Intercultural Communication Workshop

Internationalising your university experience at Aalto

Teacher: Yoonjoo Cho, PhD (Language Centre)
Hello everyone!

• My name is Yoonjoo
• I am a university teacher at Language Centre (LC)
• I teach “Intercultural Communication” courses at LC
  ○ Such as…
ICC courses available at LC!

- **LC-0610** Intercultural Communication (3 credit): On-site

- **LC-0611** Teamwork & Leadership in the 21st Century (3 credit): On-site

- **LC-0614** Developing Global Competence: Working in an International Virtual Team (2 credit): Online

The registration has been opened on Sisu! (Period 1)

8th Sep-20th Oct (Thu): 09:15-12:15
Hello everyone!

• Nice to meet you all and welcome to the session!
  o Hope you find this talk is interesting and useful! 😊
Housekeeping Points! 😊

• When I give a lecture, please mute your microphones.

• If you have any questions and comments, please write your message in the chat (But please be aware that I cannot see your message whilst I am sharing my screen to deliver a lecture).

• When in smaller groups (i.e. breakout rooms), please turn on your camera, so you can see each other! (Because it is always nice to see each other’s face whilst having a chat! 😊)
Today’s Talk

• How to internationalise your university experiences at Aalto?

• Understand the main sources of intercultural misunderstanding/miscommunication and discuss potential solutions
Key objectives (1st part)

• Demonstrate an understanding of what is meant by internationalisation and the activities it involves

• Recognise the varieties of diversity present on your university campus

• Discuss the potential internationalising opportunities available at Aalto University

Let’s have a chat about this later! 😊
Key objectives (2nd Part)

• Describe the main sources of **misunderstanding** and **miscommunication** and discuss **potential solutions**
  o **Misunderstanding** – Inadequate linguistic choices
    ➢ Clarification request & Confirmation check
  o **Miscommunication** – Clash of different communication styles
    ➢ Directness & indirectness + Politeness
Internationalising your university experience at Aalto
Where do I begin?
Where do I begin?

Intercultural Communication

Image: https://www.europelanguagejobs.com/
A plethora of domestic diversity!

Diversity at Aalto today

Here is a snapshot of our Diversity data.

We are working on non-binary gender statistics. Please find a comprehensive Diversity data set as an attachment.

Among world’s most international universities. We host 106 nationalities among our faculty and staff.

A plethora of domestic diversity!

• Key figures (2021 Report - Aalto University)

BIZ (Economics): 14 out of 39
TECH: 95 out of 180
ART:

Of course, “Diversity” is not only about different nationalities but also other aspects/identities…

Internationalisation
What is internationalisation?

• The process by which universities become international and involves “integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivery of postsecondary education (Knight, 2004: 11)

• For example, recruiting international students, developing study abroad programmes, developing intercultural communication (ICC) courses, creating satellite campuses abroad and so forth
Internationalising your university experiences

How?
Guilds & Associations
Guilds & Associations

• Student clubs, societies and associations provide a forum where students having different backgrounds gather around particular topics or activities
Guilds & Associations

• If you join a guild & association
  o lack of diversity in student backgrounds and
  o you stay within them too much

➢ This might diminish your chances of intercultural communication experiences

How can I get out of my bubble/comfort zone?

How can we enhance the interaction between home students and international students?
Study or work abroad
Study or work abroad

• A range of studies show that “studying abroad” is beneficial
  o It helps you to gain a better understanding of your own values and biases
  o It helps you to develop a more sophisticated view of the world
  o It helps you to interact with people having different backgrounds and continue to seek out those who are different from yourself in their daily lives
  o It helps you to develop the confidence to cope with the demands of their first job (and many more!)

Preparation is the key!
Study or work abroad

- Studying abroad is offered by an increasing number of departments/schools
  - Your school will offer **structured programmes** that help students to study in other countries
  - Outgoing students: [https://into.aalto.fi/display/enopinnot/Exchange+studies](https://into.aalto.fi/display/enopinnot/Exchange+studies)
  - Incoming Students: [https://into.aalto.fi/display/enuudet/Incoming+exchange+students](https://into.aalto.fi/display/enuudet/Incoming+exchange+students)
Study or work abroad

But…

We need more than just checking information...

Education
ICC Courses
Intercultural communication (ICC) courses

• Taking credit bearing courses related to ICC
  
  o You can understand the complexity around the concept of ‘culture’ and ‘communication’
  
  o You can learn several interesting topics (e.g. stereotyping, intercultural transition, non-verbal communication and so forth) in the field of ICC and apply these to your real-life contexts
  
  o You can have many opportunities to share and learn new perspectives from your classmates having different backgrounds
ICC courses available at LC!

