



Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine  
Sumy State University  
Faculty of Foreign Philology and Social Communications

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

### **Lecture notes**

Second edition, revised and supplemented



Sumy  
Sumy State University  
2024

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**Lecture notes**

for the applicants of specialty

*035 “Philology”*

full-time and part-time study

Second edition, revised and supplemented

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the Department  
of Germanic Philology  
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## INTRODUCTION

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

The lecture notes serve the following purposes:

- to acquaint the applicants of higher education with the principles and mechanism of speech activity of members of society;
- to deepen knowledge of speech acts and the interaction of individuals in the communication process;
- to develop the skills for successful implementation of the speech communication act;
- to introduce intralingual phenomena, as well as to determine the environment of the language system;
- to determine the interaction of intra – and extralingual factors that influence the communicative process;
- to develop the interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills;

The given 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 SPEECH COMMUNICATION THEORY



**The Speech Communication Theory (Communication Theory)** *is a communicative discipline that synthesizes language studies as a complex information and semiotic system, means of communication, cognition, and nation's cultural code.*

**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 optimize communications for the benefit of all.

The etymology of the term: “*communication*” (from the Latin “*communicare*”) literally means “*to put in common*” or “*to share.*” The term originally meant sharing 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 matching 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 real world's most



important elements and their relationship dynamics.

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

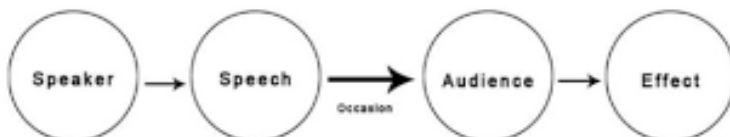
A simple communication model represents a *sender*, which transfers a *message* containing *information* to a *receiver*.

The first known scholar who wrote about communication, though not directly, is Aristotle (384-322 BC). In his famous book, “Rhetoric,” Aristotle called the study of communication “rhetoric” and elaborated on three elements within the process. According to him, the communication process comprises a speaker, a message, and a listener. At the end of the communication process, a person holds the key to whether communication occurs.

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

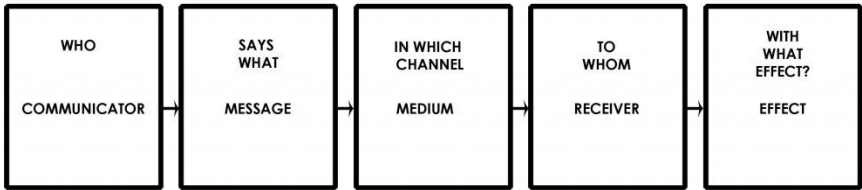
- Invention – ability to generate ideas;
- Disposition – ability to organize ideas;
- Style – use of appropriate language;
- Memory – ability to recall facts & ideas;
- Delivery – use of voice and gestures.

Later, scholars developed a communication model using the mentioned elements from his observations.



The model consists of four visible elements: *speaker* or receiver, *speech* or message, *audience* or receiver(s), and *effect* of communication. Moreover, the context or occasion of the communication covers all the elements, indicating that it influences the other four elements.

More than 126 definitions of communication have been published. 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 message’s communicator, sender, or source.
- *Says what?* – it tells about the content of the message.
- *In what channel?* – channel means the medium or media.
- *To whom?* – here is to whom the receiver of the message refers.
- *With what effect?* – the receiver’s feedback to the sender.

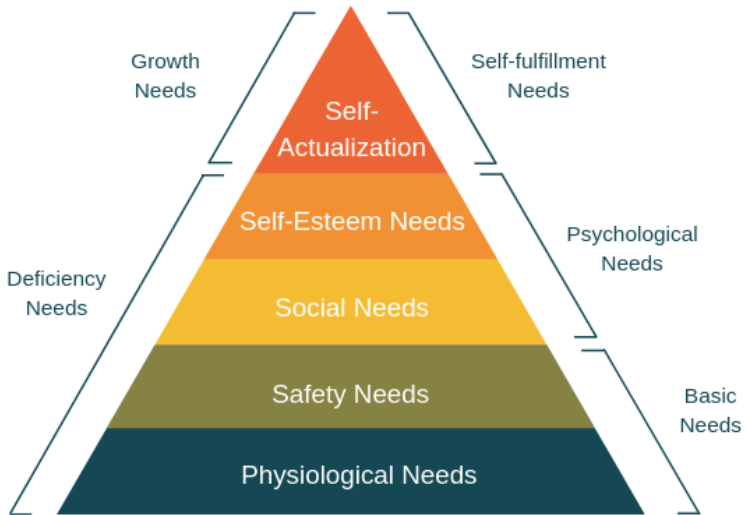
Thus, **communication** is the exchange of information between two or more parties. Communication is the process of exchanging meaning or information between individuals through a common system of symbols or codes. Communication is the process of using symbols to exchange meaning.

Other scholars stress the importance of clearly characterizing the historical, economic, and social context. Communication is 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 their needs. Human needs have been described in **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 other times, places, and situations used to control people's behavior and regulate the nature and number 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. It can also regulate the nature and number of activities humans engage in.
2. **Social Interaction** – Communication can be used to create social interaction. Humans develop and maintain bonds, intimacy, relationships, and daily living 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, likes and dislikes

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

5. **Emotional Expression** – Humans, as we are, must express ourselves verbally and in a way.

**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 occurs 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.

Self-concept 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 fun or to pass the 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 the 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 different 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 than 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 satisfy 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.

Such a 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 and 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 group members work together for an explicit purpose or goal that affects each group member. 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



for mass communication, although they have suffered much in the past decade due partly 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 different forms of communication.

Mass communication differs from other forms of communication regarding 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. Unlike interpersonal, group, and public communication, mass communication has no immediate verbal and non-verbal feedback loop.

**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 the 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, volume of voice, gestures and facial expressions, body posture, stance, 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. What definitions of communication can you draw?
2. What is a communication model?
3. What does Maslow’s hierarchy (pyramid) of needs represent? How is it connected with communication?
4. What are the functions of communication?
5. How do forms of communication differ?
6. Talk about the five forms of communication.

