

**Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine  
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**THE BASICS OF SPEECH COMMUNICATION THEORY**

**LECTURE NOTES**



**Sumy  
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## **THE BASICS OF SPEECH COMMUNICATION THEORY**

### **LECTURE NOTES**

for the students of specialty 035 “Philology”  
of full-time study

Approved at the meeting of  
the Department  
of Germanic Philology  
as lecture notes on discipline  
“The basics of speech  
communication theory”  
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Department of Germanic Philology

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## INTRODUCTION

Lecture notes are designed for lecture classes in “The Basics of Speech Communication Theory” for the first-year students, specialty 035 “Philology”, full-time study. The lecture notes contain thematic materials revealing basic information on the theory of speech communication.

The lecture notes serve the following purposes:

- to acquaint students of higher education establishments with the principles and mechanism of speech activity of members of society;
- to deepen knowledge of speech acts, the interaction of individual in the communication process;
- to develop the skills of successful implementation of speech communication act
- to introduce intralingual phenomena, as well as to determine the environment of the language system;
- to determine interaction of intra- and extralingual factors that influence the communicative process;
- to develop the interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills;
- to master foreign language comprehension and audio perceiving.

The given issues of the lecture notes can be used as an additional source of studying material for “Practical Course of English”, as well as for “Practice of Translation”, “Stylistics”, “Lexicology”, “History of the English Language”, and “Multimodal linguistics”.

# Lecture 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORY OF SPEECH COMMUNICATION

**Theory of speech communication (communication theory)** is a *communicative discipline*, which synthesizes the studies of language as a complex information and semiotic system, means of communication, cognition and cultural code of the nation.

**Communication** is deeply rooted in human behaviors and societies. It is difficult to think of social or behavioral events from which communication is absent. Indeed, communication applies to shared behaviors and properties of any collection of things, whether they are human or not.

The field of communication theory can benefit from a conceptualization of communication that is widely shared. Communication Theory attempts to document types of communication, and to optimize communications for the benefit of all.

The etymology of the term: “*communication*” (from the Latin “*communicare*”) literally means “*to put in common*”, “*to share*”. The term originally meant sharing of tangible things: food, land, goods, and property. Today, it is often applied to knowledge and information processed by living things or computers.

Communication theory generates models of communication. A **model** is a *structure of symbols and operating rules, which is supposed to match a set of relevant points in an existing structure or process*. In other words, it is a simplified representation or template of a process that can be used to help understand the nature of communication in a social setting. Such models accurately represent the most important elements of the real world, and the dynamics of their relationship to one another.

Thus, **communication models** help to assign probabilities to formulate hypothesis in research, to predict outcomes, and to describe the structure of a phenomenon.

A simple communication model represents a *sender*, which transfers a *message* containing *information* to a *receiver*.

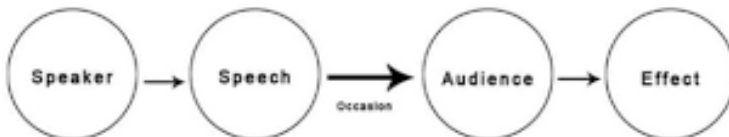


The first known scholar, who wrote about communication, though not directly, is Aristotle (384-322 BC). In his famous books, “Rhetoric”, Aristotle called the study of communication as “rhetoric” and elaborated three elements within the process. According to him, communication process composed of a speaker, a message and a listener. Person at the end of the communication process holds the key to whether or not communication takes place.

According to Aristotle, communication is purposive; it is based on the intention of affecting others; its effects can be evaluated and measured in terms of effect, and in terms of the truth; rhetoric considers not only what is or was, but also what might be. Communicators need to develop five skills:

- Invention – ability to generate ideas;
- Disposition – ability to organize ideas;
- Style – use of appropriate language;
- Memory – ability to recall facts & ideas;
- Delivery – use of voice and gestures.

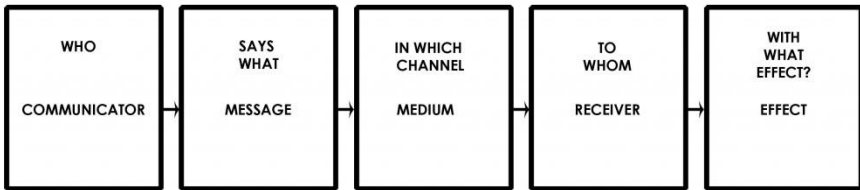
From his observations, later scholars developed a model of communication using the elements he mentioned.



The model consists of four visible elements: *speaker* or receiver, *speech* or message, *audience* or receiver(s) and *effect* of

communication. Moreover, context or *occasion* of the communication covers all the elements indicating that it has influence on other four elements.

There have been more than 126 published definitions of communication. Many communication scholars use **Lasswell's** (a leading American political scientist and communications theorist) maxim (model) “*Who (says) What (in) What Channel (to) Whom (with) What Effect?*” as a means of circumscribing the field of communication.



### **Explanation of five components of Lasswell’s model:**

- *Who?* – here who refers to the communicator or sender or source of message.
- *Says what?* – it tells about the content of the message.
- *In what channel?* – channel means the medium or media.
- *To whom?* – here to whom the receiver of the message refers to.
- *With what effect?* – the feedback of the receiver to the sender.

Thus, **communication** is the exchange of information between two or more parties. Communication is the process of exchanging meaning or information between individuals by means of the common system of symbols or codes. Communication is the process of using symbols to exchange meaning.

Other scholars stress the importance of clearly characterizing the historical, economic and social context. Communication as the process of generating meaning by sending and receiving verbal and non-verbal symbols and signs that are influenced by multiple contexts.



The main reason why a person communicates with the other is the needs. Human needs have been described in the **Maslow's pyramid of needs**.



Therefore, the functions of communication are connected with these basic human needs. Communication functions refer to how people use language for different purposes and how language is affected by different time, place, and situation used to control the behavior of people and to regulate the nature and amount of activities people engage in.

**The main functions** of communication are:

1. **Regulation/Control** – One function of communication is to control the behavior of human beings. Another, it can be used also to regulate the nature and amount of activities humans engage in.
2. **Social Interaction** – Communication can be used to create social interaction. In daily living, humans develop and maintain bonds, intimacy, relations, and associations.
3. **Motivation** – Motivation as a function of communication refers to the use of language by a person to express aspirations, desires, needs and wants, like and dislikes

4. **Information** – Communication can also be used to give and get information. Exchange of information is usually done by giving facts and or opinion.

5. **Emotional Expression** – Humans, as we are, we need to express ourselves both or either verbal or non-verbal.

**Forms of communication** vary in terms of *participants, channels (modes), and contexts*. The five main forms of communication in terms of **participants** are *intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, public, and mass communication*.



**Intrapersonal communication** is communication with oneself using internal vocalization or reflective thinking. Like other forms of communication, intrapersonal communication is triggered by some internal or external stimulus. Unlike other forms of communication, intrapersonal communication takes place only inside our heads.

Intrapersonal communication serves several social functions. Internal vocalization, or talking to ourselves, can help us achieve or maintain social adjustment. Intrapersonal communication also helps build and maintain our self-concept. We form an understanding of who we are based on how other people communicate with us and how we process that communication intrapersonally.

We will discuss self-concept much more in which focuses on perception. We also use intrapersonal communication or “*self-talk*” to let off steam, process emotions, think through something, or rehearse what we plan to say or do in the future. As with the other forms of communication, competent intrapersonal communication helps facilitate social interaction and can enhance our well-being. However, the breakdown in the ability of a person to communicate intrapersonally is associated with mental illness.

Sometimes we communicate interpersonally for the fun or to pass time. We can also engage in more intentional intrapersonal

communication. In fact, deliberate self-reflection can help us become more competent communicators as we pay more attention to our behaviors.

Intrapersonal communication has received the least amount of formal study. It is rare to find courses devoted to the topic, and it is separated from other four types of communication. The main distinction is that intrapersonal communication is not created with the intention that another person will perceive it. In all the other levels, the fact that the communicator anticipates consumption of their message is very important.



### **Interpersonal communication**

*is communication between people whose lives mutually influence one another.*

Interpersonal communication builds, maintains, and ends our relationships, and we spend more time engaged in interpersonal communication than the other forms of communication.

Interpersonal communication occurs in various **contexts** and is addressed in subfields of study within communication studies such as *cross-cultural communication, organizational communication, business communication, health communication, computer-mediated communication, etc.*

Interpersonal communication can be planned or unplanned. Since it is interactive, it is more structured in comparison with intrapersonal communication. This form of communication is also more influenced by social expectations. Interpersonal communication is also more goal oriented than intrapersonal communication and fulfills instrumental and relational needs. In terms of instrumental needs, the goal may be as minor as greeting someone to fulfill a morning ritual or as major as conveying your desire to be in a committed relationship with someone. Interpersonal communication meets relational needs by communicating the uniqueness of a specific relationship.

Since such form of communication deals with our personal relationships and is the most common form of communication. Instances of miscommunication and communication conflict most frequently occur here. To be a competent interpersonal communicator, as well as to maintain positive relationships, a person needs to master conflict management and listening skills.

**Group communication** is communication among three or more people interacting to achieve a shared goal. Organizations have been moving toward more team-based work models, and whether we like it or not, groups are an integral part of people's lives. Therefore, the study of group communication is valuable in many contexts.



Group communication is more intentional and formal than interpersonal communication. Unlike interpersonal relationships, which are voluntary, individuals in a group are often assigned to their position within a group. Additionally, group communication is often task focused, meaning that members of the group work together for an explicit purpose or goal that affects each member of the group. Goal-oriented communication in interpersonal interactions usually relates to one person. Goal oriented communication at the group level usually focuses on a task assigned to the whole group.

Some of the challenges of group communication relate to task-oriented interactions, such as deciding who will complete each part of a larger project. However, many challenges stem from interpersonal conflict or misunderstandings among group members. Since group members also communicate with and relate to each other interpersonally and may have preexisting relationships or develop them during the course of group interaction, elements of interpersonal communication occur within group communication too.



decade due in part to the rise of electronic media.

Television, websites, blogs, and social media are mass communication channels that we probably engage with regularly. Radio, podcasts, and books are other examples of mass media. The technology required to send mass communication messages distinguishes it from the other forms of communication.

Mass communication differs from other forms of communication in terms of the personal connection between participants. Even though creating the illusion of a personal connection is often a goal of those who create mass communication messages, the relational aspect of interpersonal and group communication is not inherent within this form of communication. Unlike interpersonal, group, and public communication, there is no immediate verbal and non-verbal feedback loop in mass communication.

**Mode** is a channel or means through which information is transmitted. According to the mode, there are two types of communication: *verbal (speech) and non-verbal*.

**Verbal (speech) communication** *is sharing of information between individuals by using speech (sounds and words).*

**Non-verbal communication** *is using non-verbal means to transmit the message.* Non-verbal means include pitch, speed, tone and volume of voice, gestures and facial expressions, body posture, stance, and proximity to the listener, eye movements and contact, and dress and appearance.

### **Summary**

- Communication is a broad field that draws from many academic disciplines. The field of communication theory can benefit from a conceptualization of communication that is widely shared.
- Communication is the process of generating meaning by sending and receiving symbolic cues that are influenced by multiple contexts.
- A simple communication model represents a sender, which transfers a message containing information to a receiver.

- Forms of communication vary in terms of participants, channels (modes), and contexts.
- There are five forms of communication in terms of participants: intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, public, and mass communication.
- Intrapersonal communication is communication with oneself and occurs only inside our heads.
- Interpersonal communication is communication between people whose lives mutually influence one another and typically occurs in dyads, which means in pairs.
- Group communication occurs when three or more people communicate to achieve a shared goal.
- Public communication is sender focused and typically occurs when one person conveys information to an audience.
- Mass communication occurs when messages are sent to large audiences using print or electronic media.

### **Questions for practical classes:**

1. Enlarge on the definitions of communication.
2. What is a communication model?
3. What does Maslow's hierarchy (pyramid) of needs represent? How is it connected with communication?
4. Enlarge on the functions of communication.
5. How do forms of communication differ?
6. Enlarge on the five forms of communication.

### **Recommended resources:**

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7. Maslow A. H. Motivation and personality. 2nd Ed. / Abraham H. Maslow. – New York: Harper & Row, 1970. – 369 p.
8. Muhammadali N. Introduction to Mass Communication / N. Muhammadali. – Calicut University, India, 2011. – 61 p.
9. Van Ruler B. Communication Theory: An Underrated Pillar on Which Strategic Communication Rests / Betteke van Ruler // International Journal of Strategic Communication, 2018. – Pp. 367-381.



## Lecture 2

# COMMUNICATION PROCESS

**Communication** is a two-way process wherein the message in the form of ideas, thoughts, feelings, opinions is transmitted between two or more persons with the intent of creating a shared understanding.

**Communication is a process**, and if the process breaks down, communication will fail. The effective communication occurs when the receiver understands the message conveyed by the sender in exactly the same way as it was intended. **Communication is a dynamic process** that begins with the conceptualizing of ideas by the sender who then transmits the message through a channel to the receiver, who in turn gives the feedback in the form of some message or signal within the given period.

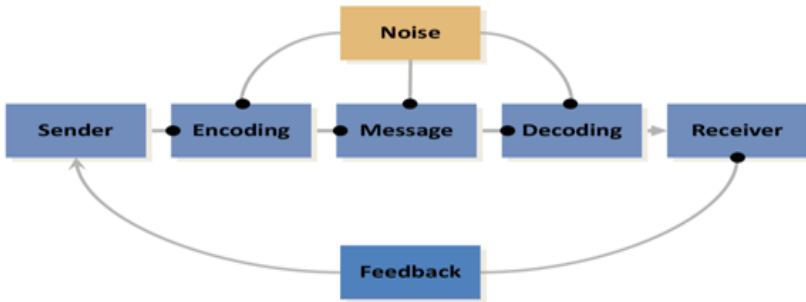
**Communication process** *is the set of some sequential steps involved in transferring message as well as feedback.* **Communication** *is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.* Communication process is a system that involves an interrelated, interdependent group of elements working together as a whole to achieve a desired outcome or goal. Communication process can also be defined as a process of message transmission from a sender to a receiver in an understandable way.

Depending on their background and objectives, different scholars have viewed the process of communication differently and have developed different models. Models of communication simplify the process by providing a visual representation of the various aspects of a communication encounter. Some models explain communication in more detail than others do, but even the most complex model does not recreate what we experience in even a moment of a communication encounter.

Models serve a valuable purpose because they allow us to see specific concepts and steps within the process of communication, define communication, and apply communication concepts. The

three models of communication to be discussed here are *the transmission, interaction, and transaction models*.

Although multiple models of communication differ, they contain some common elements. They are *sender* (source, encoder, speaker, and communicator), *encoding*, *message*, *channel* (medium/media), *receiver* (addressee, decoder, and communicator), *decoding*, *feedback* (result), and *noise* (barrier).



The term “**communicator**” refers to all of the people in the interaction or speech setting. It is used instead of sender and receiver, because when we are communicating with other people we are not only sending a message, we are receiving messages from others simultaneously. Communication is always a transactional process — sending and receiving messages.

**A sender** is someone who encodes and sends a message to a receiver through a particular channel. The sender is the initiator of communication. For example, when you talk to your mother, text a friend, ask a teacher a question, or wave to your colleague you are the sender of a message.

**Encoding** refers to the process of taking an idea or mental image, associating that image with words, and then speaking those words in order to convey a message.

**A receiver** is the recipient of a message. Receivers must decode (interpret) messages in ways that are meaningful for them.

**Decoding** is the reverse process of listening to words, thinking about them, and turning those words into mental images.

**A message** is the particular meaning or content the sender wishes the receiver to understand. The message can be intentional or unintentional, written or spoken, verbal or non-verbal, or any combination of these.

**A channel** is the method a sender uses to send a message to a receiver. The most common channels humans use are verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication relies on language and includes speaking, writing, and sign language. Non-verbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, paralanguage, and touch. We also use communication channels that are mediated (such as television or the computer) which may utilize both verbal and non-verbal communication. While communication can be sent and received using any sensory route (sight, smell, touch, taste, or sound), most communication occurs through visual (sight) and/or auditory (sound) channels.

**Feedback** is the final stage of the communication process. It can take either verbal (spoken comment) or written (written message), or non-verbal (smile, sigh, etc.) form. The feedback is very important component of communication process, because it allows the sender to evaluate whether the receiver interpreted the message correctly or not. The sender can also encourage feedback from the receiver by asking questions, such as “Is it clear?”, “Did you get what I meant by...?”, “Do you understand me?” etc.

**Noise** is anything that interferes with the sending or receiving of a message. Noise is *external* (traffic outside your window or loud music from the next-door apartment), and *internal* (physical pain, psychological stress, or nervousness about an upcoming event).

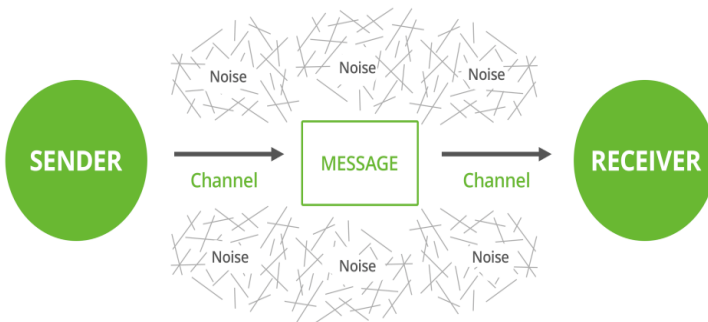
External and internal noise make encoding and decoding messages more difficult. Noise is available in every communication context, and therefore, **no message** is received exactly as it is transmitted by a sender because noise distorts it.

Even if a speaker sends a clear message, noise may interfere with a message being accurately received and decoded. The transmission

model of communication accounts for environmental and semantic noise. **Environmental noise** is any physical noise present in a communication encounter.

While environmental noise interferes with the transmission of the message, **semantic noise** refers to noise that occurs in the encoding and decoding process when participants do not understand a symbol. Semantic noise can also interfere in communication between people speaking the same language because many words have multiple or unfamiliar meanings.

