. “Little-c” subjective culture is interpreted as a subjective culture that is nothing more than a worldview of people interacting

with each other; it is presented in a specific context. It is a kind of unique vision of how people differentiate the world's phenomena, how they organize and coordinate communication, and how they interpret the concept of good and bad in existence. Much theoretical research in intercultural sensitivity refers to George Kelly's (2003 [1955]) finding that experiential learning needs more than just being close to the events when they occur. It is a continuous process of interpretation and reconstruction of events enriching life experiences. Each event can be interpreted in several ways. People create a number of personal constructs and experience and interpret the world through their own constructions (Carver and Scheier, 2016).

According to Barrett's (2013) expanded concept, intercultural competence is the set of attitudes, values, knowledge, understanding, abilities and behaviors that are needed to understand and respect people with other cultural backgrounds, communicate effectively and properly, and create interactions with these people, and build constructive and positive relationships with them. Ting-Toomey (2009) emphasizes the intercultural conflict competence within the general concept, which has a key role since the conflict can cause further perceptual distortions and emotional frustrations in the process of cultural encounters. The ability to have optimal integration of knowledge, mindfulness and communication skills can increase intercultural competence and vice versa. In the development of intercultural competence, cultural distances must be taken into account, which is one of the key factors for intercultural conflicts.

3. Introduction of Two Developmental Models

The RICA (Reflective Intercultural Competence Assessment) model follows the traditions of developmental models, which recognise that competence evolves over time. Developmental models point to the fact that relationships, through continuous interactions, become more and more capable of developing better cooperation, learning, and the incorporation of a respective cultural perspective. As stated by Hammer (2015) the developmental paradigm focuses on how individuals experience cultural difference which is not compatible with the compositional paradigm (cognitive, affective, and behavioural) as it is more a personal characteristic. Developmental models often attempt to identify the stages of development that indicate a more competent level of interaction (Bracci et al., 2013). This finding applies equally to the RICA and DMIS models, providing an appropriate basis for comparing the two models. It is important to note that both models are in fact complex models. Therefore, during the comparative analysis, the DMIS theoretical model was taken

together with the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), while the RICA model was given the EUFICCS (European Use of Full Immersion, Culture, Content and Service) approach required for implementation.

This comparative analysis of the currently developed Reflective Intercultural Competence Assessment (RICA) model and a model with long years of implementation, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), gives particular attention to stages of development in order to find guidance on practice and functioning. The study details analysis of the presently available data for the RICA model in order to be able to optimize the comparative analysis between the characteristics of the developmental stages of the two models. In the case of the DMIS model the currently available analysis and research statements give the base for the comparison.

3.1 Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

Milton Bennett collected data for about 20 years on how people respond to cultural differences, how they experience them, and how these experiences become increasingly sophisticated. Based on these observations, Bennett developed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), which can be considered a well-grounded model (Greenholtz, 2000). The model is primarily based on the observation of teachers in real-life situations and the experience of students (Bennett 1986). It is an attempt to explain why people react differently to cultural experiences. Based on cognitive psychological foundations and constructivism (Anderson et al., 2006), it is a theoretical construction. The model is a descriptive explanation of the experience-based observations in changes of sensitivity to intercultural differences. It is a complex intercultural developmental model that incorporates the individual's emotional, cognitive and behavioural determinants and the phenomenology of responding to cultural differences (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova and DeJaeghere, 2003). The related instrument as a measurement tool, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), has been designed based on the DMIS. The IDI was developed in 1998 by Bennett and Hammer for objective measurement of intercultural sensitivity based on the DMIS theoretical construct developed by Bennett in 1993 (Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman 2003). The IDI includes 50 statements in the original device (multiple variations of the device have been created, such as Hammer IDI v1, v2, v3), expressing agreement or disagreement using a 5-point Likert scale. The IDI provides a general measure of respondents' perception, their orientation toward cultural differences, and thus provides information on their position on the DMIS ethnocentric-ethnorelative continuum. The IDI tool follows the theoretical line of DMIS, but does not fully coincide with the levels (Denial / Defense, Reversal, Minimization,