**Recommended resources:**

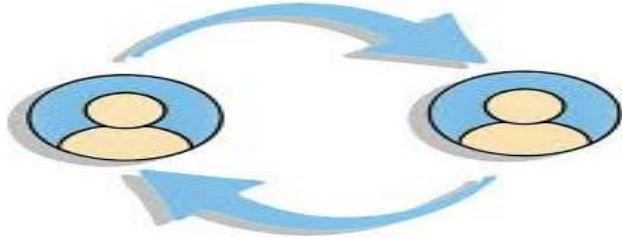
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4. Hargie, O. (2021). *Skilled Interpersonal Communication*. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 662 p.
5. Peters, J., Lee, W. E. (2023). *The Law of Public Communication*. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 576 p.
6. Sparks, G. (2022). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. McGraw-Hill Education. 578 p.
7. Turner, L., West, A. (2024). *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*. McGraw-Hill Education. 640 p.



## Lecture 2

# COMMUNICATION PROCESS



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

**Communication is a process**, and if the process breaks down, communication will fail. 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.

**The communication process is the set of sequential steps involved in transferring messages and feedback.** *Communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.* The 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. The communication process can also be defined as a process of message transmission from a sender to a receiver in an understandable way.

Different scholars have viewed the communication process differently and developed different models depending on their backgrounds and objectives. 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, but even the most complex model does not recreate what we experience during a communication encounter.

Models serve a valuable purpose because they allow us to see specific concepts and steps within the communication process, define communication, and apply communication concepts. The three communication models 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 everyone in the interaction or speech setting. It is used instead of sender and receiver because when we communicate with other people, we send and receive 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 message’s sender.

**Encoding** refers to the process of taking an idea or mental image, associating that image with words, and then speaking those words 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 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, including speaking, writing, and sign language. Non-verbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, paralanguage, and touch. We also use mediated communication channels (such as television or the computer) that may utilize 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), written (written message), or non-verbal (smile, sigh, etc.) form. Feedback is a very important component of the 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.

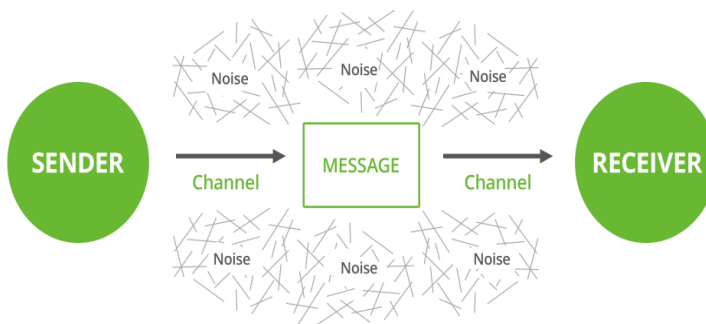
**Noise** is anything that interferes with the sending or receiving of a message. Noise is *external* (traffic outside your window or loud music from the next-door apartment) and *internal* (physical pain, psychological stress, or nervousness about an upcoming event).

External and internal noises 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 with 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 affects communication.



*The linear model describes communication as a 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, including 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, eventually leading 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 were 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.

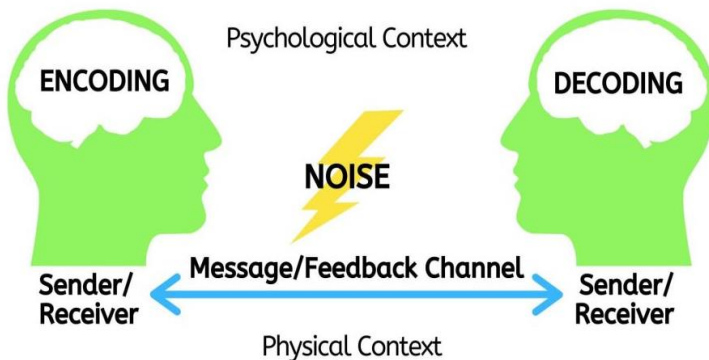
**Context** *is the layout or the situation in which the speech or interaction occurs.* In the 1980, context was taught as the actual physical setting where communication occurred, such as in a place of

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. Including a feedback loop also leads to a more complex understanding of the roles of participants in a communication encounter.



Rather than having one sender, message, and receiver, this model has two sender-receivers who exchange messages. Each participant alternates roles as sender and receiver to keep a communication encounter going. Although this seems like a perceptible and deliberate process, we quickly alternate between the roles of sender

and receiver, often without conscious thought. The interaction model is also less message-focused and more interaction-focused.

While the transmission model focuses on how a message is transmitted and whether it is received, the interaction model is more concerned with the communication process itself. In fact, this model acknowledges that so many messages are being sent at one time that many 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 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.* A space's size, layout, temperature, and lighting influence our communication. Whether it is the size of the room, the temperature, or other environmental factors, it is important to consider the physical context's role in our communication.

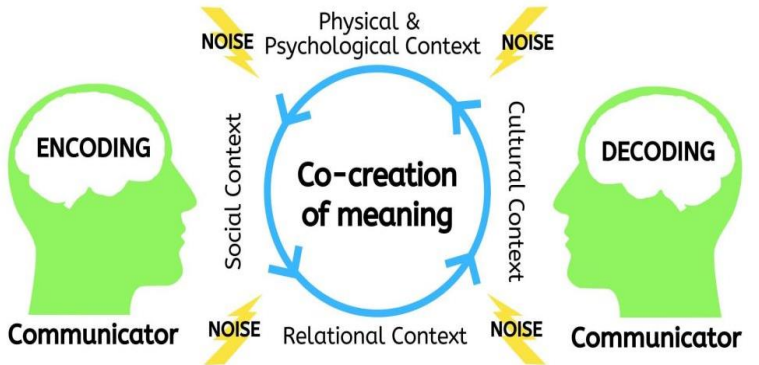
**Psychological context** *includes the mental and emotional factors in a communication encounter.* Stress, anxiety, and emotions are just some examples of psychological influences that can affect our communication. Feedback and context help make the interaction model a more useful illustration of the communication process. Still, 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 or 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 significantly from the transmission and interaction models, 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 the sender and receiver in the transaction communication model 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 can 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, 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 not lying to people, not interrupting people, not passing people in line, greeting people when they greet you, thanking 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. Still, 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 the 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, followed by a reaction (feedback), 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 understand them and create and change them.

**Semantic structure of communication process.** *Semantics is the meaning of a word, phrase, or text.* To understand the communication process better, it is necessary to understand its semantic structure. The semantic structure of the 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 the 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 in general.