**The transmission (linear) model of communication** is a model that suggests communication moves only in one direction. A sender encodes a message, and then uses a certain channel (verbal/non-verbal) to send it to a receiver who decodes (interprets) the message. Noise is anything that interferes with, or changes the original encoded message. A major criticism of the Linear Model of Communication is that it suggests communication occurs only in one direction. It also does not show how context or our personal experience affect communication.



*Linear model describes communication as linear, one-way process in which a sender intentionally transmits a message to a receiver.* This model focuses on the sender and message within a communication encounter. Although the receiver is included in the model, this role is viewed as more of a target or end rather than part of an ongoing process. We are left to presume that the receiver either successfully receives and understands the message or does not.

The scholars who designed this model extended on a linear model proposed by Aristotle centuries before that included a speaker, message, and hearer. They were also influenced by the advent and spread of new communication technologies of the time such as telegraphy and radio, and you can probably see these technical influences within the model.

Although the transmission model may seem simple or even underdeveloped to us today, the creation of this model allowed scholars to examine the communication process in new ways, which eventually led to more complex models and theories of communication. This model is not quite rich enough to capture dynamic face-to-face interactions, but there are instances in which communication is one-way and linear, especially computer-mediated communication (CMC).

When the first computers were created around World War II and the first e-mails exchanged in the early 1960s, people took the first steps toward a future filled with computer-mediated communication. CMC has changed the way we teach and learn, communicate at work, stay in touch with friends, initiate romantic relationships, search for jobs, manage our money, get our news, and participate in our democracy, it really is amazing to think that all that used to take place without computers. However, the increasing use of CMC has also raised some questions and concerns, even among those of you who are digital natives.

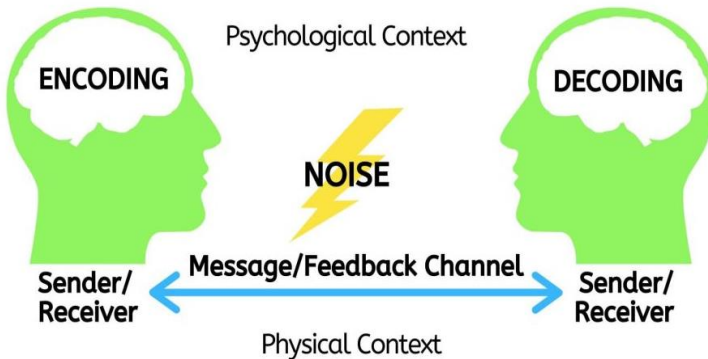
**Context** *is the layout or the situation in which the speech or interaction takes place.* In the 1980's context was taught as the actual physical setting where communication occurred, such as in a place of worship, an apartment, a workplace, a noisy restaurant, or a grocery store.

People communicate differently in each one of these places, as there are unwritten rules of communication (called norms) that govern these settings. More recently, the concept of context has evolved and expanded to include the type of relationships we have

with others and the communicative rules that govern those relationships.

In sum, the context refers to the norms that govern communication in different situations and relationships.

**The interaction model of communication** describes communication as a process in which participants alternate positions as sender and receiver and generate meaning by sending messages and receiving feedback within physical and psychological contexts. The interaction model incorporates feedback, which makes communication a more interactive, two-way process. Feedback includes messages sent in response to other messages. The inclusion of a feedback loop also leads to a more complex understanding of the roles of participants in a communication encounter.



Rather than having one sender, one message, and one receiver, this model has two sender-receivers who exchange messages. Each participant alternates roles as sender and receiver in order to keep a communication encounter going. Although this seems like a perceptible and deliberate process, we alternate between the roles of sender and receiver very quickly and often without conscious thought. The interaction model is also less message focused and more interaction focused.

While the transmission model focused on how a message was transmitted and whether or not it was received, the interaction model is more concerned with the communication process itself. In fact, this

model acknowledges that there are so many messages being sent at one time that many of them may not even be received.

Some messages are also unintentionally sent. Therefore, communication is not judged effective or ineffective in this model based on whether or not a single message was successfully transmitted and received. The interaction model considers physical and psychological context.

**Physical context** *includes the environmental factors in a communication encounter.* The size, layout, temperature, and lighting of a space influence our communication. Whether it is the size of the room, the temperature or other environmental factors it is important to consider the role that physical context plays in our communication.

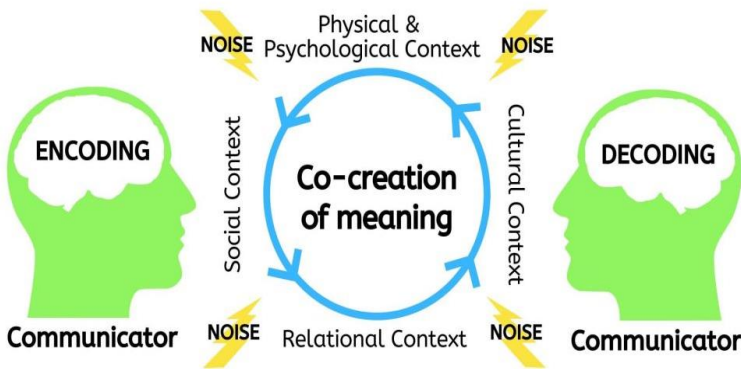
**Psychological context** *includes the mental and emotional factors in a communication encounter.* Stress, anxiety, and emotions are just some examples of psychological influences that can affect our communication. Feedback and context help make the interaction model a more useful illustration of the communication process, but the transaction model views communication as a powerful tool that shapes our realities beyond individual communication encounters.

As the study of communication progressed, models expanded to account for more of the communication process. Many scholars view communication as more than a process that is used to carry on conversations and convey meaning. We do not send messages like computers, and we do not neatly alternate between the roles of sender and receiver as an interaction unfolds. We also cannot consciously decide to stop communicating, because communication is more than sending and receiving messages.

The transaction model differs from the transmission and interaction models in significant ways, including the conceptualization of communication, the role of sender and receiver, and the role of context.

**The transaction model of communication** *describes communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts.* In this

model, we do not just communicate to exchange messages; we communicate to create relationships, form cross-cultural alliances, shape our self-concepts, and engage with others in dialogue to create



communities. In short, we do not communicate about our realities; communication helps to construct our realities.

The roles of sender and receiver in the transaction model of communication differ significantly from the other models. Instead of labeling participants as senders and receivers, the people in a communication encounter are referred to as *communicators*.

Unlike the interaction model, which suggests that participants alternate positions as sender and receiver, the transaction model suggests that we are simultaneously senders and receivers. This is an important addition to the model because it allows us to understand how we are able to adapt our communication – for example, a verbal message – in the middle of sending it based on the communication we are simultaneously receiving from our communication partner.

The transaction model also includes a more complex understanding of context. The interaction model portrays context as physical and psychological influences that enhance or impede communication. While these contexts are important, they focus on message transmission and reception.

Since the transaction model of communication views communication as a force that shapes our realities before and after specific interactions occur, it must account for contextual influences



outside of a single interaction. To do this, the transaction model considers how social, relational, and cultural contexts frame and influence our communication encounters.

**Social context** *refers to the stated rules or unstated norms that guide communication.* As we are socialized into our various communities, we learn rules and implicitly notice norms for communicating. Some common rules that influence social contexts include do not lie to people, do not interrupt people, do not pass people in line, greet people when they greet you, thank people when they pay you a compliment, and so on.

**Relational context** *includes the previous interpersonal history and type of relationship we have with a person.* We communicate differently with someone we just met versus someone we have known for a long time. Initial interactions with people tend to be more highly scripted and governed by established norms and rules, but when we have an established relational context, we may be able to bend or break social norms and rules more easily.

Since communication norms and rules also vary based on the type of relationship people have, relationship type is also included in relational context.



**Cultural context** *includes various aspects of identities such as race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, and ability.* Whether we are aware of it or not, we all have multiple cultural identities that influence our communication. Some people, especially those with identities that

have been historically marginalized, are regularly aware of how their cultural identities influence their communication and influence how others communicate with them.

Since cross-cultural communication creates uncertainty, it can deter people from communicating across cultures or lead people to view cross-cultural communication as negative. However, if you

avoid communicating across cultural identities, you will likely not get more comfortable or competent as a communicator. Cultural context is influenced by numerous aspects of our identities and is not limited to race or ethnicity.

In fact, cross-cultural communication has the potential to enrich various aspects of our lives. To communicate well within various cultural contexts, it is important to keep an open mind and avoid making assumptions about others' cultural identities. A competent communicator should not assume to know all the cultural contexts a person brings to an encounter, since not all cultural identities are visible. As with the other contexts, it requires skill to adapt to shifting contexts and the best way to develop these skills is through practice and reflection.

To sum it up, each model incorporates a different understanding of what communication is and what communication does. The *transmission model* views communication as a thing, like an information packet, that is sent from one place to another. From this view, communication is defined as sending and receiving messages. The *interaction model* views communication as an interaction in which a message is sent and then followed by a reaction (feedback), which is then followed by another reaction, and so on. From this view, communication is defined as producing conversations and interactions within physical and psychological contexts. The *transaction model* views communication as integrated into our social realities in such a way that it helps us not only understand them but also create and change them.

**Semantic structure of communication process.** *Semantics is the meaning of a word, phrase, or text.* To understand better the communication process it is necessary to understand its semantic structure. Semantic structure of communication process includes five basic components:

1. The *intention*, the goal of communication – the sender usually has a purpose. With what he/she says, the sender tries to achieve something, even though sometimes not consciously.

2. The *meaning* of communication for the sender – the sender wants to convey his/her understanding of meaning of individual words and the communication as a whole to the receiver.

3. The *factual* content of communication – information expressed in words.

4. The *meaning* of communication for the receiver – how the receiver understands what was said, his/her understanding of the meaning of individual words and the communication as a whole.

5. The *effect* of communication on the receiver of the message – what is the result or consequence of what was said.

Usually no participant of the communication (neither the sender, nor the receiver) understands and controls all five components of sematic structure. The sender can clarify his/her motivation and knows the meaning of individual words he/she uses, but can't define properly the meaning of the message, perceived by the receiver and effect of the communication on him/her. The receiver, on the other hand, subjectively interprets meanings of the words and sentences. Therefore, the result can be different from the sender's idea.

Besides, the receiver does not have to understand an effect the communication has on him/her, especially in the beginning of the communication process. Sometimes, only after the effect accumulates by aggregating several messages carrying similar meaning, the receiver realizes the impact communication has on him/her.

## **Summary**

- Communication models are not complex enough to capture all that takes place in a communication encounter, but they can help us examine the various steps in the process to understand our communication and the communication of others better.

- The transmission model of communication describes communication as a one-way, linear process in which a sender encodes a message and transmits it through a channel to a receiver who decodes it. The transmission of the message may be disrupted by environmental or semantic noise. This model is usually too simple

to capture face-to-face interactions but can be applied to computer-mediated communication.

- The interaction model of communication describes communication as a two-way process in which participants alternate positions as sender and receiver and generate meaning by sending and receiving feedback within physical and psychological contexts. This model captures the interactive aspects of communication but still does not account for how communication constructs our realities and is influenced by social and cultural contexts.

- The transaction model of communication describes communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts. This model includes participants who are simultaneously senders and receivers and accounts for how communication constructs our realities, relationships, and communities.

### **Questions for practical classes:**

1. Define the communication process.
2. Elements of the communication process.
3. Identify and define the components of the transmission model of communication.
4. Identify and define the components of the interaction model of communication.
5. Identify and define the components of the transaction model of communication.
6. Compare and contrast the three models of communication.
7. Define the semantic structure of the communication process.
8. Enlarge on different communication models (Aristotle's Model, Lasswell's Model, Shannon and Weaver Model, Osgood Model, and Schramm Model).

### **Recommended resources:**

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## Lecture 3

# COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

Communication is a two-way process of giving and receiving information through any number of channels. Most people admit that communication is important, but it is often in the back of our minds or viewed as something that “just happens”. Putting communication at the front of your mind and becoming more aware of how you communicate can be informative and have many positive effects.

**Principles** refer to the proven guidelines that are followed in performing jobs to attain predetermined objectives. Whether one is speaking informally to a colleague, addressing a conference or meeting, writing a newsletter article or formal report, the following basic principles apply:

### **1. Communication is integrated into all parts of our lives.**

The “real world” is whatever we are experiencing at any given moment. Communication is integrated into all parts of our lives. Our lives can be divided into four spheres: *academic, professional, personal, and civic*. The boundaries and borders between these spheres are not solid, and there is much overlap.

#### **Academic**

Aside from wanting to earn a good grade in class, a student may also be genuinely interested in becoming a better communicator. Research shows that even people who have poor communication skills can improve a wide range of verbal, non-verbal, and interpersonal communication skills by taking introductory communication courses. Communication skills are also tied to academic success. Poor listening skills were shown to contribute significantly to failure in a person’s first year.

#### **Professional**

Interpersonal communication skills are highly sought after by potential employers, consistently ranking in the top ten. Poor listening skills, lack of conciseness, and inability to give constructive feedback have been identified as potential communication challenges in professional contexts. Employers most desire good

communication skills in the college graduates they may hire. Poor listening skills, lack of conciseness, and inability to give constructive feedback have been identified as potential communication challenges in professional contexts. Employers appreciate good listening skills and the ability to communicate concisely because efficiency and clarity are often tied to productivity and success in terms of profit or task/project completion.

In such a competitive job market, being able to document that you have received communication instruction and training from communication professionals can give you the edge needed to stand out from other applicants or employees.

### **Personal**

While we do learn from experience, until we learn specific vocabulary and develop foundational knowledge of communication concepts and theories, we do not have the tools needed to make sense of these experiences. Just having a vocabulary to name the communication phenomena in our lives increases our ability to alter our communication to achieve our goals, avoid miscommunication, and analyze and learn from our inevitable mistakes.

### **Civic**

The connection between communication and our civic lives is a little more abstract and difficult to understand. *Civic engagement refers to working to make a difference in our communities by improving the quality of life of community members; raising awareness about social, cultural, or political issues; or participating in a wide variety of political and nonpolitical processes.*

The civic part of our lives is developed through engagement with the decision-making that goes on in our society at the small group, local, state, regional, national, or international level. Discussions and decisions that affect our communities happen around us all the time, but it takes time and effort to become a part of that process. This type of civic engagement is crucial to the functioning of a democratic society.

## 2. Communication meets needs

Communication is far more than the transmission of information. The exchange of messages and information is important for many reasons, but it is not enough to meet the various needs we have as human beings. While the content of our communication may help us achieve certain physical and instrumental needs, it also feeds into our identities and relationships in ways that far exceed the content of what we say.

**Physical needs** *include needs that keep our bodies and minds functioning.* Communication, which we most often associate with our brain, mouth, eyes, and ears, actually has many more connections to and effects on our physical body and well-being. At the most basic level, communication can alert others that our physical needs are not being met. Even babies cry when they are hungry or sick to alert their caregiver of these physical needs. There are also strong ties between the social function of communication and our physical and psychological health.

Human beings are social creatures, which makes communication important for our survival. In fact, prolonged isolation has been shown to severely damage a human. Aside from surviving, communication skills can also help us thrive. People with good interpersonal communication skills are better able to adapt to stress and have less depression and anxiety.

Communication can also be therapeutic, which can lessen or prevent physical problems. A research study found that spouses of suicide or accidental death and victims who did not communicate about the death with their friends were more likely to have health problems such as weight change and headaches than those who did talk with friends. Satisfying physical needs is essential for our physical functioning and survival. However, in order to socially function and thrive, we must also meet instrumental, relational, and identity needs.

**Instrumental needs** *include needs that help us get things done in our day-to-day lives and achieve short- and long-term goals.* We all have short- and long-term goals that we work on every day.



Fulfilling these goals is an ongoing communicative task, which means we spend much of our time communicating for instrumental needs. Some common instrumental needs include influencing others, getting information we need, or getting support. In short, communication that meets our instrumental needs helps us “get things done”.

To meet instrumental needs, we often use communication strategically. Politicians, parents, bosses, and friends use communication to influence others in order to accomplish goals and meet needs. **Compliance-gaining communication** or *communication aimed at getting people to do something or act in a particular way.*

Compliance gaining and communicating for instrumental needs is different from coercion, which forces or manipulates people into doing what you want. Compliance-gaining communication is different from persuasion. While research on persuasion typically focuses on public speaking, compliance-gaining research focuses on our daily interpersonal interactions. Researchers have identified many tactics that people typically use in compliance-gaining communication.

**Common tactics for gaining compliance:**

- *Offering rewards.* Seeks compliance in a positive way, by promising returns, rewards, or generally positive outcomes.
- *Threatening punishment.* Seeks compliance in a negative way, by threatening negative consequences such as loss of privileges, grounding, or legal action.
- *Using expertise.* Seeks compliance by implying that one person “knows better” than the other based on experience, age, education, or intelligence.
- *Liking.* Seeks compliance by acting friendly and helpful to get the other person into a good mood before asking them to do something.
- *Debt.* Seeks compliance by calling in past favors and indicating that one person “owes” the other.

- *Altruism*. Seeks compliance by claiming that one person only wants “what is best” for the other and he or she is looking out for the other person’s “best interests.”

- *Esteem*. Seeks compliance by claiming that other people will think more highly of the person if he or she complies or think less of the person if he or she does not comply.

**Relational needs** *include needs that help us maintain social bonds and interpersonal relationships.* Communicating to fill our instrumental needs helps us function on many levels, but communication meets our relational needs by giving us a tool through which to develop, maintain, and end relationships. In order to develop a relationship, we may use non-verbal communication to assess whether someone is interested in talking to us or not, then use verbal communication to strike up a conversation. Then, through the mutual process of self-disclosure, a relationship forms over time. Once formed, we need to maintain a relationship, so we use communication to express our continued liking of someone.

Although our relationships vary in terms of closeness and intimacy, all individuals have relational needs and all relationships require maintenance. Finally, communication or the lack of it helps us end relationships. We may communicate our deteriorating commitment to a relationship by avoiding communication with someone, verbally criticizing him or her, or explicitly ending a relationship. From spending time together, to checking in with relational partners by text, social media, or face-to-face, to celebrating accomplishments, to providing support during difficult times, communication forms the building blocks of our relationships.