Acceptance / Adaptation, Encapsulated Marginality). The scholars who developed IDI specifically highlight that the background model (DMIS) and its measuring instrument (IDI) should not be confused (Hammer et al., 2003). IDI is a tool designed to measure the primary constructs of the DMIS model for intercultural sensitivity and to identify the levels of development that respondents have achieved (Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, or Integration). The higher the score, the more it resolves the issues at the given level. Although the stages are located on a continuum, there is no need for successive, sequential motion on the levels. Individuals do not have to complete a level to move to the next level on the scale. As the individual score increases on the IDI scale, the closer it is to the culture from an ethnorelative point of view (Anderson et al, 2006). The IDI quantitative scale simplifies measurement of issues related to the DMIS model and can be easily and quickly reproduced anywhere. It is not necessary to complete an entire process, but enough to compare starting and endpoints. At the same time, this type of quantitative measurement creates a kind of data loss, and contains limited, finite forms of information, which results in much personal information being lost during the analysis.

3.2 Reflective Intercultural Competence Assessment (RICA) Model

The RICA model was first set up to describe the development of intercultural competence. Researchers applied their own approach to learning (EUFICCS – European Use of Full Immersion, Culture, Content and Service) and supplemented it with reflective education in order to create reflective intercultural competence through the learning experience (Biagi et al., 2012). The basic assumption is that personal motivation affects the acquisition of Reflective Intercultural Competence (RIC). This reflective intercultural competence includes the individual's affective, cognitive and behavioural manifestations. The role of service learning in developing intercultural competence is particularly well created in the RICA (Reflective Intercultural Competence Assessment) model. This is a model for measuring intercultural competence development, and it is currently being introduced with practical experiences and an underpinning theoretical system. In order to assess the reflective intercultural competence, the RICA model has been developed as a special measuring instrument, and it is able to track and measure the development of RIC through personal journals and reflections. Applying the RICA model, allows researchers to properly evaluate the reflective intercultural competence. The model follows the traditions of developmental models and has six levels of reflective intercultural competence (Pre-Contact, Contact, Superficial Understanding, Deep Understanding and Social Acting).

In order to be able to compare the two developmental models, as part of this study the RICA model needs to have further investigation based on its first data collected by the RICA research team.

4. Investigating the RICA Model

This study was based on the analysis of a primary data source provided by the RICA research team. The sample studied consists of 20 American students at the age of 18-22 who participated in the study abroad program implemented by Siena Italian Studies in Siena, Italy. This program took 10 to 12 weeks. It is important to note that as part of the primary source of materials for the RICA model, the criterion for selecting the appropriate journal entries is the basic reflective content, less observation and description, and more reflection on cultural encounters. It is also important to have a well-structured journal, a weekly reflection that keeps track of RIC development without significant time slots. The journal entries are read and analyzed by the RICA team (researchers using the RICA model) in two phases, both in individual and group reading. In the first phase, based on the reading of the journal, the evaluator independently indicates a level of development. In the second phase, the comparison is done by the group, and then jointly labeled according to the RIC development level. As a result, at the end of the program each student has an indicated RIC developmental level (based on the criterion) for each week.

By examining and analysing data, the aim is to find tendencies which characterizes the RIC levels and its functioning in practice. Since a limited number of these data are present, the primary objective is a specific examination which may help to identify further research lines.

4.1 Analysis of Data

The study used descriptive statistics to examine variables and, on this basis, looked for typical tendencies that could provide useful information for subsequent phases of the research and facilitate further questions.

4.1.1 First Phase of Data Analysis

The question is whether the distribution of the data series has any relationship to progress in the program over time. Can any tendencies be identified during the weeks in the program, are there any differences and, if so, what are the differences in the levels of intercultural competence in the various weeks of the program and their changes?