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

Usually, no participant in the communication (neither the sender nor the receiver) understands and controls all five components of the semantic structure. The sender can clarify his/her motivation and knows the meaning of individual words he/she uses but can't properly define the message perceived by the receiver and the effect of the communication on him/her. The receiver, on the other hand, subjectively interprets the 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 the effect the communication has on him/her, especially at the beginning of the communication process. Sometimes, only after the effect accumulates by aggregating several messages carrying similar meanings does the receiver realize the impact communication has on him/her.

## **Summary**

- Communication models are not complex enough to capture all that occurs in a communication encounter. Still, 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 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, Lasswell's, Shannon and Weaver's, Osgood's, and Schramm's Model).

### **Recommended resources:**

1. Amaratunga, T. (2023). Understanding Large Language Models – Learning Their Underlying Concepts and Technologies. Apress. 110 p.
2. Asemah, E. S. Et al. (2022). Theories and Models of Communication. Second edition. University of Jos Press, Jos, Plateau State. 341 p.
3. Baran, S. (2024). Introduction to Mass Communication. McGraw-Hill Education. 456 p.
4. Group Communication – an Advanced Introduction. (2023). Edited by T. Reimer, E. S. Park, and J. A. Bonito. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 476 p.
5. Hargie, O. (2021). Skilled Interpersonal Communication. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 662 p.
6. Models of Communication. Theoretical and Philosophical Approaches. (2019). Edited by Mats Bergman, Kęstas Kirtiklis, and Johan Siebers. Routledge. 240 p.
7. Peters, J., Lee, W. E. (2023). The Law of Public Communication. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 576 p.
8. Sparks, G. (2022). A First Look at Communication Theory. McGraw-Hill Education. 578 p.
9. Turner, L., West, A. (2024). Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application. McGraw-Hill Education. 640 p.

## Lecture 3

# COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES



Communication is a two-way process of giving and receiving information through various 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 for performing jobs to attain predetermined objectives. Synonyms: *truth, proposition, concept, idea, theory, postulate, assumption.*

As far as forms of communication vary in terms of participants, channels (modes), and contexts, ***the communication principle*** is a concept, theory, or guideline that serves as the foundation for the behavior of participants’ communication process in certain contexts.

Whether one is speaking informally to a colleague, addressing a conference or meeting, or 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 with 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 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 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 learn from experience, until we learn specific vocabulary and develop foundational knowledge of communication concepts and theories, we do not have the tools 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 civic life 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 associate with our brain, mouth, eyes, and ears, 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. Babies cry when hungry or sick to alert their caregivers of these physical needs. There are also strong ties between communication's social function and 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, 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, meaning we spend much time communicating for instrumental needs. Some common instrumental needs include influencing others, getting the 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 communicate to influence others to accomplish goals and meet needs. **Compliance-gaining communication** aims to get *people to do something or act in a particular way.*

Compliance gaining and communicating for instrumental needs differs 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 another 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 that 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. Still, communication meets our relational needs by giving us a tool through which to develop, maintain, and end relationships. 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. Communication forms the building blocks of our

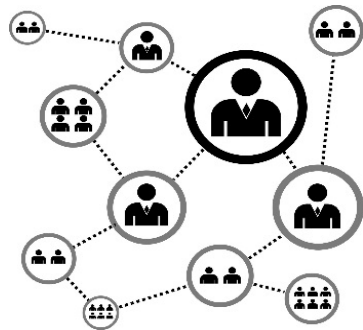
relationships from spending time together, checking in with relational partners by text, social media, or face-to-face, celebrating accomplishments, and providing support during difficult times.

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 *presenting ourselves to others and being 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. Like many companies, celebrities, and politicians create a public image, we desire to show different faces in different contexts.

The influential scholar Erving Goffman compared self-presentation to 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 follows 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 to examine it, which is not possible when communicating in real life.

However, scholars sometimes want to isolate a particular stage in the process 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 and send and receive messages simultaneously. There are also messages and other stimuli around us that we never actually perceive because we can only simultaneously attend to so much information. The dynamic nature of communication allows us to examine some communication principles 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 defined communication, stating that messages must be intended for others to perceive them. Thus, a message is counted 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.

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. More conscious thought and intention do 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 repeating 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, ultimately changing the communication encounter. Communication *is unrepeatabe*.

#### **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 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 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, more emphasis is 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 communicates, and many cultures have distinct languages consisting of symbols.

A key principle of communication is that it is symbolic. Communication is symbolic because 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 all socialize in different languages but also speak different “languages” based on our situation. For example, in some cultures, it is considered inappropriate to talk about family or health issues in public. Still, 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 many people, and some 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. A major communication barrier is our 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 interpreting or framing the first.

**Meta-communication** is thus always a qualifier to behavior rather than simply being more behavior. “*Meta*” – prefix used in terms of 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 as 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 assumes that behavior has no opposite; in other words, *one cannot cease to behave*.

Since there is no counterpart 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 contradict communication. Meta-communication is a complex concept; sometimes, what one means is

not what others interpret. Every time there is communication, meta-communication is 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. The exercise usually proves 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. Still, meta-communicative competence, seen as the ability to identify, intervene, and repair communication disruptions – also involves 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 the context of a joke, for instance. Meta-communication supposes that the communicators understand each other's code by repairing the meta-communicative cues sent 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 intended to establish social bonds rather than 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 also culturally relative. 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 other cultures. 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 a gray area. Although we talk about making decisions

regarding 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 our ethical choices 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 a 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 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 communication is integrated into different parts of our lives.
3. Describe the needs the communication meets.
4. What is 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.

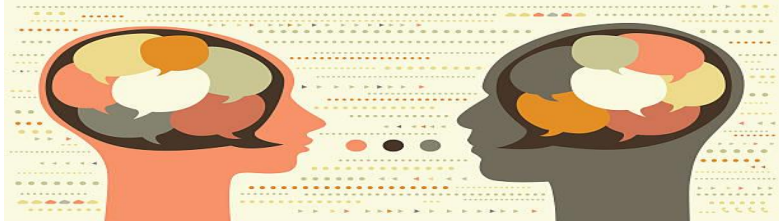
### **Recommended resources:**

1. Austin, J. T. (2021). Communication Theory: Racially Diverse and Inclusive Perspectives. Cognella Academic Publishing. 316 p.
2. Baran, S. (2024). Introduction to Mass Communication. McGraw-Hill Education. 456 p.
3. Communication Ethics: Best Practices for Ethical Communication in Business. URL: <https://medium.com/@shabbir.ehram/communication-ethics-best-practices-for-ethical-communication-in-business-84752b693730>
4. Eiberg, K. et al. (2022). The Communication Advisor – A theoretical perspective and a practical perspective. Samfundslitteratur. 460 p.