• **LC-0610** Intercultural Communication (3 credit): On-site

• **LC-0611** Teamwork & Leadership in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century (3 credit): On-site

• **LC-0614** Developing Global Competence: Working in an International Virtual Team (2 credit): Online
Learning Foreign Languages
Learning foreign language(s)

• Why learning a new language?
  o Language is thought to be a “guide to social reality”
  o Learning a new language enables us to understand different values, beliefs, worldviews, attitudes, behaviours of people having different backgrounds
  o Learning a new language improve cognitive functions (analytical and problem-solving skills, creativity, memory)
Foreign Language Courses at LC!

[Image of Aalto University and Intoto]

https://into.aalto.fi/display/enopinnot/Bachelor+programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies in Swedish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange studies</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and communication studies</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies at other Aalto schools or in Finnish universities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies in international university networks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Wide Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreign Language Courses at LC!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching of languages and communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Written communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and communication studies for Aalto students in other universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KiVAKO Online Language Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UniTandem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unite! universities

https://www.unite-university.eu

Get involved as... ▼ Metacampus Our Alliance ▼ Contact

We are working for

Aalto University, Espoo/Helsinki
KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm

Wroclaw Tech (future full partner)
Technical University of Darmstadt
Graz University of Technology (future full partner)
Grenoble INP-UGA
Politecnico di Torino
Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya · BarcelonaTech
Universidade de Lisboa

Aalto University Language Centre
Unite! Virtual language & Comm Courses

Virtual exchange courses

https://metacampus.unite-university.eu/course/info.php?id=68

Space period: 19.05.22 - 16.01.23

Take a virtual language or global competence course at Unite!
Discussion Question! (Flinga)

• So far, I have discussed several options of internationalisation experience available at Aalto. Then, https://edu.flinga.fi/s/EWRF5YT

  o What is the most interesting/attractive option for you? Can you explain why? And how would you take actions to actualize this option?
  
  o Can you come-up with any other opportunities (especially “off-campus” options)?
  
  o How can we get out of our comfort zone/bubbles? How can we increase the interaction between international and home students?
Teamwork experience

Intercultural Misunderstanding/Miscommunication
A pleathora of domestic diversity!

Diversity at Aalto today

Here is a snapshot of our Diversity data.

*We are working on non-binary gender statistics. Please find a comprehensive Diversity data set as an attachment.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>35th most international university in the world</th>
<th>Gender balance</th>
<th>Gender balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE Most international universities 2021</td>
<td>34,7 % Female</td>
<td>36,6 % Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65,3 % Male</td>
<td>63,4 % Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internality</td>
<td>Internality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21,5 % International</td>
<td>30,5 % International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78,5 % Finnish</td>
<td>69,5 % Finnish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aalto equality statistics 2020, Enrolled students

Aalto equality statistics 2020, All employees


Aalto University

Aalto University Language Centre
Working with a diverse cohort

We want it to be a valuable experience

But it might not always be positive?!
Teamwork experience...

Language and Intercultural Communication

‘Intercultural competence’ as an intersubjective process: a reply to ‘essentialism’

Vivien Xiaowei Zhou & Nick Pilcher

To cite this article: Vivien Xiaowei Zhou & Nick Pilcher (2018) ‘Intercultural competence’ as an intersubjective process: a reply to ‘essentialism’, Language and Intercultural Communication, 18:1, 125-143, DOI: 10.1080/14708477.2017.1400510

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2017.1400510
Teamwork experience...

“I noticed…it was a little bit hard to make different approaches coexist and not clash…I think we realised how difficult writing a report all together is going to be, since everyone wants to work in his/her way…I tried my hardest to find a way to convey my ideas without being too rude or ‘dictatorial’, because I know I might sound a little bit arrogant when I get overexcited and passionate about something, but I’ve learnt from previous experiences of teamwork that that does not help the work atmosphere at all, in particular if someone get offended.”
Teamwork experience...