Communicating for relational needs is not always positive though. Some people’s “relational needs” are negative, unethical, or even illegal. Although we may feel the “need” to be passive aggressive or controlling, these communicative patterns are not positive and can hurt our relationships.

**Identity needs** *include our need to present ourselves to others and be thought of in particular and desired ways.* Our identity changes as we progress through life, but communication is the

primary means of establishing our identity and fulfilling our identity needs. Communication allows us to present ourselves to others in particular ways. Just as many companies, celebrities, and politicians create a public image, we desire to present different faces in different contexts.

The influential scholar Erving Goffman compared self-presentation to a performance and suggested we all perform different roles in different contexts. Indeed, competent communicators can successfully manage how others perceive them by adapting to situations and contexts.

**3. Communication is a process** *that involves an interchange of verbal and/or non-verbal messages within a continuous and dynamic sequence of events.* Since communication is such a dynamic process, it is difficult to determine where communication begins and ends. When we refer to communication as a process, we imply that it does not have a distinct beginning and end or follow a predetermined sequence of events.



It can be difficult to trace the origin of a communication encounter, since communication does not always follow a neat and discernible format, which makes studying communication interactions or phenomena difficult. Any time we pull one part of the process out for study or closer examination, we artificially “freeze” the process in order to examine it, which is not something that is possible when communicating in real life.

However, sometimes scholars want to isolate a particular stage in the process in order to gain insight by studying, for example, feedback or eye contact. Doing that changes the very process itself, and by the time you have examined a particular stage or component of the process, the entire process may have changed.

These *snapshots* are useful for scholarly interrogation of the communication process, and they can help us evaluate our own

communication practices, troubleshoot a problematic encounter we had, or slow things down to account for various contexts before we engage in communication.

The transaction model of communication shows that we communicate using multiple channels, send, and receive messages simultaneously. There are also messages and other stimuli around us that we never actually perceive because we can only attend to so much information at one time. The dynamic nature of communication allows us to examine some principles of communication that are related to its processual nature. Communication messages vary in terms of their level of conscious thought and intention, communication is irreversible, and communication is unrepeatable. Since communication is such a dynamic process, it is difficult to determine where communication begins and ends.

Some scholars have put forth definitions of communication stating that messages must be intended for others to perceive them in order for a message to “count” as communication. This narrow definition only includes messages that are tailored or at least targeted to a particular person or group and excludes any involuntary communication. Since intrapersonal communication happens in our heads and is not intended for others to perceive, it would not be considered communication.

In general, intentional communication usually includes more conscious thought and unintentional communication usually includes less. Some communication is reactionary and almost involuntary; some of our interactions are slightly more substantial and include more conscious thought but are still very routine.

The reactionary and routine types of communication just discussed are common, but the messages most studied by communication scholars are considered constructed communication. These messages include more conscious thought and intention than reactionary or routine messages and often go beyond information exchange to meet relational and identity needs. A higher degree of conscious thought and intention does not necessarily mean the

communication will be effective, understood, or ethical. Moreover, ethical communicators cannot avoid responsibility for the effects of what they say by claiming they did not “intend” for their communication to cause an undesired effect.

Communication has short- and long-term effects, which illustrates the next principle – *communication is irreversible*. Even trying to repeat a communication encounter with the same person will not feel the same or lead to the same results. Contexts influence communication, and those contexts change frequently. Even if the words and actions stay the same, the physical, psychological, social, relational, and cultural contexts will vary and ultimately change the communication encounter. Communication *is unrepeatably*.

#### **4. Communication is guided by culture and context**

Context is a dynamic component of the communication process. *Culture and context* also influence how we perceive and define communication. Western culture tends to put more value on senders than receivers and on the content rather than the context of a message.

These cultural values are reflected in our definitions and models of communication. *Cultures vary in terms of having a more individualistic or more collectivistic cultural orientation*. The United States is considered an individualistic culture, where emphasis is put on individual expression and success. Japan is considered a collectivistic culture, where emphasis is put on group cohesion and harmony. These strong cultural values are embedded in how we learn to communicate. In many collectivistic cultures, there is more emphasis placed on silence and non-verbal context. Whether in the United States, Japan, or another country, people are socialized from birth to communication in culturally specific ways that vary by context.

#### **5. Communication is learned**

Most people are born with the capacity and ability to communicate, but everyone communicates differently. This is because communication *is learned rather than innate*. As we have already seen, communication patterns are relative to the context and

culture in which one is communicating, and many cultures have distinct languages consisting of symbols.

A key principle of communication is that it is symbolic. Communication is symbolic in that the words that make up our language systems do not directly correspond to something in reality. Instead, they stand in for or symbolize something. The fact that communication varies so much among people, contexts, and cultures illustrates the principle that meaning is not inherent in the words we use.

All symbolic communication is learned, negotiated, and dynamic. The letters do not actually refer to the object and the word itself only has the meaning that we assign to it.

We are all socialized into different languages, but we also speak different “languages” based on the situation we are in. For example, in some cultures, it is considered inappropriate to talk about family or health issues in public, but it would not be odd to overhear people in a small town grocery store in the United States talking about their children or their upcoming surgery.

There are some communication patterns shared by very large numbers of people and some that are particular to a dyad. They are not on the same scale as differing languages, but still indicate that communication is learned.

## **6. Communication has rules and norms**

Whether verbal or non-verbal, mediated or interpersonal, our communication is guided by rules and norms. Communication is complex. When listening to or reading someone else's message, we often filter what is being said through a screen of our own opinions. One of the major barriers to communication is our own ideas, opinions and behaviors. Interaction always has two levels: the concrete (content of a message) and the abstract (discussion of the content). People manage these levels simultaneously: speaking (or acting) while sending a second message about how to interpret or frame the first.

**Meta-communication** is thus always a qualifier to behavior, rather than simply being more behavior. “*Meta*” – prefix used in

terms for constructs or investigations on a higher plan or of a higher order of abstraction”. “*Meta-communication*” is the general term for communication about communication that in everyday life is often part of any conversation. A simple request “can you repeat that?” is already a kind of meta-communication, and so are requests for clarification and dialogue management functions such as “let us come to a conclusion”.



Meta-communication is communication beneath the surface. Communication is a multilevel event in which meta-communication presents itself a kind of second order communication. Meta-communication is an additional communication, a never-ending “*processus*” that pushes

communication away from simple codification of contents. Ultimately, it confirms the first Watzlawick axiom: *one cannot not communicate*. This maxim is based on the assumption that behavior has no opposite, in other words, *one cannot cease to behave*.

Since there is no counter-part to behavior (an anti-behavior), it is impossible not to communicate. Every behavior is, thus, a form of communication. Besides, each behavior has the value of a message. Activity or inactivity, each behavior influences other behaviors.

In simple terms, meta-communication may be understood as the possibility to indicate how information should be interpreted and may be congruent, to support or to contradict communication. Meta-communication is a complex concept, sometimes what one means is not what others interpret. Every time there is communication, there is also meta-communication linked to it making sense of the meaning.

There is an old communications game, *telegraph*, which is played in a circle. A message is whispered around from person to person. What the exercise usually proves is how profoundly the

message changes as it passes through the distortion of each person's inner "filter".

Body language, for example, is an important part of meta-communication but meta-communicative competence, seen as the ability to identify, intervene and repair communication disruptions – involves also verbal communication (written or oral words), para-verbal communication (intonation, volume, interruptions, rhythm) and non-verbal communication - Kinesics and Proxemics including gestures and facial expressions. Indeed, all symbolic systems can function as meta-communicative operators.

In some cases, the words meta-communicate body language enabling the communicators to interpret it in a context of a joke, for instance. Meta-communication supposes, then, that the communicators understand each other's code by repairing in the meta-communicative cues that send whenever they interact. These cues enhance or disallow what we say with words. Meta-communication is also the communication about what we mean by our communication.

**Phatic communion** is an instructive example of how we communicate under the influence of rules and norms. *Phatic communion refers to scripted and routine verbal interactions that are intended to establish social bonds rather than actually exchange meaning.*



The term "*phatic communion*" derives from the Greek word *phatos*, which means "spoken", and the word *communion*, which means "connection or bond". As we discussed earlier, communication helps us meet our relational needs. In addition to finding communion through food or religion, we also find communion through our words.

The degree to which and in what circumstances we engage in phatic communion is also influenced by norms and rules. In some cultures, silence in social interactions is awkward, which is one



sociocultural norm that leads to phatic communion, because we fill the silence with pointless words to meet the social norm. It is also a norm to greet people when you encounter them, especially if you know them. We all know not to unload our physical and mental burdens on the person who asks, “How are you?” or go through our “to do” list with the person who asks, “What’s up?” Instead, we conform to social norms through this routine type of verbal exchange. Thus, phatic talks are “talks for nothing”, “friendly talks” or “small talks”.

Phatic communion, like most aspects of communication is culturally relative as well. While most cultures engage in phatic communion, the topics of and occasions for phatic communion vary. Scripts for greetings in the United States are common, but scripts for leaving may be more common in another culture. Asking about someone’s well-being may be acceptable phatic communion in one culture, and asking about the health of someone’s family may be more common in another.

### **7. Communication Has Ethical Implications**

Another culturally and situationally relative principle of communication is the fact that communication has ethical implications. **Communication ethics** *deals with the process of negotiating and reflecting on our actions and communication regarding what we believe to be right and wrong.* Aristotle said, “In the arena of human life the honors and rewards fall to those who show their good qualities in action”. While ethics has been studied as a part of philosophy since the time of Aristotle, only more recently has it become applied.

In communication ethics, we are more concerned with the decisions people make about what is right and wrong than the systems, philosophies, or religions that inform those decisions. Much of ethics is gray area. Although we talk about making decisions in terms of what is right and what is wrong, the choice is rarely that simple. Communication has broad ethical implications.

When dealing with communication ethics, it is difficult to state that something is 100 percent ethical or unethical. While many

behaviors can be more easily labeled as ethical or unethical, communication is not always as clear.

Since many of the choices we make when it comes to ethics are situational, contextual, and personal, various professional fields have developed codes of ethics to help guide members through areas that might otherwise be gray or uncertain.

Doctors take oaths to do no harm to their patients, and journalists follow ethical guidelines that promote objectivity and provide for the protection of sources. Although businesses and corporations have gotten much attention for high-profile cases of unethical behavior, business ethics has become an important part of the curriculum in many business schools, and more companies are adopting ethical guidelines for their employees.

### **Summary**

- Increasing the knowledge of communication and improving your communication skills can positively affect person's academic, professional, personal, and civic lives.
- Communication meets our physical needs by helping us maintain:
  - physical and psychological well-being;
  - instrumental needs by helping us achieve short- and long-term goals;
  - relational needs by helping us initiate, maintain, and terminate relationships;
  - identity needs by allowing us to present ourselves to others in particular ways.
- Communication is a process that includes messages that vary in terms of conscious thought and intention. Communication is also irreversible and unrepeatable.
- Communication is guided by culture and context.
- We learn to communicate using systems that vary based on culture and language.
- Rules and norms influence the routines and rituals within our communication.

- Communication ethics varies by culture and context and involves the negotiation of and reflection on our actions regarding what we think is right and wrong.

### **Questions for practical classes:**

1. What are the principles of communication?
2. Describe how the communication is integrated into different parts of our lives.
3. Describe the needs the communication meets.
4. What is the compliance-gaining communication?
5. Describe the signs of the communication as a process.
6. Symbolism of the communication.
7. Meta-communication: origin, definition, examples.
8. Phatic communication: origin, definition, examples.
9. Ethical implications of the communication.

### **Recommended resources:**

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## Lecture 4

# COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE



To be competent at something means to know what you are doing. Thus, **communication competence** *refers to the knowledge of effective and appropriate communication patterns and the ability to use and adapt that knowledge in various contexts.*

To understand this definition better, we should consider its components apart. *The first part* of the definition deals with **knowledge**. The cognitive elements of competence include *knowing how to do something and understanding why things are done the way they are*. People can develop cognitive competence by observing and evaluating the actions of others.

Cognitive competence can also be developed through instruction. Thus, the communication concepts you are learning in the communication practices of others and yourself can be observed. This will help bring the concepts to life and help you evaluate how communication in the real world matches up with communication concepts. As you build a repertoire of communication knowledge based on your experiential and classroom knowledge, you will also be developing *behavioral competence*.

*The second part* of the definition of communication competence is **the ability to use**. Individual factors affect our ability to do anything. Not everyone has the same athletic, musical, or intellectual ability. At the individual level, a person's physiological and psychological characteristics affect competence. In terms of physiology, age, maturity, and ability to communicate affect competence. In terms of

psychology, a person's mood, stress level, personality, and level of communication apprehension (level of anxiety regarding communication) affect competence. All these factors will either help or hinder you when you try to apply the knowledge you have learned to actual communication behaviors.

*The third part* of the definition is ability **to adapt to various contexts**. What is competent or not varies based on social and cultural context, which makes it impossible to have only one standard for what counts as communication competence. Social variables such as status and power affect competence. Cultural variables such as race and nationality also affect competence. A Ukrainian who speaks English as a second language may be praised for the competence in the English language in home country but be viewed as less competent in the UK because of the accent. In summary, although we have a clear definition of communication competence, there are not definitions for how to be competent in any given situation, since competence varies at the individual, social, and cultural level.

Despite the fact that no guidelines for or definitions of competence will be applicable in all situations, there are many aspects of *competence* related to *communication*. The primary focus has been on competencies related to speaking and listening, and developing communication competence in these areas will help people in academic, professional, and civic contexts. To help colleges and universities develop curriculum and instruction strategies to prepare students, there are some tips of what students should be able to do in terms of speaking and listening competencies by the time they graduate from college:

1. State ideas clearly.
2. Communicate ethically.
3. Recognize when it is appropriate to communicate.
4. Identify their communication goals.
5. Select the most appropriate and effective medium for communicating.
6. Demonstrate credibility.

7. Identify and manage misunderstandings.
8. Manage conflict.
9. Be open-minded about another's point of view.
10. Listen attentively.

These are just some of the competencies. While these are skill focused rather than interpersonally or culturally focused, they provide a concrete way to assess your own speaking competencies and to prepare yourself for professional speaking and listening, which is often skill driven. Since we communicate in many different contexts, such as interpersonal, group, cross-cultural, and computer mediated, there are specific definitions of competence.

### **Developing Competence**

Knowing the dimensions of competence is an important first step toward developing competence. Everyone has some experience with and knowledge about communication. We are explicitly taught the verbal codes that we use to communicate. On the other hand, although there are numerous rules and norms associated with non-verbal communication, we rarely receive explicit instruction on how to do it. Instead, we learn by observing others and through trial and error with our own non-verbal communication.

*Competence obviously involves verbal and non-verbal elements, but it also applies to many situations and contexts.* Communication competence is needed in order to understand communication ethics, to develop cultural awareness, to use computer-mediated communication, and to think critically. Competence involves knowledge, motivation, and skills. It is not enough to know what good communication consists of; you must also have the motivation to reflect on and better your communication and the skills needed to do so.

In regards to competence, we all have areas where we are skilled and areas where we have deficiencies. In most cases, we can consciously decide to work on our deficiencies, which may take considerable effort. There are multiple stages of competence for you to assess as you communicate in your daily life: unconscious

incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and unconscious competence.

Before you have built up a rich cognitive knowledge base of communication concepts, practiced and reflected on skills in a particular area, you may exhibit **unconscious incompetence**, *which means you are not even aware that you are communicating in an incompetent manner*. Once you learn more about communication and have a vocabulary to identify concepts, you may find yourself exhibiting **conscious incompetence**. *This is where you know what you should be doing, and you realize that you are not doing it as well as you could*. However, as your skills increase you may advance to **conscious competence**, *meaning that you know you are communicating well in the moment*, which will add to your bank of experiences to draw from in future interactions. When you reach the stage of **unconscious competence**, *you just communicate successfully without straining to be competent*.

Just because you reach the stage of unconscious competence in one area or with one person does not mean you will always stay there. We are faced with new communication encounters regularly, and although we may be able to draw on the communication skills, we have learned about and developed, it may take a few instances of conscious incompetence before you can advance to later stages.

One way to progress toward communication competence is to become a more mindful communicator. A mindful communicator actively and fluidly processes information, is sensitive to communication contexts and multiple perspectives, and is able to adapt to novel communication situations. Becoming a more mindful communicator has many benefits, including achieving communication goals, detecting deception, avoiding stereotypes, and reducing conflict. Whether or not we achieve our day-to-day communication goals depends on our communication competence.

Various communication behaviors can signal that we are communicating mindfully. People do not always listen actively, and people often do not speak up when they are unsure of instructions for fear of appearing incompetent or embarrassing themselves.



Therefore, a certain amount of tentativeness and mindful monitoring of a person's non-verbal and verbal communication can help us detect deception. However, this is not the same thing as chronic suspicion, which would not indicate communication competence.

### **Listening.**



Listening is a primary means through which we learn new information, which can help us meet instrumental needs as we learn things that helps us complete certain tasks at work or school and get things done in general. The act of listening to our relational partners provides support, which is an important

part of relational maintenance and helps us meet our relational needs. Listening to what others say about us helps us develop an accurate self-concept, which can help us more strategically communicate for identity needs in order to project to others our desired self. Overall, improving our listening skills can help us be better students, better relational partners, and more successful professionals, that is to be competent.

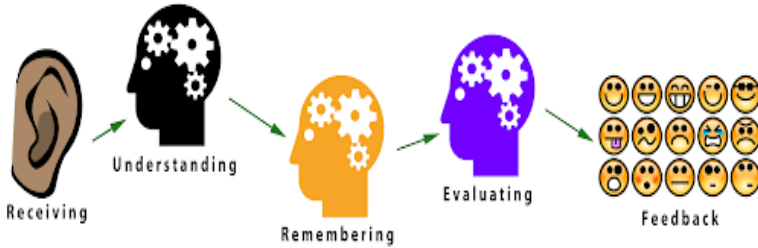
*Listening is the learned process of receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating, and responding to verbal and non-verbal messages.* We begin to engage with the listening process long before we engage in any recognizable verbal or non-verbal communication. After listening for months as infants, we begin to practice our own forms of expression consciously.