5. Group Communication – an Advanced Introduction. (2023). Edited by T. Reimer, E. S. Park, and J. A. Bonito. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 476 p.
6. Hargie, O. (2021). Skilled Interpersonal Communication. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 662 p.
7. Holtzhausen, D. et al. (2021). Principles of Strategic Communication. Routledge. 342 p.
8. Maxwell, J. C. (2023). The 16 Undeniable Laws of Communication – Apply Them and Make the Most of Your Message. Maxwell Leadership. 304 p.
9. Peters, J., Lee, W. E. (2023). The Law of Public Communication. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 576 p.
10. Turner, L., West, A. (2024). Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application. McGraw-Hill Education. 640 p.
11. Unravelling Social Discourse: Navigating the Fine Line Between Phatic Communication and Small Talk. URL: <https://www.stormsedgetherapy.co.uk/social-discourse-phatic-communication/>

## Lecture 4

# COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE



We have already defined *communication*, and to be competent at something means to know what you're doing. When we combine these terms, we get the following definition: ***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 better understand this definition, we should consider its components. *The first part* of the definition we will unpack 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 ideas 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 develop ***behavioral competence***.

*The second part* of the definition of communication 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. 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. For example, you might know strategies for being an effective speaker. Still, public speaking anxiety that kicks in when you get in front of the audience may prevent you from fully putting that knowledge into practice.

*The third part* of the definition is ***the ability to adapt to various contexts***. What is competent or not varies based on social and cultural context, making it impossible to have only one standard for communication competence. Social variables such as status and power affect competence. In a social situation where one person has more power than another (lecture–student), he typically sets the standard for competence. Cultural variables such as race and nationality also affect competence. A Ukrainian woman who speaks English as her second language may be praised for her competence in the English language in her home country but be viewed as less competent in the UK because of her accent. Thus, although we clearly define communication competence, there are no definitions for how to be competent in any given situation since competence varies at ***the individual, social, and cultural levels***.

Even though no guidelines for or definitions of competence can be applicable in all situations, many aspects of competence are 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 on 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 way to assess your speaking competencies and prepare yourself for professional speaking and listening, which is often skill-driven. Since we communicate in many different contexts, such as interpersonal, group, intercultural, and mediated, there are more specific definitions of competence in terms of contexts.

### **Developing Competence**

Knowing the dimensions of competence is an important first step toward developing competence. Everyone reading this book already has some experience with and knowledge about communication. After all, you have spent many years explicitly and implicitly learning to communicate. For example, we are explicitly taught the verbal codes we use to communicate. On the other hand, although numerous rules and norms are associated with nonverbal communication, we rarely receive explicit instructions on how to do it. Instead, we learn by observing others and through trial and error with our own nonverbal communication.

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

In regard 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 and 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. You may exhibit ***conscious incompetence*** once you learn more about communication and have a vocabulary to identify concepts. *This is where you know what you should be doing and realize that you are not doing it as well as you could*. However, as your skills increase, you may advance to ***conscious competence***, meaning you know you are communicating well. This will add to your experiences to use 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 face 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 we can advance to later stages.

One way to improve 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 we achieve our daily communication goals depends on our communication competence. Various communication



behaviors can signal that we are communicating mindfully. For example, by asking an employee to paraphrase their understanding of the instructions, you let them see that you are aware that verbal messages are not always clear, that people do not always listen actively, and that people often do not speak up when they are unsure of instructions for fear of appearing incompetent or embarrassing themselves. Some communication behaviors indicate that we are not communicating mindfully, such as withdrawing from a romantic partner or engaging in passive-aggressive behavior during a period of interpersonal conflict. Most of us know that such behaviors lead to predictable and avoidable conflict cycles. The tendency to assume that people are telling us the truth can also lead to negative results. Therefore, a certain amount of tentativeness and mindful monitoring of a person's nonverbal 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 help 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

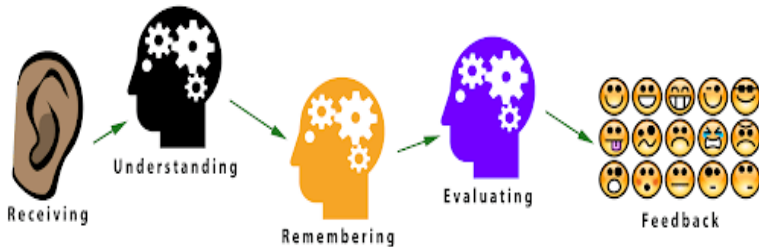
part of relational maintenance and helps us meet our relational needs. Listening to what others say about us helps us develop an accurate self-concept, which can help us more strategically communicate for identity needs to project to others our desired self. Improving our listening skills can help us be better students, better relational partners, and more successful professionals, which means being 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 engaging in 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 that 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 way. 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 engaging in 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 others, including cognitive and relational elements. We primarily take in information needed for listening through auditory and visual channels. Although we don't 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 nonverbal 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 influencing 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 interfere 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's talking, the sounds of traffic, and music, interfere with the physiological aspects of hearing. Psychological noise like stress and anger interferes 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 connect them meaningfully to previous experiences. We may begin to understand the stimuli we have received through the interpreting stage. We can attach meaning by connecting information to previous experiences when we understand something. By comparing new information with old information, we may also update or revise particular schemata if we find the latest information relevant and credible. Suppose we have difficulty interpreting information, meaning we don't have previous experience or information in our existing schemata to make sense of it. In that case, transferring the information into our long-term memory for later recall is difficult. In situations where understanding the information we receive isn't important or isn't a goal, this stage may be short or even skipped. After all, we can move

something to our long-term memory by repetition and later recall it without ever understanding it.

### **Recalling**

Our ability to recall information depends on some physiological limits of how memory works. Overall, our memories are known to be fallible. We forget 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, short-term, working, and long-term.