4.1.2 Results of the First Data Analyses

In the first two weeks, the developmental level of reflective intercultural competence (RIC), the second level (Contact) appears at the highest frequency (60% in the first week, 39% in the second week), however, the variance amongst developmental levels is higher for the second week (one of the highest values ($v = 1,559$). This indicates well the variability of data and its variation within the period under review. The higher the number, the less well characterized the given period with the expected value, and the lower the value of the variance, the developmental levels appear in a more uniform form, closer to the given median value. In the latter case, we can speak of a more uniform, more typical developmental level. In the second week of the study, the levels show much greater variability, in different ratios, different levels of development compared to the first week, which are more different from the average value, the independent appearance of the second level of development (Contact) is less outstanding here.

The following prominent feature is the third week when the highest level of intercultural competence is fifth level, Deep Understanding (63%), which is very pronounced, and there is a smaller variation in data ($v = 0.813$).

From the fourth week, the most commonly displayed values are levels four (Superficial Understanding) and level five (Deep Understanding), and this continues up to the last (12th) week, when level five (Deep Understanding) and level six Social Acting appear at the same frequency. It is an interesting phenomenon that halfway through the program in the sixth week there is a kind of double appearance, the fourth and fifth developmental levels appear at the same frequency.

After the sixth week of duality, the previous tendency continues in week seven, where the fifth level (Deep Understanding) again appears most often, but with the lowest variance of the whole program ($v = 0,314$). This is followed by another big lurch in week eight, when again level four (Superficial Understanding) is the most common, however there is the greatest amount of variation between levels ($v = 2,528$) This is due to the surprising appearance of first level development (Pre-Contact), which was last featured on the second week, however the second and third developmental levels did not appear on this week. Two additional features can be highlighted. At week five, with a small variance ($v = 0.383$) the fifth level (Deep Understanding) together with the fourth level (Superficial Understanding) have a high level of frequency.

4.1.3 Evaluation of the Results of the First Data Analyses

In the first two weeks of the program, the second level of intercultural competence development (Contact) is most pronounced. According to the RICA model, at this level of Contact, the individual is anchored to his own culture. This is a kind of superficial relationship, which is also confirmed by the fact that it is most notable in the first two weeks. This gives rise to the question that, if this second level is expressed as the first superficial relationship of the model, what role does the first level play? It may be assumed that the same phenomenon of IDI data appears in RICA as well, that students who are at the first level of IDI, at the level of divergence and diversity protection, would not choose a foreign learning program (Anderson et al., 2006). Similarly, in the case of the RICA model, it may be assumed that in such a study abroad program the first level is not present in practice, since a person who participates in a foreign study program can no longer be at RICA's first, Pre-Contact level. However, the lack of appearance of level 1 may be due to the fact that at the time of the program selection, and then after departure (especially if the student is already in the preparatory program before leaving), he is already aware of the other culture.

The next feature highlighted in the data analysis was that, in the absence of the frequency of the first level (Pre-Contact), the third level (Culture Shock) did not rise sharply in any week of the program. Culture Shock, according to the RICA model, includes the fear of losing the symbols of social contact, a kind of rejection of culture, frustration and euphoria at the same time. It is possible that this level does not sufficiently characterize the level of development in itself and, as the appearance of fear and euphoria of losing symbols, and it is still too closely anchored to one's own culture. With the appearance of frustration, the same symbolism can be linked to the acquisition and further frustration of the cultural routine of the fourth level of development (Superficial Understanding) and as such it does not form an independent factor in the process of the of intercultural competence development. An interesting parallel can be set up in this respect by the level three of IDI (Minimization), which forms a kind of transition from monocultural thinking towards intercultural thinking on the intercultural development continuum (Hammer 2012). As such, it focuses on similarities in different cultural frameworks, although it notices the difference, but looks for the similarity. In this sense it can be assumed that at the third level of the RIC (Culture Shock) a similar process is taking place: the individual will still stick to the previous symbol systems, but the differences are well understood. At the same time, it would be worth examining whether level three (Culture Shock) is sufficiently differentiated in the definition of the levels of the RICA model. The question is whether, if there is such a well-defined level three, why

is its appearance less pronounced in the process of development? In this case, it is also assumed that it represents a level of development that individuals are concluding much "faster", that is, its appearance is important, it exists, but is short-lived, and not emphasized.