### **The listening process**

Listening is a process and as such does not have a defined start and finish. Like the communication process, listening has cognitive, behavioral, and relational elements and does not occur in a linear, systematic fashion. Models of processes are informative in that they help us visualize specific components, but keep in mind that they do

not capture the speed, overlapping nature, or overall complexity of the actual process in action.

The stages of the listening process are *receiving*, *interpreting (understanding)*, *recalling (remembering)*, *evaluating*, and *responding (feedback)*.



## Receiving

Before we can engage other steps in the listening process, we must take in stimuli through our senses. In any given communication encounter, it is likely that we will return to the receiving stage many times as we process incoming feedback and new messages. This part of the listening process is more physiological than other parts, which include cognitive and relational elements. We primarily take in information needed for listening through auditory and visual channels.

Although we do not often think about visual cues as a part of listening, they influence how we interpret messages. For example, seeing a person's face when we hear their voice allows us to take in non-verbal cues from facial expressions and eye contact. The fact that these visual cues are missing in e-mail, text, and phone interactions presents some difficulties for reading contextual clues into meaning received through only auditory channels.

It is important to consider noise as a factor that influences how we receive messages. Some noise interferes primarily with hearing, which is the physical process of receiving stimuli through internal and external components of the ears and eyes, and some interferes with listening, which is the cognitive process of processing the

stimuli taken in during hearing. While hearing leads to listening, they are not the same thing.

Environmental noise such as other people talking, the sounds of traffic and music interfere with the physiological aspects of hearing. Psychological noise like stress and anger interfere primarily with the cognitive processes of listening. We can enhance our ability to receive, and in turn listen, by trying to minimize noise.

### **Interpreting**

During the interpreting stage of listening, we combine the visual and auditory information we receive and try to make meaning out of that information using schemata. The interpreting stage engages cognitive and relational processing as we take in informational, contextual, and relational cues and try to connect them in meaningful ways to previous experiences.

Through the interpreting stage, we begin to understand the stimuli we have received. When we understand something, we are able to attach meaning by connecting information to previous experiences. Through the process of comparing new information with old information, we may also update or revise particular schemata if we find the new information relevant and credible.

If we have difficulty interpreting information, meaning we do not have previous experience or information in our existing schemata to make sense of it, then it is difficult to transfer the information into our long-term memory for later recall. In situations where understanding the information we receive is not important or is not a goal, this stage may be short or even skipped. We can move something to our long-term memory by repetition and then later recall it without ever having understood it.

### **Recalling**

Our ability to recall information is dependent on some of the physiological limits of how memory works. Overall, our memories are known to be fallible. We forget about half of what we hear immediately after hearing it, recall 35 percent after eight hours, and recall 20 percent after a day. Our memory consists of multiple

“storage units,” including sensory storage, short-term memory, working memory, and long-term memory.

Our sensory storage is very large in terms of capacity but limited in terms of length of storage. We can hold large amounts of unsorted visual information but only for about a tenth of a second. By comparison, we can hold large amounts of unsorted auditory information for longer – up to four seconds. This initial memory storage unit does not provide much use for our study of communication, as these large but quickly expiring chunks of sensory data are primarily used in reactionary and instinctual ways.

As stimuli are organized and interpreted, they make their way to short-term memory where they either expire and are forgotten or are transferred to long-term memory. **Short-term memory** *is a mental storage capability that can retain stimuli for twenty seconds to one minute.* **Long-term memory** *is a mental storage capability to which stimuli in short-term memory can be transferred if they are connected to existing schema and in which information can be stored indefinitely.*

**Working memory** *is a temporarily accessed memory storage space that is activated during times of high cognitive demand.* When using working memory, we can temporarily store information and process and use it at the same time. This is different from our typical memory function in that information usually has to make it to long-term memory before we can call it back up to apply to a current situation. People with good working memories are able to keep recent information in mind, process it, and apply it to other incoming information. This can be very useful during high-stress situations.

Although recall is an important part of the listening process, there is not a direct correlation between being good at recalling information and being a good listener. Some people have excellent memories, recall abilities, and can tell you a very accurate story from many years earlier during a situation in which they should actually be listening and not showing off their recall abilities.

Recall is an important part of the listening process because it is most often used to assess listening abilities and effectiveness. Many

quizzes and tests in school are based on recall and are often used to assess how well students comprehended information presented in class, which is seen as an indication of how well they listened. When recall is our only goal, we excel at it.

Experiments have found that people can memorize and later recall a set of faces and names with near 100 percent recall when sitting in a quiet lab and asked to do so. However, throw in external noise, more visual stimuli, and multiple contextual influences, and we cannot remember the name of the person we were just introduced to one minute earlier. Even in interpersonal encounters, we rely on recall to test whether or not someone was listening.

### **Evaluating**

When we evaluate something, we make judgments about its credibility, completeness, and worth. In terms of credibility, we try to determine the degree to which we believe a speaker's statements are correct and/or true. In terms of completeness, we try to "read between the lines" and evaluate the message in relation to what we know about the topic or situation being discussed.

We evaluate the worth of a message by making a value judgment about whether we think the message or idea is good/bad, right/wrong, or desirable/undesirable. All these aspects of evaluating require critical thinking skills. We are not born with thinking skills but must develop them over time through our personal and intellectual development.

Studying communication is a great way to build your critical thinking skills, because you learn much more about the taken-for-granted aspects of how communication works, which gives tools to analyze and critique messages, senders, and contexts. Critical thinking and listening skills also help you take a more proactive role in the communication process rather than being a passive receiver of messages that may not be credible, complete, or worthwhile.

One danger within the evaluation stage of listening is to focus your evaluative lenses more on the speaker than the message. This can quickly become a barrier to effective listening if we begin to prejudge a speaker based on his or her identity or characteristics

rather than on the content of his or her message. We will learn more about how to avoid slipping into a person-centered rather than message-centered evaluative stance later in the chapter.

### **Responding**

*Responding entails sending verbal and non-verbal messages that indicate attentiveness and understanding or a lack thereof.* This part of the listening process can be connected to feedback. We all know from experience some signs that indicate whether a person is paying attention and understanding a message or not.

We send verbal and non-verbal feedback while another person is talking and after they are done. **Back-channel cues** are the verbal and non-verbal signals we send while someone is talking and can consist of verbal cues like “uh-huh,” “oh,” and “right,” and/or non-verbal cues like direct eye contact, head nods, and leaning forward. Back-channel cues are generally a form of positive feedback that indicates others are actively listening. People also send cues intentionally and unintentionally that indicate they are not listening. If another person is looking away, fidgeting, texting, or turned away, we will likely interpret those responses negatively.

**Paraphrasing** is a responding behavior that can also show that you understand what was communicated. When you paraphrase information, you rephrase the message into your own words. Make sure to paraphrase and/or ask questions once a person’s turn is over, because interrupting can also be interpreted as a sign of not listening. Paraphrasing is also a good tool to use in computer-mediated communication, especially since miscommunication can occur due to a lack of non-verbal and other contextual cues.

Poor listening skills, lack of conciseness, and inability to give constructive feedback have been identified as potential communication challenges in professional contexts. Even though listening education is lacking in our society, research has shown that introductory communication courses provide important skills necessary for functioning in entry-level jobs, including listening, writing, motivating/ persuading, interpersonal skills, informational interviewing, and small-group problem solving. Training and

improvements in listening will continue to pay off, as employers desire employees with good communication skills, and employees who have good listening skills are more likely to get promoted.

Empathetic listening can help us expand our self and social awareness by learning from other people's experiences and by helping us take on different perspectives. Emotional support in the form of empathetic listening and validation during times of conflict can help relational partners manage common stressors of relationships that may otherwise lead a partnership to deteriorate. The following list reviews some of the main functions of listening that are relevant in multiple contexts.

**The main purposes of listening are**

- to focus on messages sent by other people or noises coming from our surroundings;
- to better our understanding of other people's communication;
- to critically evaluate other people's messages;
- to monitor non-verbal signals;
- to indicate that we are interested or paying attention;
- to empathize with others and show we care for them (relational maintenance); and
- to engage in negotiation, dialogue, or other exchanges that result in shared understanding of or agreement on an issue.

**Summary**

- Communication competence refers to the knowledge of effective and appropriate communication patterns and the ability to use and adapt that knowledge in various contexts.
- To be a competent communicator, one should have cognitive knowledge about communication based on observation and instruction; understand that individual, social, and cultural contexts affect competence; and be able to adapt to those various contexts.
- Developing communication competence in speaking and listening can help in academic, professional, and civic contexts.
- Levels of communication competence include unconscious

incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and unconscious competence.

- To develop communication competence, you must become a more mindful communicator and a higher self-monitor.
- Communication apprehension refers to fear or anxiety experienced by a person due to real or imagined communication with another person or persons.
- Listening is the learned process of receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating, and responding to verbal and non-verbal messages.
- The stages of the listening process are receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating, and responding.
- Listening has implications for personal lives and relationships. The power of listening to make someone else feel better and to open our perceptual field to new sources of information should not be underestimated.

### **Questions for practical classes:**

1. Define the communication competence.
2. Name and describe the parts of the communication competence.
3. What are the tips of efficient listening and communication competences?
4. Determine and describe the stages of the competence development.
5. Enlarge on listening.
6. What are the stages of the listening process?
7. Enlarge on the listening types.
8. Enlarge on the listening styles.
9. What are the barriers to listening?

### **Recommended resources:**

1. Бацевич Ф. С. Основи комунікативної лінгвістики / Ф. С. Бацевич – К.: ВЦ «Академія», 2009. – 376с.
2. Косенко Ю. В. Основи теорії мовної комунікації: навч. посіб. / Ю.В. Косенко. – Суми: СумДУ, 2013. – 292 с.



3. Семенюк О. А. Основи теорії мовної комунікації : навч. посіб. / О. А. Семенюк, В. Ю. Паращук. – К: ВЦ «Академія», 2010. – 240 с.
4. A Primer on Communication Studies. URL: <https://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/a-primer-on-communication-studies/> (Last accessed 29.03.2021).
5. Das L. Lecture notes on language and communication / Lisa Das. – Guwahati: Department of Humanities and Social Sciences. Indian Institutes of Technology, 2006. – 150 p.
6. Defleur M. Fundamentals of Human Communication / Melvin L. Defleur, Patricia Kearney, Timothy G. Plax. – Mayfield Pub. Co., 1992. – 491 p.
7. Handbook of Communication Competence. Edited by: Annegret F. Hannawa and Brian H. Spitzberg. – Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2015. – 787 p.

## Lecture 5

# COMMUNICATION CONFLICTS



Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging messages between people whose lives mutually influence one another in unique ways in relation to social and cultural norms. This definition highlights the fact that interpersonal communication involves two or more people who are interdependent to some degree and who build a unique bond based on the larger social and cultural contexts to which they belong.

Many times, we engage in interpersonal communication to fulfill certain goals we may have, but sometimes we are more successful than others are. This is because interpersonal communication is strategic, meaning we intentionally create messages to achieve certain goals that help us function in society and our relationships.

Goals vary based on the situation and the communicators, but ask yourself if you are generally successful at achieving the goals with which you enter a conversation or not. If so, you may already possess a high degree of **interpersonal communication competence**, *or the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in personal relationships.*

We have different needs that are met through our various relationships. Whether we are aware of it or not, we often ask ourselves, “What can this relationship do for me?” In order to understand how relationships achieve strategic functions, we will look at instrumental goals, relationship-maintenance goals, and self-presentation goals.

Interpersonal communication occurs between two or more people whose lives are interdependent and mutually influence one another. These relationships occur in academic, professional, personal, and civic contexts, and improving our interpersonal communication competence can also improve our physical and psychological health, enhance our relationships, and make us more successful in our careers.

There are functional aspects of interpersonal communication.

- We “get things done” in our relationships by communicating for instrumental goals such as getting someone to do something for us, requesting or presenting information, and asking for or giving support.
- We maintain our relationships by communicating for relational goals such as putting your relational partner’s needs before your own, celebrating accomplishments, spending time together, and checking in.
- We strategically project ourselves to be perceived in particular ways by communicating for self-presentation goals such as appearing competent or friendly.

**Interpersonal conflict** *occurs in interactions where there are real or perceived incompatible goals, scarce resources, or opposing viewpoints.* Interpersonal conflict may be expressed verbally or non-verbally along a continuum ranging from a nearly imperceptible cold shoulder to an obvious blowout. Interpersonal conflict is, however, distinct from interpersonal violence, which goes beyond communication to include abuse.

Conflict is an inevitable part of close relationships and can take a negative emotional toll. It takes effort to ignore someone or be passive aggressive, and the anger or guilt we may feel after blowing up at someone are valid negative feelings. However, conflict is not always negative or unproductive. In fact, numerous research studies have shown that quantity of conflict in a relationship is not as important as how the conflict is handled. Additionally, when conflict is well managed, it has the potential to lead to more rewarding and satisfactory relationships.

Improving your *competence* in dealing with conflict can yield positive effects in the real world. Since conflict is present in our personal and professional lives, the ability to manage conflict and negotiate desirable outcomes can help us be more successful at both. Whether you and your partner are trying to decide what brand of flat-screen television to buy or discussing the upcoming political election with your mother, the potential for conflict is present. In professional settings, the ability to engage in conflict management, sometimes called conflict resolution, is a necessary and valued skill. However, many professionals do not receive training in conflict management even though they are expected to do it as part of their job.

Being able to manage conflict situations can make life more pleasant rather than letting a situation stagnate or escalate. The negative effects of poorly handled conflict could range from an awkward last few weeks of the semester with a college roommate to violence or divorce. However, there is no absolute right or wrong way to handle a conflict. Remember that being a competent communicator does not mean that you follow a set of absolute rules. Rather, a competent communicator assesses multiple contexts and applies or adapts communication tools and skills to fit the dynamic situation.

Context plays an important role in conflict and conflict management styles in particular. The way we view and deal with conflict is *learned and contextual*.

There has been much research done on different types of conflict management styles, which are communication strategies that attempt to avoid, address, or resolve a conflict. Keep in mind that we do not always consciously choose a style. We may be caught up in emotion and become reactionary.

*A powerful tool to mitigate conflict is information exchange.* Asking for more information, before you react to a conflict-triggering event is a good way to add a buffer between the trigger and your reaction.

Another key element is *whether a communicator is oriented toward self-centered or other-centered goals*. In general, strategies

that facilitate information exchange and include concern for mutual goals will be more successful at managing conflict.

The five strategies for managing conflict we will discuss are *competing, avoiding, accommodating, compromising, and collaborating.*



### Competing

*The competing style indicates a high concern for self and a low concern for other. When we compete, we are striving to “win” the conflict, potentially at the expense or “loss” of the other person. One way we may gauge our win is by being granted or taking concessions from the other person. The competing style also involves the use of power, which can be non-coercive or coercive.*

**Non-coercive** strategies include requesting and persuading. When *requesting*, we suggest the conflict partner change a behavior. Requesting does not require a high level of information exchange. When we *persuade*, however, we give our conflict partner reasons to support our request or suggestion, meaning there is more information exchange, which may make persuading more effective than requesting.

**Coercive** strategies violate standard guidelines for ethical communication and may include aggressive communication directed at rousing your partner’s emotions through insults, profanity, and yelling, or through threats of punishment if you do not get your way. In all these scenarios, the “win” that could result is only short term

and can lead to conflict escalation. Interpersonal conflict is rarely isolated, meaning there can be ripple effects that connect the current conflict to previous and future conflicts.

Competing has been linked to aggression, although the two are not always paired. If assertiveness does not work, there is a chance it could escalate to hostility. There is a pattern of verbal escalation: requests, demands, complaints, angry statements, threats, harassment, and verbal abuse. Aggressive communication can become patterned, which can create a volatile and hostile environment.

The competing style of conflict management is not the same thing as having a competitive personality. *Competition in relationships is not always negative, and people who enjoy engaging in competition may not always do so at the expense of another person's goals.* In fact, research has shown that some couples engage in competitive shared activities like sports or games to maintain and enrich their relationship. In addition, although we may think that competitiveness is gendered, research has often shown that women are just as competitive as men are.

### **Avoiding**

*The avoiding style of conflict management often indicates a low concern for self and a low concern for other, and no direct communication about the conflict takes place.* In general, avoiding does not mean that there is no communication about the conflict. Remember, *you cannot not communicate.* Even when we try to avoid conflict, we may intentionally or unintentionally give our feelings away through our verbal and non-verbal communication.

The avoiding style is either passive or indirect, meaning there is little information exchange, which may make this strategy less effective than others may. We may decide to avoid conflict for many different reasons, some of which are better than others. If you view the conflict as having little importance to you, it may be better to ignore it. If the person you are having conflict with will only be working in your office for a week, you may perceive a conflict to be temporary and choose to avoid it and hope that it will solve itself. If

you are not emotionally invested in the conflict, you may be able to reframe your perspective and see the situation in a different way, therefore resolving the issue. In all these cases, avoiding does not really require an investment of time, emotion, or communication skill, so there is not much at stake to lose.

Avoidance is not always an easy conflict management choice. While it may be easy to tolerate a problem when you are not personally invested in it or view it as temporary, *avoidance would just make the problem worse.*

*Indirect strategies of hinting and joking fall under the avoiding style.* While these indirect avoidance strategies may lead to a buildup of frustration or even anger, they allow us to vent a little of our built-up steam and may make a conflict situation *more bearable*. When we hint, we drop clues that we hope our partner will find and piece together to see the problem and hopefully change, thereby solving the problem without any direct communication. In almost all the cases of hinting that I have experienced or heard about, the person dropping the hints overestimates their partner's detective abilities.

We also overestimate our partner's ability to decode the jokes we make about a conflict situation. It is more likely that the receiver of the jokes will think you are genuinely trying to be funny or feel provoked or insulted than realize the conflict situation that you are referencing. So more frustration may develop when the *hints and jokes are not decoded*, which often leads to an extreme *form of hinting/joking: passive-aggressive behavior.*

*Passive-aggressive behavior is a way of dealing with conflict in which one person indirectly communicates their negative thoughts or feelings through non-verbal behaviors, such as not completing a task.*

Although passive-aggressive behavior can feel rewarding in the moment, it is one of the most unproductive ways to deal with conflict. These behaviors may create additional conflicts and may lead to a cycle of passive-aggressiveness in which the other partner begins to exhibit these behaviors as well, while never actually addressing the conflict that originated the behavior. In most

avoidance situations, both parties lose. However, *avoidance can be the most appropriate strategy in some situations* – for example, when the conflict is temporary, when the stakes are low or there is little personal investment, or when there is the potential for violence or retaliation.