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 doesn’t 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 go to short-term memory, where they either expire and are forgotten or 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 an 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 simultaneously. This is different from our typical memory function in that information usually must be made into long-term memory before we can call it back up to apply to a current situation. People with good working memories can keep recent information in mind, process it, and use 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 isn't a direct correlation between being good at recalling information and being a good listener. Some people have excellent memories and recall abilities and can tell you a very accurate story from many years earlier when they should 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 indicates 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 nearly 100 percent recall when sitting in a quiet lab and asked to do so. But throw in external noise, more visual stimuli, and multiple contextual influences, and we can't 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 someone is listening.

### **Evaluating**

When we evaluate something, we judge its credibility, completeness, and worth. Regarding credibility, we try to determine the degree to which we believe a speaker's statements are correct and/or true. Regarding 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 evaluating aspects require critical thinking skills, which we aren't born with but must develop over time through our own 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 you 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 nonverbal messages that indicate attentiveness and understanding or a lack thereof. From our earlier discussion of the communication model, you may be able to connect this part of the listening process to feedback. We all know from experience that some signs indicate whether a person is paying attention and understanding a message or not.

We send verbal and nonverbal feedback while another person is talking and after they are done. *Back-channel cues are the verbal and nonverbal signals we send while someone is talking* and can consist of verbal cues like “uh-huh,” “oh,” and “right,” and/or nonverbal 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 aren’t listening. If another person is looking away, fidgeting, texting, or turning away, we will likely interpret those responses negatively. Paraphrasing is a responding behavior that shows that you understand what was communicated.

When you **paraphrase** information, you rephrase the message in your own words. For example, you might say the following to start off a paraphrased response: “What I heard you say was...” or “It seems like you’re saying...” You can also ask clarifying questions to get more information. It is often a good idea to pair paraphrasing with a question to keep a conversation flowing. For example, you might pose the following paraphrase and question

pair: “It seems like you believe you were mistreated. Is that right?” Or you might ask a standalone question like “What did your boss do that made you think he was ‘playing favorites?’” 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 for computer-mediated communication, especially since miscommunication can occur due to a lack of nonverbal 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 with good listening skills are more likely to get promoted.

Listening also has implications for our personal lives and relationships. We shouldn’t underestimate the power of listening to make someone else feel better and to open our perceptual field to new sources of information. 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 nonverbal 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 the 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.
  - 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 communication competence.
2. Name and describe the parts of the communication competence.
3. What are the tips for efficient listening and communication competencies?
4. Determine and describe the stages of competence development.
5. Define listening and the stages of the listening process.
6. Determine and describe the listening types and styles.
7. Talk about the barriers to listening.

### **Recommended resources:**

1. Communication Ethics: Best Practices for Ethical Communication in Business. URL: <https://medium.com/@shabbir.ehram/communication-ethics-best-practices-for-ethical-communication-in-business-84752b693730>
2. Communicative Competence: Model, Components & Examples. URL: <https://study.com/learn/lesson/communicative-competence-models-components-what-is-communicative-competence.html>
3. Eiberg, K. et al. (2022). The Communication Advisor – A theoretical perspective and a practical perspective. Samfundslitteratur. 460 p.
4. Group Communication – an Advanced Introduction. (2023). Edited by T. Reimer, E. S. Park, and J. A. Bonito. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 476 p.
5. Hargie, O. (2021). Skilled Interpersonal Communication. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 662 p.
6. Maxwell, J. C. (2023). The 16 Undeniable Laws of Communication – Apply Them and Make the Most of Your Message. Maxwell Leadership. 304 p.
7. Peters, J., Lee, W. E. (2023). The Law of Public Communication. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 576 p.

## Lecture 5

# COMMUNICATION CONFLICTS



Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging messages between people whose lives mutually influence one another in unique ways concerning 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.

We often engage in interpersonal communication to fulfill certain goals we may have, but sometimes, we are more successful than others. 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. If so, you may already possess high **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 know it or not, we often ask ourselves, “What can this relationship do for me?” To understand how relationships achieve strategic functions, we consider instrumental, relationship-maintenance, 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 with 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 inevitable in close relationships and can take a negative emotional toll. It takes effort to ignore someone or be passive-aggressive; 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 the 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 positively affect 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.

Managing 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 following 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. The way we view and deal with conflict is *learned and contextual*.

Much research has been 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.

We will discuss the five strategies for managing conflict: *competing, avoiding, accommodating, compromising, and collaborating.*



### Competing

The competing style indicates a high concern for self and a low concern for others. When we compete, we strive to “win” the conflict, potentially at the expense or “loss” of the other person. We may gauge our win by being granted or taking concessions from the other person. The competing style also involves using 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. They may include aggressive communication directed at rousing your partner’s emotions through insults, profanity, yelling, or 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 ripple effects can 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, creating a volatile and hostile environment.

The competing conflict management style is not the same 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 others, 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. We may decide to avoid conflict for many different reasons, some of which are better than others. If you view the conflict as unimportant 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 as temporary and choose to avoid it and hope 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 require time, emotion, or communication skills, 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 worsen the problem.*

*Indirect strategies of hinting and joking fall under the avoiding style.* While these indirect avoidance strategies may lead to a buildup of frustration or anger, they allow us to vent a little of our built-up steam and 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 lead to a cycle of passive-aggressiveness in which the other partner begins to exhibit these behaviors 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 others. It 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 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 an accommodating style is more likely to occur when there are time restraints and less likely to happen when someone does not want to appear weak. As with avoiding, certain cultural influences make accommodating a more effective strategy.

### **Compromising**

*The compromising style shows a moderate concern for self and others 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 but a partial win/lose. 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, which 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 others and usually indicates investment in the conflict situation and the relationship.* Although the collaborating style takes the most work regarding 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 is 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 the underlying needs that drive 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.

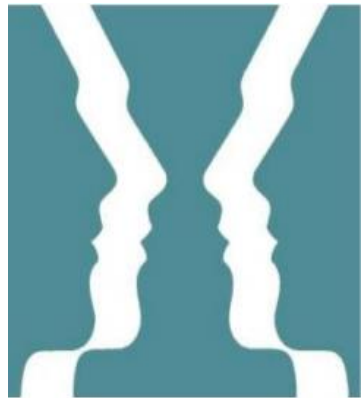
### **Culture and conflict.**

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 others, 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 protect, 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 their conflict management styles.