The next outstanding phenomenon is the emphasis and frequency of the fifth level (Deep Understanding), already present in the third week. The question is whether this is coming from the content differentiation or from the nature of the process. Deep understanding involves the emergence of dual/plural identity; the way an individual feels at home in another culture and becomes more sensitive to the differences between cultures. Is this sensitivity to the difference overlapping with the level of Contact (level 2), where observation from the perspective of one's own culture emphasizes differences? Perhaps it would be worth emphasizing the differences between forms or appearance and attitudes of awareness and sensitivity towards their own identity and dual / plural identities, and thus the two phenomena could be more distinct. In assessing the process, it is also worth examining whether it is not a kind of sudden jump, which can result in a rapid development in a short time (in our case after week three).

From the fourth week, the appearance of levels four (Superficial Understanding) and five (Deep Understanding) is relatively typical up to the last 12th week, when the highest level of development six (Social Acting) becomes the most common together with level five (Deep Understanding). The question is, in this case, if we assume that the highest degree of intercultural competence is most likely to be attributed to week 12, why did RICA's researchers start to think about a program of 10 weeks instead of 12 weeks? If the goal is to reach the maximum level of development, it is worth thinking back to what is best for this, either with regard to the length of the program or the content support tools.

The analysis of the data raises the further question of what might be the reason for the significantly high variance in week eight, such that the different levels of development with the highest variability appear this week? It would be worth examining whether it is in the process of complete development, with the formation of a definitive and stable higher developmental level, a kind of "last shake (lurch)" before the final transformation. The latter can be underlined by the fact that level two (Contact) and level three (Culture Shock) did not appear in the same week. It would be worth exploring what factors might be in the background.

4.1.4 Second Phase of Data Analysis

In the next data analysis, the study examined whether the change in the levels of intercultural competences in each week shows a kind of uniform developmental tendency.

To examine this, this paper uses two types of evaluation based on the data available. On one hand, an interpretation is based on the basic graph of the cumulative development levels of students. On the other hand, the interpretation is through the pie charts of the cumulative frequency distribution over the weeks. Depending on a limited data source, these analyzes may provide additional information on further future research orientations.

4.1.5 Results of the Second Data Analysis

Based on the evaluation, there is a well-evolved kind of developmental curve, which follows a relatively uniform development path after the first three weeks of rapid development. That is, after a rapid rise, a uniform slow-moving change is typical. At the same time, it can be said that during the 12-week program there is no definitive development of level six (Social Acting), despite the fact that in the last week the incidence of level six is the same as the incidence of level five.

Furthermore, it can be seen from the basic graph that individual developmental lines do not follow a straight curve of steady growth, but in this process periodic steps appear at each level. The frequency distribution on pie charts clearly shows that level two, (Contact) is no longer present at all after the third week and the sixth level of development, Social Acting, appears already in the fifth week. It is also clearly apparent that during the 12-week program level four, (Superficial Understanding) appears every week, and level five (Deep Understanding) will appear every week after the first week. At the same time, there is a continuous increase in level four, Superficial Understanding, followed by a decrease of this in the second half of the program, while the presence of level five, Deep Understanding is not uniform, its direction of movement is not clearly defined or distributed throughout the program.

4.1.6 Evaluation of the Second Data Analysis

Based on the analyzes made by these illustrative representations, it can be said that during the program evaluated by RIC researchers there is a kind of growth and development curve in the evolution of the levels of intercultural competence. This shows a rapid and greater increase in the first half of the program, while after the first few weeks it is much slower and more balanced, reflecting a more even development.