### **Accommodating**

*The accommodating conflict management style indicates a low concern for self and a high concern for other and is often viewed as passive or submissive, in that someone complies with or obliges another without providing personal input. The context for and motivation behind accommodating play an important role in whether or not it is an appropriate strategy. Generally, we accommodate because we are being generous, we are obeying, or we are yielding.*

If we are being generous, we accommodate because we genuinely want to; if we are obeying, we don't have a choice but to accommodate (perhaps due to the potential for negative consequences or punishment); and if we yield, we may have our own views or goals but give up on them due to fatigue, time constraints, or because a better solution has been offered.

Accommodating can be appropriate when there is little chance that our own goals can be achieved, when we don't have much to lose by accommodating, when we feel we are wrong, or when advocating for our own needs could negatively affect the relationship.

The occasional accommodation can be useful in maintaining a relationship – remember earlier we discussed putting another's needs before your own as a way to achieve relational goals. However, being a team player can slip into being a pushover, which people generally do not appreciate.

Research has shown that the accommodating style is more likely to occur when there are time restraints and less likely to occur when someone does not want to appear weak. As with avoiding, there are certain cultural influences that make accommodating a more effective strategy.



## **Compromising**

*The compromising style shows a moderate concern for self and other and may indicate that there is a low investment in the conflict and/or the relationship.* Even though we often hear that the best way to handle a conflict is to compromise, the compromising style is not a win/win solution; it is a partial win/lose. In essence, when we compromise, we give up some or most of what we want. It is true that the conflict gets resolved temporarily, but lingering thoughts of what you gave up could lead to a future conflict. Compromising may be a good strategy when there are time limitations or when prolonging a conflict may lead to relationship deterioration. Compromise may also be good when both parties have equal power or when other resolution strategies have not worked.

A negative of compromising is that it may be used as an easy way out of a conflict. The compromising style is most effective when both parties find the solution agreeable.

## **Collaborating.**

*The collaborating style involves a high degree of concern for self and other and usually indicates investment in the conflict situation and the relationship.* Although the collaborating style takes the most work in terms of communication competence, it ultimately leads to a win/win situation in which neither party has to make concessions because a mutually beneficial solution is discovered or created.

The obvious advantage is that both parties are satisfied, which could lead to positive problem solving in the future and strengthen the overall relationship. The disadvantage is that this style is often time consuming, and only one person may be willing to use this approach while the other person is eager to compete to meet their goals or willing to accommodate.

Here are some tips for collaborating and achieving a **win/win outcome**:

- Do not view the conflict as a contest you are trying to win.
- Remain flexible and realize there are solutions yet to be discovered.

- Distinguish the people from the problem (do not make it personal).
- Determine what the underlying needs are that are driving the other person's demands (needs can still be met through different demands).
- Identify areas of common ground or shared interests that you can work from to develop solutions.
- Ask questions to allow them to clarify and to help you understand their perspective.
- Listen carefully and provide verbal and non-verbal feedback.

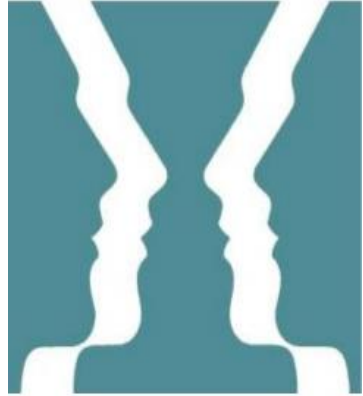
### **Culture and conflict.**

Culture is an important context to consider when studying conflict, and recent research has called into question some of the assumptions of the five-conflict management styles discussed so far, which were formulated with a Western bias. For example, while the avoiding style of conflict has been cast as negative, with a low concern for self and other or as a lose/lose outcome, this research found that participants in the United States, Germany, China, and Japan all viewed avoiding strategies as demonstrating a concern for the other.

While there are some generalizations, we can make about culture and conflict, it is better to look at more specific patterns of how interpersonal communication and conflict management are related. We can better understand some of the cultural differences in conflict management by further examining the concept of *face*.

What does it mean to “save face?” This saying generally refers to preventing embarrassment or preserving our reputation or image, which is similar to the concept of face in interpersonal and cross-cultural communication. Our **face** is the projected self we desire to put into the world, and **face work** refers to the communicative strategies we employ to project, maintain, or repair our face or maintain, repair, or challenge another's face.

**Face negotiation theory** argues that people in all cultures negotiate face through communication encounters, and that cultural factors influence how we engage in face work, especially in conflict situations. These cultural factors influence whether we are more concerned with self-face or other-face and what types of conflict management strategies we may use. One key cultural influence on face negotiation is the distinction between individualistic and collectivistic cultures.



The distinction between individualistic and collectivistic cultures is an important dimension across which all cultures vary. **Individualistic cultures** like the United States and most of Europe emphasize individual identity over group identity and encourage competition and self-reliance.

**Collectivistic cultures** like Taiwan, Colombia, China, Japan, Vietnam, and Peru value in-group identity over individual identity and value conformity to social norms of the in-group.

However, within the larger cultures, individuals will vary in the degree to which they view themselves as part of a group or as a separate individual, which is called self-construal. Independent self-construal indicates a perception of the self as an individual with unique feelings, thoughts, and motivations. Interdependent self-construal indicates a perception of the self as interrelated with others.

People from individualistic cultures are more likely to have higher levels of independent self-construal, and people from collectivistic cultures are more likely to have higher levels of interdependent self-construal. Self-construal and individualistic or collectivistic cultural orientations affect how people engage in face work and the conflict management styles they employ.

Self-construal alone does not have a direct effect on conflict style, but it does affect face concerns, with independent self-construal

favoring self-face concerns and interdependent self-construal favoring other-face concerns. There are specific face work strategies for different conflict management styles, and these strategies correspond to self-face concerns or other-face concerns.

- **Accommodating.** Giving in (self-face concern).
- **Avoiding.** Pretending conflict does not exist (other-face concern).
- **Competing.** Defending your position, persuading (self-face concern).
- **Collaborating.** Apologizing, having a private discussion, remaining calm (other-face concern).

Research done on college students in Germany, Japan, China, and the United States found that those with independent self-construal were more likely to engage in competing, and those with interdependent self-construal were more likely to engage in avoiding or collaborating. In general, this research found that members of collectivistic cultures were more likely to use the *avoiding* style of conflict management and less likely to use the *integrating* or *competing* styles of conflict management than were members of individualistic cultures. The following examples bring together face work strategies, cultural orientations, and conflict management style: Someone from an individualistic culture may be more likely to engage in competing as a conflict management strategy if they are directly confronted, which may be an attempt to defend their reputation (self-face concern).

Someone in a collectivistic culture may be more likely to engage in avoiding or accommodating in order not to embarrass or anger the person confronting them (other-face concern) or out of concern that their reaction could reflect negatively on their family or cultural group (other-face concern).

While these distinctions are useful for categorizing large-scale cultural patterns, it is important not to essentialize or arbitrarily group countries together, because there are measurable differences within cultures. For example, expressing one's emotions was seen as demonstrating a low concern for other-face in Japan, but this was not

so in China, which shows there is variety between similarly collectivistic cultures.

Culture always adds layers of complexity to any communication phenomenon, but experiencing and learning from other cultures enriches our lives and makes us communicators that are more competent.

### **Handling conflict better.**

Conflict is inevitable and it is not inherently negative. *A key part of developing interpersonal communication competence involves being able to effectively manage the conflict you will encounter in all your relationships.* One key part of handling conflict better is to notice patterns of conflict in specific relationships and to generally have an idea of what causes you to react negatively and what your reactions usually are.

### **Identifying conflict patterns**

Four common triggers for conflict are *criticism, demand, cumulative annoyance, and rejection.*

*We all know from experience that criticism, or comments that evaluate another person's personality, behavior, appearance, or life choices, may lead to conflict.* Comments do not have to be meant as criticism to be perceived as such. A simple but useful strategy to manage the trigger of criticism is to follow the old adage "*Think before you speak*". In many cases, there are alternative ways to phrase things that may be taken less personally, or we may determine that our comment doesn't need to be spoken at all. A majority of the thoughts that we have about another person's physical appearance, whether positive or negative, do not need to be verbalized.

**Demands** *also frequently trigger conflict, especially if the demand is viewed as unfair or irrelevant.* It is important to note that demands rephrased as questions may still be or be perceived as demands. Tone of voice and context are important factors here. As with criticism, thinking before you speak and before you respond can help manage demands and minimize conflict episodes. Demands are sometimes met with withdrawal rather than a verbal response. If you are doing the demanding, remember a higher level of information exchange

may make your demand clearer or more reasonable to the other person. If you are being demanded of, responding calmly and expressing your thoughts and feelings are likely more effective than withdrawing, which may escalate the conflict.

**Cumulative annoyance** *is a building of frustration or anger that occurs over time, eventually resulting in a conflict interaction.* Cumulative annoyance can build up like a pressure cooker, and as it builds up, the intensity of the conflict builds. *Criticism and demands can also play into cumulative annoyance.* We have all probably let critical or demanding comments slide, but if they continue, it becomes difficult to hold back, and most of us have a breaking point.

A good strategy for managing cumulative annoyance is to monitor your level of annoyance and occasionally let some steam out of the pressure cooker by processing through your frustration with a third party or directly addressing what is bothering you with the source.

**Rejection** *can lead to conflict when one person's comments or behaviors are perceived as ignoring or invalidating the other person.* Vulnerability is a component of any close relationship. When we care about someone, we verbally or non-verbally communicate. Managing feelings of rejection is difficult because it is so personal, but controlling the impulse to assume that your relational partner is rejecting you, and engaging in communication rather than reflexive reaction, can help put things in perspective.

### **Negotiation steps and skills**



*Negotiation in interpersonal conflict refers to the process of attempting to change or influence conditions within a relationship. The negotiation skills discussed next can be adapted to all types of relational contexts, from romantic partners to coworkers. The stages of negotiating are pre-negotiation, opening, exploration, bargaining, and settlement.*

**In the pre-negotiation stage, we prepare for the encounter.** If possible, let the other person know you would like to talk to them, and preview the topic, so they will also have the opportunity to prepare. It is very important that you realize there is a range between your ideal and your bottom line and that remaining flexible is key to a successful negotiation – remember, through collaboration a new solution could be found that you did not think of.

**In the opening stage of the negotiation, we set the tone for the interaction because the other person will be likely to reciprocate.** Generally, it is good to be cooperative and pleasant, which can help open the door for collaboration. You also want to establish common ground by bringing up overlapping interests and using “we” language.

*There should be a high level of information exchange in **the exploration stage.*** The overarching goal in this stage is to get a panoramic view of the conflict by sharing your perspective and listening to the other person. In this stage, you will likely learn how the other person is punctuating the conflict. The information that you gather here may clarify the situation enough to end the conflict and cease negotiation. If negotiation continues, the information will be key as you move into the bargaining stage.

**The bargaining stage is where we make proposals and concessions.** The proposal you make should be informed by what you learned in the exploration stage. Flexibility is important here, because you may have to revise your ideal outcome and bottom line based on new information. If there are areas of disagreement, however, you may have to make concessions or compromise, which can be a partial win or a partial loss.

**In the settlement stage, we decide on one of the proposals and then summarize the chosen proposal and any related concessions.** It is possible that each party can have a different view of the agreed solution.

### **Summary**

- Interpersonal conflict is an inevitable part of relationships that, although not always negative, can take an emotional toll on relational partners unless they develop skills and strategies for managing conflict.
- Although there is no absolute right or wrong way to handle a conflict, there are five predominant styles of conflict management, which are competing, avoiding, accommodating, compromising, and collaborating.
- Perception plays an important role in conflict management because we are often biased in determining the cause of our own and others' behaviors in a conflict situation, which necessitates engaging in communication to gain information and perspective.
- Culture influences how we engage in conflict based on our cultural norms regarding individualism or collectivism and concern for self-face or other-face.
- We can handle conflict better by identifying patterns and triggers such as demands, cumulative annoyance, and rejection and by learning to respond mindfully rather than reflexively.

### **Questions for practical classes:**

1. Define communication conflict.
2. How to mitigate the conflict.
3. Define each out of five strategies of communication conflict management.
4. State the tips for collaborating and achieving a win/win outcome.
5. What is meant by the face concerns in the communication conflict?
6. Enlarge on conflict patterns and triggers.



## 7. Define and describe negotiation steps and skills.

### **Recommended resources:**

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8. Hener G. Communication and conflict management in local public organizations / Gabriela Hener // Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, No. 30E, 2010. – Pp. 132-141.
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## Lecture 6

# VERBAL COMMUNICATION



**Verbal communication** is about language, both written and spoken. Imagine for a moment that you have no language with which to communicate. It is probably even harder to imagine that with all of the advancements we have at our disposal today, there are people in our world who actually do not have, or cannot use, language to communicate.

Here is the story. In 1980-s, being deaf was being lost in Nicaragua. Thus, the government started bringing deaf children together from all over the country in an attempt to educate them. These children had spent their lives in remote places and had no contact with other deaf people. They had never learned a language and could not understand their teachers or each other. Likewise, their teachers could not understand them.

Shortly after bringing these students together, the teachers noticed that the students communicated with each other in what appeared to be an organized fashion: they had literally brought together the individual gestures they used at home and composed them into a new language.

Although the teachers still did not understand what the kids were saying, they were astonished at what they were witnessing – the birth of a new language in the late 20th century! This was an unprecedented discovery.

In 1986, an American linguist Judy Kegl went to Nicaragua to find out what she could learn from these children without language. She contends that our brains are open to language until the age of 12 or 13, and then language becomes difficult to



learn. She quickly discovered approximately 300 people in Nicaragua who did not have language and says, *“They are invaluable to research – among the only people on Earth who can provide clues to the beginnings of human communication. I’m convinced that language is in the brain”*, Kegl says. *“But I’m also convinced that language needs a trigger”*.

Adrien Perez, one of the early deaf students who formed this new language (referred to as Nicaraguan Sign Language), says that without verbal communication, *“You can’t express your feelings. Your thoughts may be there but you cannot get them out. And you can’t get new thoughts in.”* *“It’s like a rocket going off in your head”*, says Adrian Perez. *“It’s just an understanding that soars”*. As one of the few people on earth who has experienced life with and without verbal communication, his comments speak to the heart of communication: it is the essence of who we are and how we understand our world. We use it to form our identities, initiate and maintain relationships, express our needs and wants, construct and shape world-views, and achieve personal goals.

**Language is expressive.** *Verbal communication helps us meet various needs through our ability to express ourselves.* In terms of instrumental needs, we use verbal communication to ask questions that provide us with specific information. We also use verbal communication to describe things, people, and ideas. It is also through our verbal expressions that our personal relationships are

formed. At its essence, language is expressive. Verbal expressions help us communicate our *observations, thoughts, feelings, and needs*.

### **Functions of language**

When we **express observations**, *we report on the sensory information we are taking or have taken in*. Observation and description occur in the first step of the perception and checking process. When you are trying to make sense of an experience, expressing observations in a descriptive rather than evaluative way can lessen defensiveness, which facilitates competent communication.

**Expressing Thoughts.** When we express thoughts, *we draw conclusions based on what we have experienced*. In the perception process, this is similar to the interpretation step. We take various observations, evaluate, and interpret them to assign them meaning (a conclusion). Whereas our observations are based on sensory information (what we saw, what we read, what we heard), thoughts are connected to our beliefs (what we think is true/false), attitudes (what we like and dislike), and values (what we think is right/wrong or good/bad).

**Expressing Feelings.** When we express feelings, *we communicate our emotions*. Expressing feelings is a difficult part of verbal communication, because there are many social norms about how, why, when, where, and to whom we express our emotions. Norms for emotional expression also vary based on nationality and other cultural identities and characteristics such as age and gender. Although individuals vary in the degree to which they are emotionally expressive, there is still a prevailing social norm that *women are more emotionally expressive than men are*.

Expressing feelings can be uncomfortable for those who are listening. Some people are generally not good at or comfortable with receiving and processing other people's feelings. Even those with good empathetic listening skills can be affected positively or negatively by others' emotions. Expressions of anger can be especially difficult to manage because they represent a threat to the face and self-esteem of others. Despite the fact that expressing

feelings is more complicated than other forms of expression, emotion sharing is an important part of how we create social bonds and empathize with others, and it can be improved.

Expressing feelings is often the most difficult form of verbal expression. Expressing our emotions verbally, it is important to develop an emotional vocabulary. The more specific we can be when we are verbally communicating our emotions, the less ambiguous our emotions will be for the person decoding our message. As we expand our emotional vocabulary, we are able to convey the intensity of the emotion we are feeling whether it is mild, moderate, or intense.

Nowadays, when so much of our communication is mediated electronically, we communicate emotions through the written word in an e-mail, text, or instant message. Communicating emotions through the written (or typed) word can have advantages such as time to compose your thoughts and convey the details of what you are feeling. There are also disadvantages in that important context and non-verbal communication cannot be included.

Things like facial expressions and tone of voice offer much insight into emotions that may not be expressed verbally. There is also a lack of immediate feedback.

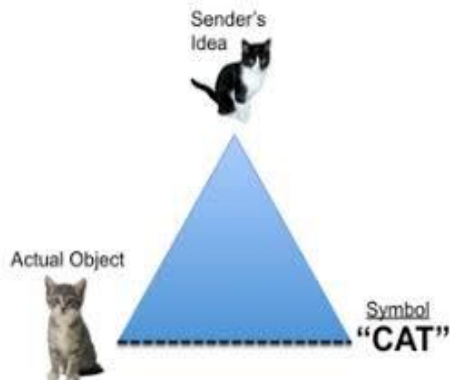
**Expressing Needs.** When we express needs, *we are communicating in an instrumental way to help us get things done.* Since we almost always know our needs more than others do, it's important for us to be able to convey those needs to others. Expressing needs can help us get a project done at work or help us navigate the changes of a long-term romantic partnership. Not expressing needs can lead to feelings of abandonment, frustration, or resentment.