Self-construal alone does not have a direct effect on conflict style. Still, 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, which correspond to self-face 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, and 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 avoid or be accommodating 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 demonstrated a low concern for other-face in Japan, but this was not so in China, which shows variation 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 more competent communicators.

### **Handling conflict better.**

Conflict is inevitable, and it is not inherently negative. *A key part of developing interpersonal communication competence involves effectively managing 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 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. Most thoughts 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. The 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. However, controlling the impulse to assume that your relational partner is rejecting you and engaging in communication rather than a 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 can 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 likely 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. You will likely learn how the other person punctuates the conflict in this stage. The information that you gather here may clarify the situation enough to end the conflict and cease negotiation. The information will be key if negotiation continues as you move into the bargaining stage.

**The bargaining stage** is where we make proposals and concessions. Your proposal 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. However, if there are areas of disagreement, 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: competing, avoiding, accommodating, compromising, and collaborating.

- Perception plays an important role in conflict management. We are often biased in determining the cause of our own and others' behaviors in a conflict situation, necessitating 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 of the 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. Talk about conflict patterns and triggers.
7. Define and describe negotiation steps and skills.

### **Recommended resources:**

1. Communication and Conflict Studies. – Disciplinary Connection, Research Directions. (2019). Springer Nature Switzerland AG. 72 p.
2. Eiberg, K. et al. (2022). The Communication Advisor – A theoretical perspective and a practical perspective. Samfundslitteratur. 460 p.



3. Effective Communication Skills: Resolving Conflicts. URL: <https://extension.usu.edu/relationships/research/effective-communication-skills-resolving-conflicts>
4. Group Communication – an Advanced Introduction. (2023). Edited by T. Reimer, E. S. Park, and J. A. Bonito. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 476 p.
5. Hargie, O. (2021). Skilled Interpersonal Communication. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 662 p.
6. Katz, N. H. (2021). Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills. Kendall / Hunt Publishing Co, U.S. 174 p.
7. Maxwell, J. C. (2023). The 16 Undeniable Laws of Communication – Apply Them and Make the Most of Your Message. Maxwell Leadership. 304 p.
8. Meluch, A. L., Walter, H. L. (2022). Casing Conflict Communication. Kendall / Hunt Publishing Co, U.S. 254 p.
9. Van Ruler, B., Korver, F. (2019). The Communication Strategy Handbook. Peter Lang Publishing Inc. 186 p.

## 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 the 1980s, being deaf was being lost in Nicaragua. Thus, the government started bringing together deaf children 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 they 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 witnessed – 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 age 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 worldviews, and achieve personal goals.

**Language is expressive.** *Verbal communication helps us meet various needs through our ability to express ourselves.* Regarding 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 trying to make sense of an experience, expressing observations in a descriptive rather than evaluative way can lessen defensiveness, facilitating competent communication.

**Expressing Thoughts.** When we express thoughts, *we draw conclusions based on what we have experienced.* The perception process is like the interpretation step. We take various observations, evaluate them, and interpret them to assign 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 believe 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, other cultural identities, and characteristics such as age and gender. Although individuals differ 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. Although 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 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 can convey the intensity of the emotion we feel, whether 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 your feelings. There are also disadvantages in that important context; non-verbal communication cannot be included.

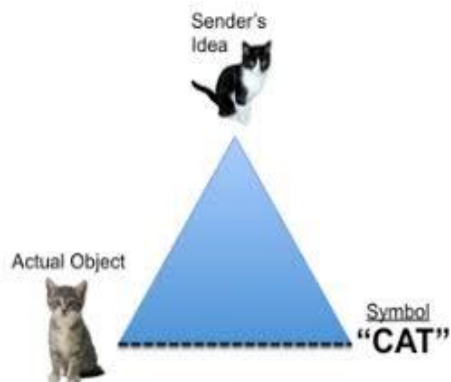
Things like facial expressions and tone of voice offer much insight into emotions that may not be expressed verbally. There is also a lack of immediate feedback.

**Expressing Needs.** When we express needs, *we communicate in an instrumental way that helps 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. In contrast, non-verbal communication is 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 and our interpretation of that object.

The triangle of meaning illustrates this idea. 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 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 agree on the meanings of the symbols we use.

Not only are symbols arbitrary, but they are also **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 have multiple meanings, how do we communicate and understand one another? We can 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 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 a “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 concerning 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 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 are 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.

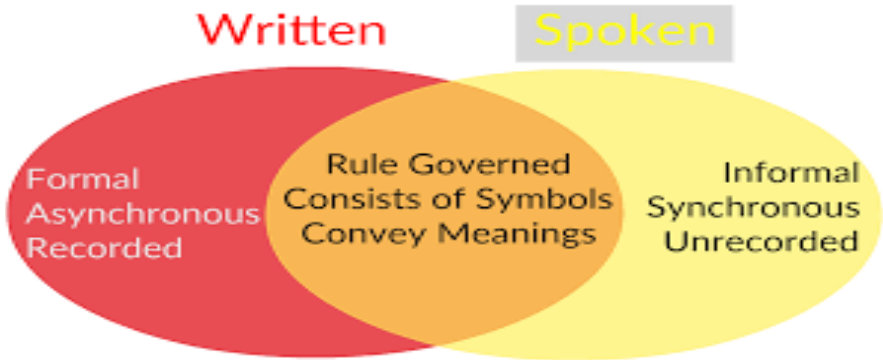
*It is only through an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols that we can exchange verbal communication in an effective manner*. Without agreement, rules, and symbols, verbal communication would not work. The reality is that after we learn a language in school, we do not spend much time consciously thinking about all these rules; we simply use them. However, rules structure



our verbal communication 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 are 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 “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 *asynchronous*. **Synchronous communication** is communication that takes place in real-time, such as a conversation with a friend. In conversation and even in public speaking situations, the rule is immediate feedback and response from the receiver.

In contrast, **asynchronous communication** is not immediate and occurs over longer periods, such as letters, emails, or even text messages. 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 when they have time.

This is one of the reasons people sometimes choose to send an email instead of calling another person: 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 cataloged 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 several 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 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. 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 daily with your five primary senses. 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 can 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. 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 create the possibility for countless word games and humorous uses of language.