“[Group member] A…presented us a draft structure of how to write the report without sent it to us before, just say we can have a look in this meeting…I was surprise and appreciate that A has already done so much because someone has to do it, but…I feel a little uncomfortable…I observed the others’ reaction, they were a little surprised too and saying how appreciate what A has done as well…Although I can understand A did this because A really wants us have a good mark but who does not?”
“The two students [from Country X] hold their opinions towards some details of our writings such as the punctuation and the format…This is definitely a challenge to my patience as a person [from Country Z] who possesses less concerns about the details of our job, what we concerns more is the relationship between your partners…As a result, this situation increased my stereotype of [Country X] are really rigid to details. Thus, I started confusing that whether the group work has increase my intercultural competence or strengthen my stereotype of a specific culture.”
Misunderstanding
Miscommunication

What are the main sources?
Misunderstanding vs Miscommunication

- **Misunderstanding**
  - ‘Language’ related

- **Miscommunication**
  - Misunderstanding of another’s norms, values and practices

Zhu (2014, pp. 115-129)
What are the main sources?

Main sources of misunderstanding/miscommunication

• **Inadequate linguistic choices**
• Pragmatic mismatch
• Clash of style
• Mismatch in schemas and cultural stereotypes
• Mismatch in contextualization cues and framing

Zhu (2014, pp. 115-129)
Inadequate linguistic choices (Misunderstanding)
Inadequate linguistic choices

• Lexical comprehension problem
• ‘Mishearing’ a lexical element
• Syntactic complexity

What does that mean?

They are related to “word choice” & “structures of utterance”

They are relatively easy to solve as we can directly point out the trouble source and ask a clarification

We might use different Englishes

“When you use the term, ‘xxx’, what does that exactly mean in this case?”

“You’ve tried to explain several things at once and I am just wondering whether you could explain one by one?”

How to solve it?

• Clarification & negotiation strategies

  o Confirmation checks
    ➢ e.g. ‘Have you understood my explanation?, ‘Did I understood it right?’ , ‘Yeah?’, etc.

  o Clarification request
    ➢ e.g. ‘Can you explain a bit further?’, ‘Can you make it more simple?’, ‘Can you repeat?’, ‘When you said xxx, what did you mean?’

Identify a trouble source +
Ask open/non-judgemental Qs!
What are the main sources?

Main sources of misunderstanding/miscommunication

- Inadequate linguistic proficiency
- Pragmatic mismatch
- Clash of style
- Mismatch in schemas and cultural stereotypes
- Mismatch in contextualization cues and framing

❖ Major issues
❖ It is rather tricky to point out trouble source
❖ The problem often runs across longer stretch or beyond conversation/interaction
❖ Related to different ways of doing things

Zhu (2014, pp. 115-129)
Clash of Style
(Miscommunication)
Clash of style

• Directness or indirectness (Politeness)
  o When norms of direct/indirect communication is different between/amongst people, miscommunication is likely to happen
Directness/Indirectness

“A classmate of yours asked you whether you would like to go to a cinema with her and a couple of other classmates during the weekend. You do not particularly want to go, because you need time to prepare for an assignment. How are you going to say ‘no’ to her? Which of the following reply sounds most like you?”
A: Would you like to go to cinema with me?

• B1: No, I can’t.
• B2: Sorry, I can’t. I need to write an assignment.
• B3: Thanks for the invitation but I am not sure that I would be free, but I will let you know if I can go!
• B4: Thanks, but I have visitors this weekend. I need to show them around.
Directness/Indirectness

• Understanding “directness” and “indirectness” as a spectrum

• Being polite/nice (Indirectness) → Being clear (Directness)

Metacommunication

Socio-emotional processes?

Task-related processes?
Time is not enough...But! 😊
Summary – Key takeaways!

• Try to think about how to increase the opportunity to experience diversity available both on and off campus!
  o How to get out of my comfort zone/bubble?
  o How to have authentic interactions with people having different backgrounds?
  o How to experience the importance & values of diversity

Take actions! 😊
Summary – Key takeaways!

- Misunderstanding & Miscommunication is part of our everyday interaction with others
  - But, there are potentially helpful strategies to manage and negotiate misunderstanding & miscommunication
  - To resolve intercultural miscommunication, we need to acquire more sophisticated understanding of human communication (embracing both culture-specific, universal and context-bound variations)
ICC courses available at LC!

- **LC-0610** Intercultural Communication (3 credit): On-site
- **LC-0611** Teamwork & Leadership in the 21st Century (3 credit): On-site
- **LC-0614** Developing Global Competence: Working in an International Virtual Team (2 credit): Online

The registration has been opened on Sisu! (Period 1)

8th Sep - 20th Oct (Thu): 09:15-12:15
Any questions?

yoonjoo.cho@aalto.fi
Thanks for listening!

All the best for your 1st year at Aalto! 😊