In general, **verbal communication** *refers to our use of words while non-verbal communication refers to communication that occurs through means other than words, such as body language, gestures, and silence.* Both verbal and non-verbal communication can be *spoken and written.* Many people mistakenly assume that verbal communication refers only to spoken communication. **Verbal**

**Communication** is an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols used to share meaning.

**Symbols** are arbitrary representations of thoughts, ideas, emotions, objects, or actions used to encode and decode meaning. Symbols stand for, or represent, something else. For example, there is nothing inherent about calling a cat a cat. Rather, English speakers have agreed that these symbols (words), whose components (letters) are used in a particular order each time, stand for both the actual object, as well as our interpretation of that object.

This idea is illustrated by the **triangle of meaning**. The word “cat” is not the actual cat. Nor does it have any direct connection to an actual cat. Instead, it is a symbolic representation of our idea of a cat, as indicated by the line going from the word “cat” to the speaker’s idea of “cat” to the actual object.



Symbols have three distinct qualities: *they are arbitrary, ambiguous, and abstract.*

Notice that the picture of the cat on the left side of the triangle more closely represents a real cat than the word “cat.”

However, we do not use pictures as language, or verbal communication. Instead, we use words to represent our ideas. This example demonstrates our agreement that the word “cat” represents or stands for a real cat and our idea of a cat. The symbols we use are **arbitrary** and have *no direct relationship to the objects or ideas they represent*. We generally consider communication successful when we reach agreement on the meanings of the symbols we use.

Not only are symbols arbitrary, they are **ambiguous** – that is, they *have several possible meanings*. The meanings of symbols change over time due to changes in social norms, values, and advances in technology. If symbols can have multiple meanings then how do we

communicate and understand one another? We are able to communicate because there are a finite number of possible meanings for our symbols, a range of meanings which the members of a given language system agree upon. Without an *agreed-upon system of symbols*, we could share relatively little meaning with one another.

The verbal symbols we use are also **abstract**, meaning that, *words are not material or physical*. A certain level of abstraction is inherent in the fact that *symbols can only represent objects and ideas*. Abstraction is helpful when you want to communicate complex concepts in a simple way. However, the more abstract the language, the greater potential there is for confusion.

Verbal communication is **rule-governed**. *We must follow agreed-upon rules to make sense of the symbols we share*. Consider the example of the word “*cat*”. What would happen if there were no rules for using the symbols (letters) that make up this word? If placing these symbols in a proper order was not important, then *cta, tac, tca, act, or atc* could all mean *cat*. What if you could use any three letters to refer to the word “*cat*”? What if there were no rules and anything could represent “*cat*”? Without any doubt, it is important to have rules to govern our verbal communication. There are four general rules for verbal communication, involving *the sounds, meaning, arrangement, and use of symbols*.

- **Phonology** *is the study of speech sounds*. The pronunciation of the word *cat* comes from the rules governing how letters sound, especially in relation to one another. The context in which words are spoken may provide answers for how they should be pronounced. When we do not follow phonological rules, confusion results. One way to understand and apply phonological rules is to use syntactic and pragmatic rules to clarify phonological rules.

- **Semantic** *rules help us understand the difference in meaning between words*. Even though many of the words are spelled the same, their meanings vary depending on how they are pronounced and in what context they are used. We attach meanings to words; meanings are not inherent in words themselves. As mentioned above, words

(symbols) are arbitrary and attain meaning only when people give them meaning.

While we can always look to a dictionary to find a standardized definition of a word, or its denotative meaning. Most words have multiple meanings, which are categorized as either *denotative* or *connotative*. The **denotation** of a word is its *explicit definition as listed in a dictionary*. However, *the emotions and associations connected to a word is known as its **connotative meaning***. Depending on our experiences, certain words have a positive, negative, or neutral **connotation**.

Meanings do not always follow standard, agreed-upon definitions when used in various contexts. For example, think of the word “sick.” The denotative definition of the word is ill or unwell. However, *connotative meanings, the meanings we assign based on our experiences and beliefs*, are quite varied. Consider the word “sick”, which can have a connotative meaning that describes something as good or awesome as opposed to its literal meaning of illness having a negative association.

- **Syntactics** *is the study of language structure and symbolic arrangement*. Syntactics focuses on the rules we use to combine words into meaningful sentences and statements. We speak and write according to agreed-upon syntactic rules to keep meaning coherent and understandable. Think about this sentence: “I can can a can into a can”. While the content of this sentence is not very informative, you can understand it because it follows syntactic rules for language structure.

- **Pragmatics** *is the study of how people actually use verbal communication*. Even though we use agreed-upon symbolic systems and follow phonological, syntactic, and semantic rules, we apply these rules differently in different contexts. Each communication context has different rules for “appropriate” communication.

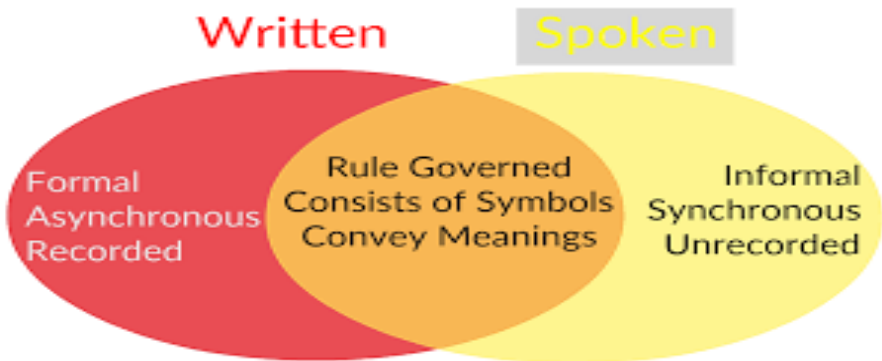
*It is only through an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols that we can exchange verbal communication in an effective manner*. Without agreement, rules, and symbols, verbal communication would not work. The reality is, after we learn



language in school, we do not spend much time consciously thinking about all of these rules, we simply use them. However, rules keep our verbal communication structured in ways that make it useful for us to communicate more effectively.

While both spoken and written communication function as agreed-upon rule-governed systems of symbols used to convey meaning, there are enough differences in pragmatic rules between writing and speaking to justify discussing some of their differences.

**Four of the major differences** between the two: 1) formal versus informal, 2) synchronous versus asynchronous, 3) recorded versus unrecorded, and 4) privacy.



The *first difference* between spoken and written communication is that we generally use spoken communication informally while we use *written communication* **formally**. While we may certainly notice mistakes in another’s speech, we are generally not inclined to correct those mistakes as we would in written contexts. Even though most try to speak without qualifiers and verbal mistakes, there is something to be said about those utterances in our speech while engaging in an interpersonal conversation.

While *writing is generally more formal and speech more informal*, there are some exceptions to the rule, especially with the growing popularity of new technologies. For the first time in history, we are now seeing exceptions in our uses of speech and writing. Using text messaging and email, people are engaging in forms of writing using more informal rule structures, making their writing

“sound” more like conversation. Likewise, this style of writing often attempts to incorporate the use of “non-verbal” communication (known as emoticons) to accent the writing.

The *second difference* between spoken and written forms of verbal communication is that spoken *communication or speech* is almost entirely *synchronous while written communication* is almost entirely *asynchronous*. **Synchronous communication** is communication that takes place in real time, such as a conversation with a friend. When we are in conversation and even in public speaking situations, immediate feedback and response from the receiver is the rule.

In contrast, **asynchronous communication** is communication that is not immediate and occurs over longer periods, such as letters, email, or even text messages at times. When someone writes a book, letter, email, or text, there is no expectation from the sender that the receiver will provide an immediate response. Instead, the expectation is that the receiver will receive the message, and respond to it when they have time.

This is one of the reasons people sometimes choose to send an email instead of calling another person, because it allows the receiver to respond when they have time rather than “putting them on the spot” to respond right away.

The *third difference* between spoken and written communication is that *written communication is generally archived and recorded for later retrieval*, while *spoken communication is generally not recorded*. When we talk with friends, we do not tend to take notes or record our conversations. Instead, conversations tend to be ongoing and catalogued into our personal memories rather than recorded in an easily retrievable written format.

On the other hand, it is quite easy to reference written works such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and electronic sources such as web pages and emails for long periods after the sender has written them.

While most of us have become accustomed to using technologies such as texting and instant messaging in ways that are similar to our spoken conversations, we must also consider the repercussions of

using communication technologies in this fashion because they are often archived and not private. We can see examples of negative outcomes from archived messages in recent years through many highly publicized sexting scandals.

As you can see, there are a number of differences between spoken and written forms of verbal communication. Both forms are **rule-governed** as our definition points out, but the rules are often different for the use of these two types of verbal communication. However, it is apparent that as new technologies provide more ways for us to communicate, many of our traditional rules for using both speech and writing will continue to blur as we try to determine the “most appropriate” uses of these new communication technologies.

Our existence is tied to the communication we use, and verbal communication serves many functions in our daily lives. We use verbal communication *to define reality, organize, think, and shape attitudes.*

**Verbal communication helps us define reality.** *We use verbal communication to define everything from ideas, emotions, experiences, thoughts, objects, and people.* Verbal communication is how we label and define what we experience in our lives. We make choices about what to focus on and how to define what we experience and its impact on how we understand and live in our world.

**Verbal communication helps us organize complex ideas and experiences into meaningful categories.** Consider the number of things you experience with your five primary senses every day. It is impossible to comprehend everything we encounter. *We use verbal communication to organize seemingly random events into understandable categories to make sense of our experiences.* We highlight certain qualities, traits, or scripts to organize outwardly haphazard events into meaningful categories to establish meaning for our world.

**Verbal communication helps us think.** Without verbal communication, we would not function as thinking beings. The ability most often used to distinguish humans from other animals is

our ability to reason and communicate. *With language, we are able to reflect on the past, consider the present, and ponder the future. We develop our memories using language.*

People rely on language even when doing simple things like distinguishing patches of color, counting dots on a screen or orienting in a small room. Limiting people's ability to access their language faculties fluently – by giving them a competing demanding verbal task such as repeating a news report, for instance – impairs their ability to perform these tasks. This may be why it is difficult for some people to multitask – especially when one task involves speaking and the other involves thinking.

**Verbal communication helps us shape our attitudes about our world.** *The way you use language shapes your attitude about the world around you.* Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf developed the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to explain that language determines thought. People who speak different languages, or use language differently, think differently. The argument suggests that if a native English speaker had the exact same experiences in their life, but grew up speaking Chinese instead of English, their worldview would be different because of the different symbols used to make sense of the world.

Therefore, the more sophisticated your repertoire of symbols is, the more sophisticated your worldview can be for you. While the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is highly respected, there have been many scholarly and philosophical challenges to the viewpoint that language is what shapes our worldview.

When it comes to the actual use of verbal communication – accounting for the infinite possibilities of *symbols, rules, contexts, and meanings* – studying how humans use verbal communication is daunting. When you consider the complexities of verbal communication, it is a wonder we can communicate effectively at all. Nevertheless, verbal communication is not the only channel humans use to communicate.

## **Summary**

- Language helps us express observations (reports on sensory information), thoughts (conclusions and judgments based on observations or ideas), feelings, and needs.
- Language is powerful in that it expresses our identities through labels used by and on us, affects our credibility based on how we support our ideas, serves as a means of control, and performs actions when spoken by certain people in certain contexts.
- The productivity and limitlessness of language creates the possibility for countless word games and humorous uses of language.
- Language is relational and can be used to bring people together through a shared reality but can separate people through unsupportive and divisive messages.
- The triangle of meaning is a model of communication that indicates the relationship among a thought, symbol, and referent, and highlights the indirect relationship between the symbol and the referent. The model explains how for any given symbol there can be many different referents, which can lead to misunderstanding.
- Denotation refers to the agreed on or dictionary definition of a word. Connotation refers to definitions that are based on emotion- or experience-based associations people have with a word.

## **Questions for practical classes:**

1. What is language?
2. Functions does the language fulfill?
3. Define and describe the “symbol”.
4. What are the differences and similarities between verbal and non-verbal communication?
5. Enlarge on the rules of the verbal communication.
6. Distinguish spoken and written communication.
7. What are the functions of the verbal communication?

## **Recommended resources:**

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## Lecture 7

### NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION



When we think about communication, we most often focus on how we exchange information using words. While verbal communication is important, humans relied on non-verbal communication for thousands of years before we developed the capability to communicate with words. **Non-verbal communication** *is a process of generating meaning using behavior other than words.*

Rather than thinking of non-verbal communication as the opposite of or as separate from verbal communication, it's more accurate to view them as operating side by side – as part of the same system. Yet, as part of the same system, they still have important differences, including how the brain processes them. For instance, non-verbal communication is typically governed by the right side of the brain and verbal, the left.

The content and composition of verbal and non-verbal communication also differ. In terms of content, non-verbal communication tends to do the work of communicating emotions more than verbal. In terms of composition, although there are rules of grammar that structure our verbal communication, no such official guides govern our use of non-verbal signals. There are no dictionaries and thesauruses of non-verbal communication like there are with verbal symbols. Finally, whereas we humans are unique in our capacity to abstract and transcend space and time using verbal

symbols, we are not the only creatures that engage in non-verbal communication.

A channel is the sensory route on which a message travels. Oral communication only relies on one channel, because spoken language is transmitted through sound and picked up by our ears. Non-verbal communication, on the other hand, can be taken in by all *five senses*, since most of our communication relies on *visual and auditory channels*. However, we can also receive messages and generate meaning through *touch, taste, and smell*.



Verbal and non-verbal communication include both *vocal* and *non-vocal* elements, shows the relationship among vocal, non-vocal, verbal, and non-verbal aspects of communication. A vocal element of verbal communication is spoken words. A vocal element of non-verbal communication is **paralanguage**, which is the *vocalized but not verbal part of a spoken message, such as speaking rate, volume, and pitch*.

Non-vocal elements of verbal communication include the use of unspoken symbols to convey meaning. Writing and Sign Language are non-vocal examples of verbal communication and are not considered non-verbal communication. Non-vocal elements of non-verbal communication include *body language such as gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact*.

### **Principles of non-verbal communication**

Non-verbal communication has a distinct history and serves separate evolutionary functions from verbal communication. For



example, non-verbal communication is primarily *biologically based* while verbal communication is primarily *culturally based*. This is evidenced by the fact that some elements of non-verbal communication have the same meaning across cultures while no verbal communication systems share that same universal recognizability.

Non-verbal communication also evolved earlier than verbal communication and served an early and important survival function that helped humans later develop verbal communication. While some of our non-verbal communication abilities, like our sense of smell, lost strength as our verbal capacities increased, other abilities like paralanguage and movement have grown alongside verbal complexity. The fact that non-verbal communication is processed by an older part of our brain makes it *more instinctual and involuntary* than verbal communication.

### **Non-verbal communication conveys important interpersonal and emotional messages**

More meaning is generated from non-verbal communication than from verbal. Some studies have claimed that 90 percent of our meaning is derived from non-verbal signals, but more recent and reliable findings claim that it is closer to *65 percent*. We may rely more on non-verbal signals in situations where verbal and non-verbal messages conflict and in situations where emotional or relational communication is taking place. Conversely, in some situations, verbal communication might carry more meaning than non-verbal. In interactions where information exchange is the focus, at a briefing at work, for example, verbal communication likely accounts for much more of the meaning generated. Despite this exception, a key principle of non-verbal communication is that it often takes on more meaning in interpersonal and/or emotional exchanges.

### **Non-verbal communication is more involuntary than verbal**

There are some instances when we verbally communicate involuntarily. These types of exclamations are often verbal responses to a surprising stimulus. For example, we say “owww!” when we stub our toe or scream “stop!” when we see someone heading toward

danger. Involuntary non-verbal signals are much more common, and although most non-verbal communication is not completely involuntary, it is more below our consciousness than verbal communication and therefore more difficult to control.

The involuntary nature of non-verbal communication makes it more difficult to control or “fake”. Non-verbal communication leaks out in ways that expose our underlying thoughts or feelings. Poker players, therapists, police officers, doctors, teachers, and actors are also in professions that often require them to have more awareness of and control over their non-verbal communication.

While we can consciously decide to stop sending verbal messages, our non-verbal communication always has the potential of generating meaning for another person. In this sense, non-verbal communication is “irrepressible”.

### **Non-verbal communication is more ambiguous**

We learned that the symbolic and abstract nature of language can lead to misunderstandings, but non-verbal communication is even more ambiguous. As with verbal communication, most of our non-verbal signals can be linked to multiple meanings, but unlike words, many non-verbal signals do not have any one specific meaning.

Just as we look at context clues in a sentence or paragraph to derive meaning from a particular word, we can look for context clues in various sources of information like the physical environment, other non-verbal signals, or verbal communication to make sense of a particular non-verbal cue. Unlike verbal communication, however, non-verbal communication does not have explicit rules of grammar that bring structure, order, and agreed-on patterns of usage. Instead, we implicitly learn norms of non-verbal communication, which leads to greater variance. In general, we exhibit more idiosyncrasies in our usage of non-verbal communication than we do with verbal communication, which also increases the ambiguity of non-verbal communication.

### **Non-verbal communication is more credible**

Although we can rely on verbal communication to fill in the blanks sometimes left by non-verbal expressions, we often put more

trust into what people do over what they say. This is especially true in times of stress or danger when our behaviors become more instinctual and we rely on older systems of thinking and acting that evolved before our ability to speak and write. In short, the involuntary or subconscious nature of non-verbal communication makes it less easy to fake, which makes it seem more honest and credible.

### **Functions of non-verbal communication**

A primary function of non-verbal communication is to convey meaning by reinforcing, substituting for, or contradicting verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is also used to influence others and regulate conversational flow. Perhaps even more important are the ways in which non-verbal communication functions as a central part of relational communication and identity expression.