The phenomenon that levels four and five, Superficial and Deep Understanding, appear throughout the program raises the question of how and in what capacity the program can support the development of intercultural competence and how well defined are the content definitions for these levels.

The frequency of the fourth level, Superficial Understanding can be the result of the fact that this level highlights the reflection on the first cultural differences, which is already characteristic of the second developmental level (Pre-Contact). In its content formulation, a superficial relationship and a superficial understanding can easily be misinterpreted and, as such, there is a need for a more accurate content distinction in order to help avoid subjective evaluation.

A possible explanation of the frequent appearance of level five (Deep Understanding), is the role of previous experiences and expectations at the level of Deep Understanding, since anyone who participates in such a program can suppose that the program really wants to get to know the culture better. In such a case, it is conceivable that strong motivation leads to better understanding and does not show a well-differentiated difference in the two developmental stages.

At the same time, it is not possible to fully detect the appearance of the ethnocentric-etnorelative continuum in the pie charts of the development curves and distribution, but it would be worth to examine it. While in the DMIS theory this line is well distinguished and does not allow fallback in these two categories, the RICA model merely states that a continuum is a kind of progress towards an ethnorelative viewpoint but it does not indicate where levels change.

5. Comparative Analysis of the Two Developmental Models - Related to the Developmental Levels/Stages

The experiences, questions and suggestions related to the development levels formulated in the analyses can be summarized as follows (Table 1):

- Whether the characteristics and behavioral patterns associated with the performance of the data analyzes based on the RICA model really reflect the characteristics of the process or possibly the consequences of content / definition inaccuracies.
- If content inaccuracy can be excluded, one may draw conclusions about the operation of each level and explore in greater detail why some levels are present to a lesser extent in the development process (for example first and third development levels), while the presence of other levels is almost continuous (for example levels four and five). With wide-ranging studies (larger number, more data, fewer missing data), it would be worth examining whether this phenomenon mentioned above is generalised in the program and what level of individual deviation exists.

- With content inaccuracies excluded, it is also worth exploring what might be the reason for the sudden jump in development, as seen in the current analysis.
- Preliminary data analyzes clearly show a developmental curve in the development of reflective intercultural competence, which in the beginning shows rapid and later slow progress. However, to be able to generalize this observation, there is a need for a more comprehensive examination.
- Questions on the characteristic of specific levels of development also arise. Due to content or process characteristics it appears that development levels one and three are less pronounced during the program. If in data analyzes of frequency the sixth stage of development increases up to 12 weeks, why did the RICA research group decide to use a 10-week program instead of a 12-week program? Is it possible to develop and design a program / support tool that will justify the use of this shorter version? The high variability in levels occurring at week eight is outstanding. Is this a "last great setback" before the final development of intercultural competence? During the whole program, the fourth level is a steadily increasing developmental trend, while level five is unevenly developed. Does this better characterize the process of learning through intercultural competence? If these two levels of development are constantly present, what implications does this have for the entire program? Is it not possible that these two levels are not sufficiently differentiated and therefore cannot be properly defined in their developmental curve?

Table 1: *Experiences, Questions and Suggestions related to the Development Levels*