- Language is relational and can 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 based on people’s emotion- or experience-based associations with a word.

**Questions for practical classes:**

1. What is language?
2. What 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. What are the rules of verbal communication?
6. Distinguish spoken and written communication.
7. What are the functions of verbal communication?

**Recommended resources:**

1. Austin, J. T. (2021). Communication Theory: Racially Diverse and Inclusive Perspectives. Cognella Academic Publishing. 316 p.

2. Birth of a language. Children without language. URL: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/birth-of-a-language/>

3. Boroditsky L. (2011). How Language Shapes Thought. *Scientific American*, Vol. 304, No. 2. 62–65.
4. Chomsky N. (2006). *Language and mind*, third edition. Cambridge University Press. 209 p.
5. Everett, D. (2018). *How Language Began - The Story of Humanity's Greatest Invention*. Profile Books Ltd. 352 p.
6. Pierce C. S. (1998). *The Essential Pierce: Selected Philosophical Writings, Vol. 2 (1893-1913)*, edit. by the Peirce Edition Project. Indiana University Press. 626 p.
7. Saussure de F. (1959). *Course in general linguistics*. Translated from the French by Wade Baskin. New York: Philosophical Library. 240 p.
8. Sparks, G. (2022). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. McGraw-Hill Education. 578 p.
9. Turner, L., West, A. (2024). *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*. McGraw-Hill Education. 640 p.
10. Yeomans, J. (2019). *The Ultimate Guide to Your Best Verbal Communication: Learn to make your verbal conversations more meaningful, speak and listen more confidently*. Independently Published. 172 p.

## Lecture 7

# SOCIOLINGUISTICS, LANGUAGE VARIATIONS, AND SOCIETY



Language is a system of symbols to communicate. Thus, language is a system of communication. It combines sounds into words and words into complex sentences. Language is a way of communication, a tool for uniting or dividing people. It allows people to share thoughts, ideas, and values. Language forms and destroys communities; it changes and dies.

As children, we acquire language under social circumstances unique to each of us, and it is those individual circumstances that place each of us within one or several of the thousands of communicative communities worldwide. Most frequently, we think of speech communities in terms of mouth-to-ear communication. Still, native sign language users are members of speech communities, another form of natural language acquisition utilizing gesture-to-eye communication. Thus, certain circumstances affect a single language within a speech community. Speakers of a single language vary in many ways; they differ in class, sex, ethnicity, voice quality, and other idiosyncratic traits that reflect their unique personal experience with language(s). Languages provide various ways of saying the same thing – addressing and greeting others, describing things, and paying compliments.

When we talk of sociolinguistics, two terms catch our attention, i.e., “Socio” or “pertaining to society” and “linguistics or “pertaining to language”. Thus, sociolinguistics has something to do with

language and society. Technically, sociolinguistics is the branch of linguistics that deals with studying language in relation to society. Language and society are like hand and glove. They are interrelated as language can't exist without society. Sociolinguistics can shed much light on both the nature of language and society as we talk in different styles in different social conditions (contexts).

Social conditions mean a set of external circumstances in which a language functions and develops: the society of people who use a given language, the social structure of this society, differences between speakers of the language in age, social status, level of culture, and education, place of residence, and as well as differences in their speech behavior depending on the communication situation.

**Sociolinguistics or social linguistics** is a scientific discipline that develops at the intersection of linguistics, sociology, social psychology, and ethnology. *It studies a complex of issues related to the social nature of language, its social functions, the mechanism of influence of social factors on language, and the role played by language in the life of society.* The most important issues that sociolinguistics deals with are social variation of language, language and nation, language situation, interaction of language and culture, bilingualism and multilingualism, etc.

*Sociolinguists study the relationship between language and society.* They are interested in explaining why we speak differently in different social contexts, and they are concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the ways it is used to convey social meaning. Examining the way people use language in different social contexts provides a wealth of information about the way language works, as well as about the social relationships in a community and the way people convey and construct aspects of their social identity through their language.

In other words, the sociolinguist aims to move towards a theory that provides a motivated account of how language is used in a community and people's choices when using it. The relationship between linguistic choices and the social contexts in which they are made is sometimes easiest to see when different languages are



involved (multilingualism). But there is plenty of language variation in monolingual communities, too, and it is socially meaningful.

**Sociolinguistics and linguistics.** How is sociolinguistics different from linguistics? Linguistics makes us aware of language structure, whereas sociolinguistics tells us how we interact with each other using that structure in everyday situations. Dell Hymes has distinguished between the structural and functional approaches to studying language. As the term indicates, the structural approach focuses on the structure of language (code), and code analysis is given the primary importance. On the other hand, the functional approach focuses on the functional aspect of language, i.e., its use in society. The analysis of language use is given primary importance, and the code analysis is secondary. *The linguist analyzes the language out of context, whereas the sociolinguist analyzes the language as it is used in a social context.* In brief, linguistics is the study of language, primarily language structure.

*Sociolinguistics is the study of the use of language at different levels and for various purposes and other functions.* If we ask both linguists and sociolinguists to analyze the construction “Shut up,” their approach to analysis will be different. A linguist will say it is an imperative sentence in which we can drop a subject. On the other hand, a sociolinguist will say it is a sentence used as a directive for giving a command and will provide the norms of its usage in society.

**Sociolinguistics and the Sociology of Language.** Sociolinguistics is defined as the study of language in relation to society, whereas sociology is defined as the study of society with regard to language. The goals of sociolinguistics and those of the sociology of language are different. Hudson differentiates between sociolinguistics and the sociology of language as follows: sociolinguistics is “the study of language in society, whereas the sociology of language is “the study of society in relation to language”. The focus of the two fields is different. In sociolinguistics, we study society, i.e., the context of language use, to know more about the language.