### **Non-verbal communication conveys meaning**

Non-verbal communication conveys meaning by reinforcing, substituting for, or contradicting verbal communication. Verbal and non-verbal communication are two parts of the same system that often work side by side, helping us generate meaning. In terms of reinforcing verbal communication, gestures can help describe a space or shape that another person is unfamiliar with in ways that words alone cannot. Gestures also reinforce basic meaning – for example, pointing to the door when you tell someone to leave. Facial expressions reinforce the emotional states we convey through verbal communication. For example, smiling while telling a funny story better conveys your emotions. Vocal variation can help us emphasize a particular part of a message, which helps reinforce a word or sentence’s meaning. For example, saying, “How was *your* weekend?” conveys a different meaning than “How was your *weekend?*”

Non-verbal communication can substitute for verbal communication in a variety of ways. Non-verbal communication can convey much meaning when verbal communication is not effective because of language barriers. Language barriers are present when a

person has not yet learned to speak or loses the ability to speak. For example, babies who have not yet developed language skills make facial expressions, at a few months old, that are similar to those of adults and therefore can generate meaning. People who have developed language skills but cannot use them because they have lost them temporarily or permanently, or because they are using incompatible language codes, like in some cross-cultural encounters, can still communicate non-verbally.

Non-verbal communication is also useful in a quiet situation where verbal communication would be disturbing. Crowded or loud places can also impede verbal communication and lead people to rely more on non-verbal messages. Finally, there are just times when we know it is better not to say something aloud. If you want to point out a person's unusual outfit or signal to a friend that you think his or her date is a loser, you are probably more likely to do that non-verbally.

Final point, non-verbal communication can convey meaning by contradicting verbal communication. As we learned earlier, we often perceive non-verbal communication to be more credible than verbal communication. This is especially true when we receive **mixed messages**, or messages *in which verbal and non-verbal signals contradict each other*. Mixed messages lead to uncertainty and confusion on the part of receivers, which leads us to look for more information to try to determine which message is more credible. If we are unable to resolve the discrepancy, we are likely to react negatively and potentially withdraw from the interaction. Persistent mixed messages can lead to relational distress and hurt a person's credibility in professional settings.

### **Non-verbal communication influences others**

Non-verbal communication can be used to influence people in a variety of ways, but the most common way is through deception. Deception is typically thought of as the intentional act of altering information to influence another person, which means that it extends beyond lying to include concealing, omitting, or exaggerating information. While verbal communication is to blame for the content

of the deception, non-verbal communication partners with the language through deceptive acts to be more convincing.

Since most of us intuitively believe that non-verbal communication is more credible than verbal communication, we often intentionally try to control our non-verbal communication when we are engaging in deception. Likewise, we try to evaluate other people's non-verbal communication to determine the veracity of their messages. Deception obviously has negative connotations, but people engage in deception for many reasons, including excusing our own mistakes, to be polite to others, or to influence others' behaviors or perceptions.

Aside from deception, we can use non-verbal communication to "take the edge off" a critical or unpleasant message in an attempt to influence the reaction of the other person. We can also use eye contact and proximity to get someone to move or leave an area. Non-verbal cues such as length of conversational turn, volume, posture, touch, eye contact, and choices of clothing and accessories can become part of a player's social game strategy.

### **Non-verbal communication regulates conversational flow**

Conversational interaction has been likened to a dance, where each person has to make moves and take turns without stepping on the other's toes. Non-verbal communication helps us regulate our conversations so we do not end up constantly interrupting each other or waiting in awkward silences between speaker turns. Pitch, which is a part of vocalics, helps us cue others into our conversational intentions. We also signal our turn of coming to an end by stopping hand gestures and shifting our eye contact to the person who we think will speak next. Conversely, we can "hold the floor" with non-verbal signals even when we are not exactly sure what we are going to say next. Repeating a hand gesture or using one or more verbal fillers can extend our turn even though we are not verbally communicating at the moment.

### **Non-verbal communication affects relationships**

To relate to other people successfully, we must possess some skill at encoding and decoding non-verbal communication. The non-

verbal messages we send and receive influence our relationships in positive and negative ways and can work to bring people together or push them apart. Non-verbal communication in the form of tie signs, immediacy behaviors, and expressions of emotion are just three of many examples that illustrate how non-verbal communication affects our relationships.

Tie signs are non-verbal cues that communicate intimacy and signal the connection between two people. These relational indicators can be objects such as wedding rings or tattoos that are symbolic of another person or the relationship, actions such as sharing the same drinking glass, or touch behaviors such as hand- holding. Touch behaviors are the most frequently studied tie signs and can communicate much about a relationship based on the area being touched, the length of time, and the intensity of the touch. Kisses and hugs, for example, are considered tie signs, but a kiss on the cheek is different from a kiss on the mouth and a full embrace is different from a half embrace. If you consider yourself a “people watcher,” take note of the various tie signs you see people use and what they might say about the relationship.

Immediacy behaviors play a central role in bringing people together and have been identified by some scholars as the most important function of non-verbal communication. Immediacy behaviors are verbal and non-verbal behaviors that lessen real or perceived physical and psychological distance between communicators and include things like smiling, nodding, making eye contact, and occasionally engaging in social, polite, or professional touch. Immediacy behaviors are a good way of creating rapport, or a friendly and positive connection between people. These skills are important to help initiate and maintain relationships.

While verbal communication is our primary tool for solving problems and providing detailed instructions, non-verbal communication is our primary tool for communicating emotions. Touch and facial expressions are two primary ways we express emotions non-verbally. Given many people’s limited emotional

vocabulary, non-verbal expressions of emotion are central to our relationships.

### **Non-verbal communication expresses our identities**

Non-verbal communication expresses who we are. Our identities (the groups to which we belong, our cultures, our hobbies and interests, etc.) are conveyed non-verbally through the way we set up our living and working spaces, the clothes we wear, the way we carry ourselves, and the accents and tones of our voices. Our physical bodies give others impressions about who we are, and some of these features are more under our control than others. Height, for example, has been shown to influence how people are treated and perceived in various contexts. Our level of attractiveness also influences our identities and the way other people perceive us.

Aside from our physical body, *artifacts*, which are the objects and possessions that surround us, also communicate our identities. Examples of **artifacts** include our clothes, jewelry, and space decorations. We can also use non-verbal communication to express identity characteristics that do not match up with who we actually think we are. Through changes to non-verbal signals, a capable person can try to appear helpless, a guilty person can try to appear innocent, or an uninformed person can try to appear credible.

### **Types of non-verbal communication**

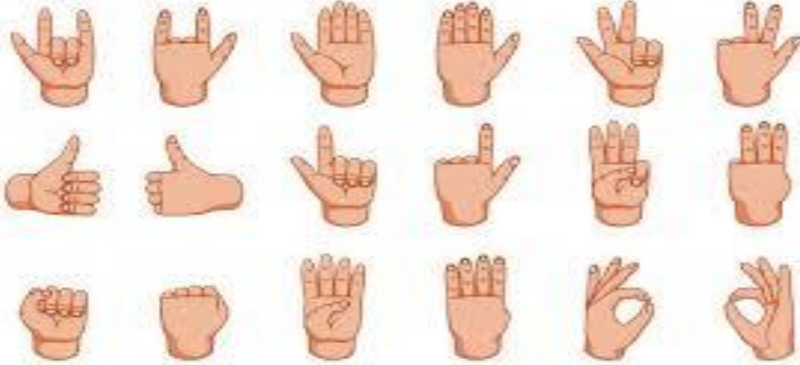
Just as verbal language is broken up into various categories, there are also different types of non-verbal communication. Non-verbal often work in concert with each other, combining to repeat, modify, or contradict the verbal message being sent.

#### **Kinesics**



The word *kinesics* comes from the root word *kinesis*, which means “movement”, and refers to the study of hand, arm, body, and face movements. Specifically, this section will outline the use of gestures, head movements and posture, eye contact, and facial expressions as non-verbal communication.

## Gestures



There are three main types of gestures: *adaptors*, *emblems*, and *illustrators*. **Adaptors** are touching behaviors and movements that indicate internal states typically related to arousal or anxiety. Adaptors can be targeted toward the self, objects, or others. In regular social situations, adaptors result from uneasiness, anxiety, or a general sense that we are not in control of our surroundings.

Common self-touching behaviors like scratching, twirling hair, or fidgeting with fingers or hands are considered self-adaptors. Some self-adaptors manifest internally, as coughs or throat-clearing sounds. Use of object adaptors can also signal boredom as people play with the straw in their drink or peel the label off a bottle of beer. Smartphones have become common object adaptors, as people can fiddle with their phones to help ease anxiety.

**Emblems** are gestures that have a specific agreed-on meaning. These are still different from the signs used by hearing-impaired people or others who communicate using Sign Language. Even though they have a generally agreed-on meaning, they are not part of a formal sign system that is explicitly taught to a group of people. A



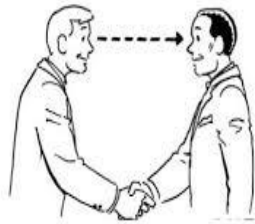
hitchhiker's raised thumb, the "OK" sign with thumb and index finger connected in a circle with the other three fingers sticking up, and the raised middle finger are all examples of emblems that have an agreed-on meaning or meanings with a culture.

**Illustrators** are the most common type of gesture and are used to illustrate the verbal message they accompany. Unlike emblems, illustrators do not typically have meaning on their own and are used more subconsciously than emblems. These largely involuntary and seemingly natural gestures flow from us as we speak but vary in terms of intensity and frequency based on context. Although we are never explicitly taught how to use illustrative gestures, we do it automatically.

### **Head Movements and Posture**

Head movements and posture group together because they are often used to acknowledge others, as well as to communicate interest or attentiveness.

### **Eye Contact**



While eye behaviors are often studied under the category of kinesics, they have their own branch of non-verbal studies called oculusics, which comes from the Latin word "oculus", meaning "eye". The face and eyes are the main point of focus during communication, and along

with our ears, our eyes take in most of the communicative information around us. The saying "The eyes are the window to the soul" is actually accurate in terms of where people typically think others are "located," which is right behind the eyes. Certain eye behaviors have become tied to personality traits or emotional states, as illustrated in phrases like "hungry eyes", "evil eyes", and "bedroom eyes".

Eye contact serves several communicative functions ranging from regulating interaction to monitoring interaction, to conveying

information, to establishing interpersonal connections. In terms of regulating communication, we use eye contact to signal to others that we are ready to speak or we use it to cue others to speak.

- Regulate interaction and provide turn-taking signals
- Monitor communication by receiving non-verbal communication from others
  - Signal cognitive activity (we look away when processing information)
  - Express engagement (we show people we are listening with our eyes)
  - Convey intimidation
  - Express flirtation
  - Establish rapport or connection

### **Facial Expressions**



Our faces are the most expressive part of our bodies. Much research has supported the universality of a core group of facial expressions: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and disgust. The first four are especially identifiable across cultures. However, the triggers for these expressions and the cultural and social norms that influence their displays are still culturally diverse.

Smiles are powerful communicative signals and, as you will recall, are a key immediacy behavior. Although facial expressions are typically viewed as innate and several are universally

recognizable, they are not always connected to an emotional or internal biological stimulus; they can actually serve a more social purpose.

Facial expressions are communicating an emotion, mood, or personality trait that you think your audience will view favorably, and that will help you achieve your speech goals. Also, make sure your facial expressions match the content of your speech. When delivering something light-hearted or humorous, a smile, bright eyes, and slightly raised eyebrows will non-verbally enhance your verbal message. When delivering something serious or somber, a furrowed brow, a tighter mouth, and even a slight head nod can enhance that message. If your facial expressions and speech content are not consistent, your audience could become confused by the mixed messages, which could lead them to question your honesty and credibility.

### **Haptics**



**Haptics** refers to the study of communication by touch. We probably get more explicit advice and instruction on how to use touch than any other form of non-verbal communication. A lack of non-verbal communication competence related to touch could have negative interpersonal

consequences. A lack of competence could have more dire negative consequences, including legal punishment, if we touch someone inappropriately (intentionally or unintentionally). Touch is necessary for human social development, and it can be welcoming, threatening, or persuasive.

There are several types of touch, including *functional-professional*, *social-polite*, *friendship-warmth*, *love-intimacy*, and *sexual-arousal touch*.

## Vocalics

As far as paralinguage refers to the vocalized but non-verbal parts of a message. Vocalics is the study of paralinguage, which includes the vocal qualities that go along with verbal messages, such as *pitch, volume, rate, vocal quality, and verbal fillers*.

**Pitch** *helps convey meaning, regulate conversational flow, and communicate the intensity of a message.* Even babies recognize a sentence with a higher pitched ending as a question. We also learn that greetings have a rising emphasis and farewells have falling emphasis. Of course, no one ever tells us these things explicitly; we learn them through observation and practice. We do not notice some more subtle and/or complex patterns of paralinguage involving pitch until we are older.

Paralinguage provides important context for the verbal content of speech. For example, **volume** *helps communicate intensity.* A louder voice is thought of as more intense, although a soft voice combined with a certain tone and facial expression can be just as intense. We typically adjust our volume based on our setting, the distance between people, and the relationship. In our age of computer-mediated communication, TYPING IN ALL CAPS is seen as offensive, as it is equated with yelling. A voice at a low volume or a whisper can be very appropriate when sending a covert message or flirting with a romantic partner, but it would not enhance a person's credibility if used during a professional presentation.

**Speaking rate** *refers to how fast or slow a person speaks and can lead others to form impressions about our emotional state, credibility, and intelligence.* As with volume, variations in speaking rate can interfere with the ability of others to receive and understand verbal messages.

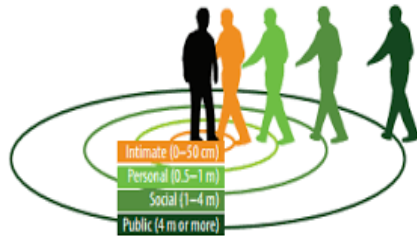
Our tone of voice can be controlled somewhat with pitch, volume, and emphasis, but each voice has a distinct quality known as a **vocal signature**. Voices vary in terms of resonance, pitch, and tone, and some voices are more pleasing than others are. People typically find pleasing voices that employ vocal variety and are not monotone, are lower pitched (particularly for males), and do not exhibit particular

regional accents. Many people perceive nasal voices negatively and assign negative personality characteristics to them.

**Verbal fillers** are sounds that fill gaps in our speech as we think about what to say next. They are considered a part of non-verbal communication because they are not like typical words that stand in for a specific meaning or meanings. Verbal fillers such as “um,” “uh,” “like,” and “ah” are common in regular conversation and are not typically disruptive. The use of verbal fillers can help a person “keep the floor” during a conversation if they need to pause for a moment to think before continuing with verbal communication. Verbal fillers in more formal settings, like a public speech, can hurt a speaker’s credibility.

### Proxemics

*Proxemics refers to the study of how space and distance influence communication.* We only need look at the ways in which space shows up in common metaphors to see that space, communication, and relationships are closely related.



To understand how proxemics functions in non-verbal communication, the proxemic distances associated with personal space and the concept of territoriality should be considered.

### Proxemic Distances

We all have varying definitions of what our “personal space” is, and these definitions are contextual and depend on the situation and the relationship. Although our bubbles are invisible, people are socialized into the norms of personal space within their cultural group. Scholars have identified four zones, which are *public, social, personal, and intimate distance*.

**Territoriality** is an innate drive to take up and defend spaces. Many creatures and entities, ranging from packs of animals to individual humans to nations, share this drive. Sometimes our claim to a space is official. These spaces are known as our primary

territories because they are marked or understood to be exclusively ours and under our control. A person's house, yard, room, desk, side of the bed, or shelf in the medicine cabinet could be considered primary territories.

Secondary territories don't belong to us and aren't exclusively under our control, but they are associated with us, which may lead us to assume that the space will be open and available to us when we need it without us taking any further steps to reserve it. This happens in classrooms regularly. Students often sit in the same desk or at least same general area as they did on the first day of class. Public territories are open to all people.

### **Chronemics**



*Chronemics refers to the study of how time affects communication. Time can be classified into several different categories, including biological, personal, physical, and cultural time.*

**Biological time** refers to the rhythms of living things. Humans follow a circadian

rhythm, meaning that we are on a daily cycle that influences when we eat, sleep, and wake. When our natural rhythms are disturbed, by all-nighters, jet lag, or other scheduling abnormalities, our physical and mental health and our communication competence and personal relationships can suffer.

**Personal time** refers to the ways in which individuals experience time. The way we experience time varies based on our mood, our interest level, and other factors. Think about how quickly time passes when you are interested in and therefore engaged in something. I have taught fifty-minute classes that seemed to drag on forever and three-hour classes that zipped by. Individuals also vary based on whether or not they are future or past oriented. People with past-time orientations may want to reminisce about the past, reunite with old

friends, and put considerable time into preserving memories and keepsakes in scrapbooks and photo albums. People with future-time orientations may spend the same amount of time making career and personal plans, writing out to-do lists, or researching future vacations, potential retirement spots, or what book they're going to read next.

**Physical time** *refers to the fixed cycles of days, years, and seasons.* Physical time, especially seasons, can affect our mood and psychological states. Some people experience seasonal affective disorder that leads them to experience emotional distress and anxiety during the changes of seasons, primarily from warm and bright to dark and cold (summer to fall and winter).

**Cultural time** *refers to how a large group of people views time.* **Polychronic** *people do not view time as a linear progression that needs to be divided into small units and scheduled in advance.* Polychronic people keep schedules that are more flexible and may engage in several activities at once. **Monochronic** *people tend to schedule their time more rigidly and do one thing at a time.* A polychronic or monochronic orientation to time influences our social realities and how we interact with others.

### **Personal presentation and environment**

Personal presentation involves two components: our physical characteristics and the artifacts with which we adorn and surround ourselves. Physical characteristics include body shape, height, weight, attractiveness, and other physical features of our bodies. We do not have as much control over how these non-verbal cues are encoded as we do with many other aspects of non-verbal communication.

### **Summary**

- Non-verbal communication is a process of generating meaning using behavior other than words.
- Non-verbal communication includes vocal elements, which is referred to as paralanguage and includes pitch, volume, and rate, and non-vocal elements.