Experiences, questions and suggestions related to the development levels	
DMIS – IDI	RICA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a significant amount of research - factor analyses, content analysis - to confirm and verify development levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently there isn't yet a satisfactory amount of research. • We can come to realistic conclusions excluding inaccuracy. • Do the characteristics, behaviour samples reflect the real peculiarities of the process, or are they consequences of inaccuracy in content/definition?
<i>Confirmation of experiences</i>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of various experiences relating to various development levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it a consequence of the content or process peculiarities that the development levels one and three appear as less emphasized items during the program?
<p><i>First level</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is presumable that those students who are on the first level of IDI (denying differences and self-protecting against being different) would not chose any learning programs abroad (Andersen et al., 2006). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is presumable that during the program in the practice the first Pre-Contact level will not appear, as those who participate in a learning program abroad are already aware of the foreign culture at the time of their arrival.
<p><i>Third level</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The third level of the IDI, Minimization, is a sort of transition from a mono-cultural mentality towards an intercultural mentality on the intercultural development continuum (Hammer, 2012). • Focuses on the similarities in the various cultural frames, notices also the difference, but seeks to prove its opposite, the similarity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The third level of the RICA model, Culture Shock, includes the fear of the loss of symbols of social interactions, a kind of rejection of their culture, frustration but euphoria too in the same time. It is possible that this phrasing does not characterize properly the given development level. • It is presumable that a similar process occurs also in the case of Culture Shock - the person would stick to the previous symbol-systems, but perceives well. • It is presumable that this represents a development level, which is accomplished by the individuals much “faster”. Its appearance is important, it does exist, but it is short, and it’s not emphatic.
<p><i>Continuity</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous progress cannot be tracked, only the evaluation at development points is present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of some levels is almost continuous during the program (For example- level four- Superficial

	<p>Understanding and level five- Deep Understanding).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it characterise better the process of learning in the development of the intercultural competence, or worse? Isn't it differentiated enough?
<i>Step-backs between levels</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step-backs between levels are possible. • Quick upsurges (it is not necessary to accomplish a level fully to advance to the following one). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step-backs between levels are possible. • Does a sudden jump in development really exist? (For example, after the first couple of weeks?)
<i>Development arc</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We talk about advancing on a continuum, not about a specifically defined development arc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A development arc in the development of the reflective intercultural competence can be detected, showing quick advancing in the beginning, slowing down later. Can it be confirmed?
<i>Time-frame</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There isn't any specified, permanent time-frame related to the development of the intercultural competence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specified time-frame • The frequency of the sixth development level (Social Acting) appears at the twelfth week. • Why has the RICA research team decided on a ten weeks' long program?
<i>Development lurch</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no specified program length/ general, permanent development plan period, thus the development lurches cannot be examined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the eighth week a significant variability can be noticed in the occurrence of the levels. • Is it a "last great lurch" before the forming of the maximal level of the final reflexive intercultural competence?
<i>Evaluation of the development levels</i>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researchers tried to shape the objective, validated, properly confirmable quantitative measuring tool• Smaller chance of error, narrower data source• The evaluation and the application can be easily acquired, it allows multiple applicability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The individual analysis of the journal entries includes a subjective possibility of error.• Larger data source, but also a bigger chance of error.• Currently there are very few trained evaluating persons, the frames of applicability are narrow.• The training of further experts would be necessary for future research, or/and the use of automatic narrative analysis for journals - computer assisted text analysis.
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6. Conclusions

By the end of the comparative analysis, there seem to be many more questions than answers.

6.1 Research Limitations

Although this research was carefully prepared, it still has limitations. The investigation of the RICA model was based on a limited data source provided by the RICA research team (currently the only accessible data source of RICA research). Since the number of these data is limited, the primary objective was a specific examination which may help to identify further research lines. Lacking of statistical tests, the study was not able to identify significant relationships within data set, which would be very important in further examination. Larger sample size could have generated more accurate results. Because of the limitations of the study, only tentative conclusions can be drawn from the analysis presented, so their significance cannot be expressed as a result, but as a future research direction.

6.2 Scope of Future Research

Further research is needed to effectively investigate the functioning of the RICA model. The comparison of intercultural models, extending to a uniform intercultural "model-base", could make it possible to formulate a conceptualization of an intercultural competence model. The primary goal would not be building a single measuring instrument adopted by everyone, but to have measuring instruments that can be complemented, can support each other, and apply the same reliability. However, it is also important that such a measuring instrument is

capable of showing something new and creating a kind of surplus in measuring intercultural competence. It is important to highlight the role of further investigations, the importance of defining and clarifying the concepts.

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