- Although verbal communication and non-verbal communication work side by side as part of a larger language system, there are some important differences between the two.
- Non-verbal communication serves several functions.
- Non-verbal communication affects verbal communication in that it can complement, reinforce, substitute, or contradict verbal messages.
- Kinesics refers to body movements and posture and includes the following components: gestures, head movements and posture, eye contact, and facial expressions.
- Haptics refers to touch behaviors that convey meaning during interactions.
- Vocalics refers to the vocalized but not verbal aspects of Non-verbal communication, including our speaking rate, pitch, volume, tone of voice, and vocal quality.
- Proxemics refers to the use of space and distance within communication.
- Chronemics refers the study of how time affects communication and includes how different time cycles affect our communication.
- Personal presentation and environment refers to how the objects we associate ourselves and our surroundings with, referred to as artifacts, provide non-verbal cues that others make meaning from.

### **Questions for practical classes:**

1. Define non-verbal communication.
2. What are the principles of non-verbal communication?
3. What functions does the non-verbal communication fulfill?
4. What are the differences and similarities between verbal and non-verbal communications?
5. Enlarge on the types of non-verbal communication. Define each type and draw examples.

### **Recommended resources:**

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## Lecture 8

# CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION



The study of cross-cultural communication requires cross-cultural understanding, which is an ability to understand and value cultural differences. Language is an example of an important cultural component that is linked to cross-cultural understanding.

The intended meaning of any message differs when encoded by a person of a certain culture and decoded by someone of the other. The different meanings of symbols in different culture also vary making the interpretation difficult.

While applying cross-cultural communication, it refers to making people aware and able to adopt others' *cultures* when they communicate with them and thus have a meaningful communication.

**Culture** does include race, nationality, and ethnicity, but goes beyond those identity markers as well. The following are various aspects of our individual identity that we use to create membership with others to form a shared cultural identity: *race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, and social class*. Explaining the above identities is relevant to understanding the interplay between communication and culture.

When we talk about culture, we are referring to *belief systems, values, and behaviors that support a particular ideology or social arrangement*. Culture guides language use, appropriate forms of dress, and views of the world. The concept is broad and encompasses many areas of our lives such as the role of the family, individual, educational systems, employment, and gender.

**Race** is often difficult to talk about, not because of the inherent complexity of the term itself, but because of the role that race plays in society. Race is what we call a loaded word



because it can bring up strong emotions and connotations. Understandings of race fall into two camps: a biological versus a sociopolitical construction of what it means to belong to a particular racial group.

A biological construction of race claims that “pure” races existed and could be distinguished by such physical features as eye color and shape, skin color, and hair. Moreover, these differences could be traced back to genetic differences. This theory has been debunked by numerous scientists and been replaced with the understanding that there are greater genetic differences within racial groups, not between them. In addition, there is no scientific connection with racial identity and cultural traits or behaviors.

Related to race are three other distinct concepts: *racial prejudice, racial discrimination, and racism*. Racial prejudice refers to the practice of holding false or negative beliefs of one racial group for the purpose of making another racial group (usually one’s own) appear superior or normative. Racial discrimination is the outward manifestation of racial prejudice: it is when people act upon their negative beliefs about other races when communicating or setting policy. It is possible to be prejudiced without acting upon those beliefs and that all races can discriminate against other races.

The final concept, racism, combines racial prejudice with social power. Racism is institutional, rather than individual, meaning it occurs in large institutional contexts such as the representations of particular groups within media or the fact that racial minorities do not have equal access to educational or legal opportunities.

Racism often involves the unequal accessibility to resources and power. Two other concepts that are often confused with race are ethnicity and nationality.

**Ethnicity** refers to a person's or people's heritage and history, and involves shared cultural traditions and beliefs.

**Nationality** refers to a people's nation-state of residence or where they hold citizenship. Most often nationality is derived from the country where one was born, but on occasion people give up their citizenship by birth and migrate to a new country where they claim national identity.



Gender and sexual orientation are two additional ways to think about culture.

**Gender** is part of culture in that every society has particular gender roles and expectations for males and females.

**Sexual orientation** refers to a person's preference for sexual or romantic relationships; one may prefer a partner of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both. Sexual orientation influences one's worldview or politics because while all societies include members who identify as gay or lesbian, these members do not always receive the same social or health benefits as heterosexual couples.

Economic standing is only one variable that influences **class or socioeconomic standing**. As the label suggests, one's socioeconomic status is influenced by monetary and social factors. *Socioeconomic standing* is your understanding of the world and where you fit in; it's

composed of ideas, behaviors, attitudes, values, and language; *class* is how you think, feel, act, look, dress, talk, move, walk.

Thus, *cross-cultural communication can be defined as the interpersonal interaction between members of different groups, which differ from each other in respect of the knowledge shared by their members and in respect of their linguistic forms of symbolic behavior.*

For the proper name of the field “Cross-cultural Communication”, credit is often given to American anthropologist **Edward T. Hall**, who used it for the first time in his book *The Silent Language* in 1959. The book is sometimes called “the field's founding document”.

Prior to publishing the book, Hall was a staff member at the Foreign Service Institute, USA (1951-1955), where he, together with his colleagues, worked out what can be called the first original paradigm for cross-cultural communication.



Due to his personal experiences, Hall paid attention to the problems of cross-cultural communication, but scholarly influences brought Hall to the investigation of cross-cultural communication.

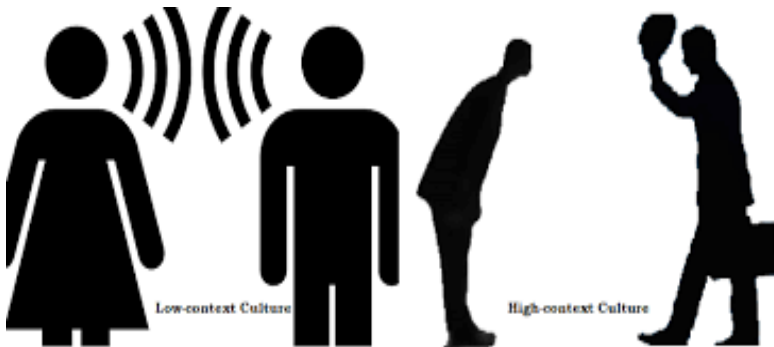
Hall’s graduate training in anthropology at Columbia University and his work as an applied anthropologist in the Foreign Service Institute brought him in contact with scholars who influenced his conceptualization of cross-cultural communication. Hall identified four major influences on his work: cultural anthropology, linguistics, ethology, the study of animal behavior, and Freudian psychoanalytic theory.

The main elements of Hall's paradigm for cross-cultural communication were:

- Systematic empirical study and the classification of Non-verbal communication (defined as communication that does not involve the exchange of words);
- Emphasis, especially in non-verbal communication, on the out-of-conscious level of information-exchange;
- Focus on cross-cultural communication, not as earlier as on macro level monocultural studies;
- A non-judgmental view toward and acceptance of cultural differences;
- Participatory training methods in cross-cultural communication.

The beginning of cross-cultural communication was for applied purposes rather than for theoretical considerations: training was the main issue. The first target audience comprised American diplomats and development personnel whose cross-cultural skills had to be improved.

### High and Low Context



Have there been times when you began a sentence and the other person knew exactly what you were going to say before you said it? This phenomenon of being on someone's wavelength is similar to what Hall describes as high context. In **high context** communication, *the meaning is in the people, or more specifically, the relationship between the people as opposed to just the words*. When we have to rely on the *translation of the words to decipher a person's meaning* then this is said to be **low context** communication.

While some cultures are low or high context, in general terms, there can also be individual or contextual differences within cultures. The USA, for example, is considered a low context culture. Countries such as Germany and Sweden are also low context while Japan and China are high context.

Other variations in communication can be described using Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey's four **communication styles**.

This first style has to do with the **explicitness** of one's talk, or how much of their thoughts are communicated directly through words and how much is hinted at. Direct speech is very explicit while indirect speech is more obscure.

The **elaborate** style uses more words, phrases, or metaphors to express an idea than the other two styles. It may be described as descriptive, poetic or too wordy depending on your view.

The third communication style is **contextual**. The contextual style is one where there are structural linguistic devices used to mark the relationship between the speaker and the listener.

The final style, **instrumental/affective**, refers to who holds the responsibility for effectively conveying a message: the speaker or the audience. The instrumental style is goal- or sender-orientated, meaning it is the burden of the speaker to make themselves understood. The affective style is more receiver-orientated thus, places more responsibility on the listener. Here, the listener should pay attention to verbal, Non-verbal, and relationship clues in an attempt to understand the message.

### **Cultural perceptions**



There are common conceptualizations of attributes that define *collectivistic and individualistic cultures*. Operationalizing the perceptions of cultural identities works under the guise that cultures are static and homogeneous, when in fact cultures within nations are multi-ethnic and individuals show high variation in how cultural differences are internalized and expressed.

When a person or culture has a **collectivistic** orientation, they *place the needs and interests of the group above individual desires or motivations*. In contrast, *the self or one's own personal goals motivate those cultures with individualistic orientations*. Thus, each person is viewed as responsible for his or her own success or failure in life.

From years of research, Geert Hofstede organized 52 countries in terms of their orientation to individualism. When looking at Hofstede's and others research on individualism and collectivism, it is important to remember is that no culture is purely one or the other. Individuals and co-cultures may exhibit differences in individualism/collectivism from the dominant culture and certain contexts may highlight one or the other. Moreover, it can be very difficult to change one's orientation and interaction with those with different value orientations can prove challenging.

**Cross-cultural communication skills** are those required to communicate, or share information, with people from other cultures and social groups. While language skills may be an important part of cross-cultural communication, they are by no means the only requirement. Cross-cultural communication also requires an understanding that different cultures have different customs, standards, social mores, and even thought patterns. Finally, good cross-cultural communication skills requires a willingness to accept differences these and adapt to them.

A desire for cross-cultural communication starts from the point of view that communication is better if it is constructive, and does not suffer from misunderstandings and breakdowns. Cross-cultural communication requires both knowledge and skills. It also requires understanding and empathy.



Effective cross-cultural communication is a vital skill for anyone working across countries or continents, including those working for multinational companies in their either home country or abroad (expatriates).

### **Globalization**

Globalization plays a central role in theorizing for mass communication, media, and cultural communication studies. Cross-cultural communication scholars emphasize that globalization emerged from the increasing diversity of cultures throughout the world and thrives with the removal of cultural barriers. The notion of nationality, or the construction of national space, is understood to emerge dialectically through communication and globalization.

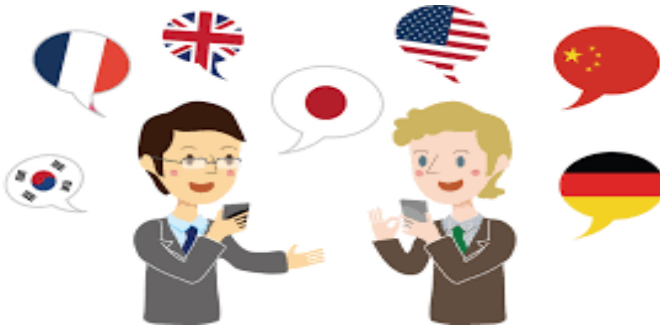
It is also crucial for anyone working with people from other cultures to avoid misunderstandings and even offence. Those studying languages often encounter issues of cross-cultural communication.

The problems in cross-cultural communication usually come from problems in message transmission and in reception. In communication between people of the same culture, the person who receives the message interprets it based on values, beliefs, and expectations for behavior similar to those of the person who sent the message. When this happens, the way the message is interpreted by the receiver is likely to be fairly similar to what the speaker intended. However, when the receiver of the message is a person from a different culture, the receiver uses information from his or her culture to interpret the message. The message that the receiver interprets may be very different from what the speaker intended.

Non-verbal communication has been shown to account for between 65% and 93% of interpreted communication. Minor variations in body language, speech rhythms, and punctuality often cause mistrust and misperception of the situation among cross-cultural parties. This is where Non-verbal communication can cause problems with cross-cultural communication. Misunderstandings with Non-verbal communication can lead to miscommunication and insults with cultural differences. For example, a handshake in one

culture may be recognized as appropriate, whereas another culture may recognize it as rude or inappropriate.

**Cross-cultural business communication** is very helpful in building cultural intelligence through coaching and training in cross-cultural communication management and facilitation, cross-cultural negotiation, multicultural conflict resolution, customer service, business and organizational communication. Cross-cultural understanding is not just for incoming expats. Cross-cultural understanding begins with those responsible for the project and reaches those delivering the service or content. The ability to communicate, negotiate and effectively work with people from other cultures is vital to international business.



Effective communication depends on the informal understandings among the parties involved that are based on the trust developed between them. When trust exists, there is implicit understanding within communication, cultural differences may be overlooked, and problems can be dealt with more easily. The meaning of trust and how it is developed and communicated vary across societies. Similarly, some cultures have a greater propensity to be trusting than others.

When doing business or travel abroad, it is advisable to know the main rules of **international etiquette**. The culture and tradition of each country make people behave differently, and if the business executive does not know how to adapt to that behavior, it can provoke a rejection from the other party, which makes it more difficult or even endangers the success of negotiations.

What might be accepted in your country could be offensive in another country, and you do not want to be that traveler who is constantly disrespecting the locals of the country you are visiting and humiliating yourself because you do not know the country's customs and traditions.

When traveling abroad, you want to make sure you eat right, tip correctly, know whether to shake hands or bow and are polite to the locals and business partners you interact with. Knowing the customs, traditions and etiquette of the country you are traveling to shows your respect to the country and its people, helps you fit in better and makes sure you seal that business deal you have worked so hard for.

To navigate in today's business world or travel to different countries around the world, you need to be able to communicate with people from all around the world. Understanding international etiquette, or the unwritten rules of behavior, has become increasingly important in this modern world. Each person has to learn to understand the key themes that differ between countries and get specific tips when travelling in some of the countries of the world.

Every country's unique culture translates into different conventions for how business should be conducted. If you should find yourself across the pond (or in any other country), understanding different customs is essential to getting your relationship started off on the right foot.

It is a good idea for international travelers to learn about a country's culture and communication norms before they arrive. Being aware of topics like cross-cultural communication can help travelers recognize the value that specific cultures place on indirect and direct communication. Preparation is particularly important for those teaching abroad or traveling for business.

Knowledge of **international business etiquette** is relevant for conducting meetings, building relationships with others and demonstrating respect for local culture.

There are some basic tips people should use on what to do and what to avoid will help you engage in successful global business and social interactions. They will help to avoid embarrassing situations

and guide you toward establishing quality relationships and friendships.

1. Show respect. The most important of the global etiquette tips is to show respect for what is important to another person and his or her culture. Although cultural conditioning has deep roots, respect is universally understood – and is an essential step in bridging the cultural gap.



2. Show you care. Be proactive and learn about what is important to the cultures you visit or interact with. This will



help you win friendships and develop business relationships.

3. Strike a balance. Find the comfortable middle ground between your culture and that which you are visiting or working with. No one expects you to be just like him or her, nor would that be congruent. Be yourself and adapt to develop rapport in a way that works for all concerned.

4. Know your geography. There is nothing more embarrassing than not knowing the exact location of the country you are visiting or the locality of its neighboring countries and surrounding areas!

5. Mind your manners. What is polite in one culture may not be considered so in another, so know your manners for the countries you visit.

6. Know how to address people. The practice of using first names, surnames, titles, university degrees, or religious designations varies from country to country, so learn what is appropriate.

7. Clearly enunciate and speak slower. Speak clearly and slightly slower – about 20 percent slower – when communicating across linguistic borders. There is no need to speak louder – multilingual speakers may be cross translating, but they are not deaf!

8. Define acronyms, slang, and jargon. Define, clarify, or eliminate any acronyms, abbreviations, slang, and jargon that other cultures may not understand or even worse —take literally.

9. Know the appropriate greetings. Greetings are as diverse as the cultures themselves. There are handshakes, kisses, hugs, and bows – and they come in all shapes and sizes.



Of course, knowledge of the characteristic features of national-cultural and ethnic relations does not exclude the need for knowledge of the basic rules, ethical norms and traditions, established as general cultural in business relations and based on the provisions of the diplomatic protocol. At the same time, it is important to be able to study partners, using, in particular, the methods of visual

psychodiagnostics, socio-analysis, etc.

Thus, the path to mutual understanding between partners representing different cultures involves the fulfillment of two conditions. On the one hand, it is necessary to get acquainted with the culture of the country, with representatives of which must be negotiated. On the other hand, when the implementation of the first condition is complicated, you have to choose a certain style of communication, in general, to predict how your partner will perceive you from another country. Besides, it is important to avoid stereotyped partner perception.

### **Summary**

- Culture does include race, nationality, and ethnicity, but goes beyond those identity markers as well. The following are various aspects of our individual identity that we use to create membership

with others to form a shared cultural identity: race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, and social class.

- For the proper name of the field “Cross-cultural Communication”, credit is often given to American anthropologist Edward T. Hall, who used it for the first time in his book *The Silent Language* in 1959.

- In high context communication, the meaning is in the people, or more specifically, the relationship between the people as opposed to just the words. When we have to rely on the translation of the words to decipher a person’s meaning then this is said to be low context communication.

- Other variations in communication can be described using Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey’s four communication styles.

- Effective cross-cultural communication is a vital skill for anyone working across countries or continents, including those working for multinational companies in their either home country or abroad (expatriates).

- International business etiquette should be observed in conducting meetings, building relationships with others and demonstrating respect for local culture.

- Knowledge of the characteristic features of national-cultural and ethnic relations does not exclude the need for knowledge of the basic rules, ethical norms and traditions, established as general cultural in business relations and based on the provisions of the diplomatic protocol.

### **Questions for practical classes:**

1. What definitions of culture can you draw?
2. What are the aspects of individual identity that form a shared cultural identity?
3. Enlarge on the history of cross-cultural communication.
4. Give the information about the founders and followers of the theory of cross-cultural communication.
5. Talk about the differences and similarities of high and low context cultures.

6. What are the four communication styles?
7. Define international business etiquette.

**Recommended resources:**

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Навчальне видання

## **ОСНОВИ ТЕОРІЇ МОВНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ**

### **Конспект лекцій**

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денної та заочної форми навчання  
(Англійською мовою)

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