In the sociology of language, we study language use to know more about society. A sociolinguist refrains from concluding society; a sociologist prefers ignoring language-related discoveries. No doubt, there is a difference between sociolinguistics and the sociology of language, but the main difference is basically that of emphasis. *It depends on whether the investigator is more interested in language or society and whether he has more skills in analyzing linguistic or social structures.*

**Sociolinguistics and related disciplines.** Not only linguists and sociolinguists are interested in studying language in society, but researchers from various other disciplines, like anthropologists, psychologists, educators, language planners, etc., are interested in unfolding the mystery of language. For example, anthropologists have explored kinship systems, and some psychologists are concerned with the possible effects of linguistic structure on social and psychological behavior. *Many educators are involved in language planning, language development, and teaching standard language.*

**Variations of language (Language variations).** *The term linguistic variation (or simply variation) refers to regional, social, or contextual differences in how a particular language is used.* Variation between languages, dialects, and speakers is known as interspeaker variation. Variation within the language of a single speaker is called intraspeaker variation. All aspects of language (including phonemes, morphemes, syntactic structures, and meanings) are subject to variation. Variation in language use among speakers or groups of speakers is a notable criterion or change that may occur in pronunciation (accent), word choice (lexicon), or even preferences for particular grammatical patterns. *Variation is a principal concern in sociolinguistics.* It has been discovered that variation is typically the vehicle of language change.

Each language has many variations, and in a way, language is a sum of all variations. Ferguson defines a variation of language as “any element of speech patterns which is sufficiently homogenous to be analyzed by available techniques of synchronic description and

which has a sufficiently large repertory of elements and their arrangements or processes with broad enough semantic scope to function in all formal contexts of communication.” Therefore, variation is defined in terms of “human speech patterns” presumably sounds, words, grammatical features, etc. which we can uniquely associate with some external factors like geographical area or a social group.

Language variations not only indicate a speaker’s origin or aspects of their *social identity* (for instance, their social class or ethnic group), but they also *carry certain social values related to the speakers who use them and the contexts in which they are habitually used*. Language variations, therefore, constitute a resource that may be drawn on in interaction with others. Variations can be classified based on

a) **Users** – The focus is on language variations based on users, such as dialects and accents.

b) **Use** – The focus is on language variations based on their use, such as register.

c) **Social relations** – The focus is on variations based on social relationships among speakers.

In sociolinguistics, a variation is also called a **lect**. It is a specific form of a language or language cluster. This may include *languages, dialects, accents, registers, styles, other sociolinguistic variations, and the standard variation itself*.

**Standard and non-standard variations.** A standard variation of language is a variation that is given either legal or quasi-legal status. It is usually the variation used in the media, education, or for official purposes, etc. A recognized dictionary, grammar, and pronunciation system are available for a standard variation. A non-standard variation is not given the legal status, and generally, no references are available.

**Native and non-native variations.** The variation that is acquired by a speaker from childhood in natural settings and in which his/her first socialization takes place is the native variation of language. On the other hand, the variation learned by a speaker in a formal setting

like school and learned after the child has acquired their first language is the non-native variation. American and Canadian English are the native variations of English, whereas Indian English is the non-native variation.

**Standard language.** The standard language is a variation of language that is used by the government, in the media, in schools, and for international communications. There are different variations of English worldwide, such as North American English, Australian English, and Indian English. Although these variations differ in terms of pronunciation, there are few differences in grammar between them. In contrast, non-standard forms of language are used, for example, in different regional dialects, and in these, non-standard variations of language are different from each other. The only difference between standard and non-standard language is that we consider that language standard which is right according to our own value judgments.

**National language/Official language.** The official language of a country is recognized and adopted by its government and spoken and written by the majority of people in a country. A national language may, for instance, represent the national identity of a nation or country. It brings people of a nation together and creates a sense of brotherhood and patriotism

**Dialect** is a complex concept; for linguists, a dialect is the collection of attributes (phonetics, phonological, syntactic, morphological, and semantic) that make one group of speakers noticeably different from another group of speakers of the same language. So, dialect is a variation related to a user. It involves differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Every language is a collection of many dialects.

*Dialect is related to variations, which can be regional, i.e., based on the place, region, or area where the users live.* The variation can also be social, i.e., based on the social status or class of the users. Dialect also refers to language variation that comes from a group of users that are relative in numbers, living in one particular place, region, or area.

**Regional dialect** is not a distinct language but a variation of a language spoken in a particular country area. Some regional dialects have been given traditional names that mark them as significantly different from standard variations spoken in the same place. The regional dialects of English are British English, American English, Canadian English, Australian English...etc.

**Minority dialect.** Sometimes, members of a particular minority ethnic group have their own variation, which they use as a marker of identity, usually alongside a standard variation. This is called a minority dialect. Examples are African American Vernacular English in the USA, London Jamaican in Britain, and Aboriginal English in Australia.

**Sociolect or social dialect** is associated with a particular class. A social dialect is specifically used by a particular group of people living in a society.

**Individual dialect.** It is also known as idiolect. Idiolect is used by all individuals living in a society. All people of a country use this dialect in their speech. Every person has a different tone, accent, and pronunciation. It is called “idiolect”.

**Accent.** When we talk about different accents in a language, we refer to differences in pronunciation between speakers of a language. The accents differ due to the geographical region in which speakers live or their social class. For example, Received Pronunciation (RP), spoken in the south of England by educated speakers, and Cockney, used by uneducated speakers in London, are accents of English. The word *god*, pronounced by an American, sounds like a guard and is pronounced by a British speaker of English, and the word *ladder* sounds like a ladder to many non-American English speakers.

**Pidgin.** David Crystal defines pidgin as: “A language with a markedly reduced grammatical structure, lexicon, and stylistic range, formed by two mutually unintelligible speech communities.” A pidgin is a new language that develops when speakers of different languages need to communicate but don’t share a common language. The vocabulary of a pidgin comes mainly from one particular language, called the ‘lexifier’. It is a language with no native

speaker; it is no one's first language but a contact language. It is restricted in use.

*Pidgin is a reduced variation of language.* Pidgin is an “odd mixture” of two languages, which cannot be said to be a divergent variation of “a language” but of two or more



languages. Most of the present pidgins have developed in European colonies. But the later “stable pidgin” develops its own grammatical rules quite different from those of the lexifier. Once a stable pidgin has emerged, it is generally learned as a second language and used for communication among people who speak different languages. Examples are Nigerian Pidgin and Chinese Pidgin English, with only 700 words.

**Creole.** When two pidgin language speakers marry, and their children start learning the pidgin as their first language, and it becomes the mother tongue of a community, it is called a creole. Creole has its own grammatical rules. *Unlike a pidgin, a creole is not restricted in use and is like any other language in its full range of functions.* When children start learning pidgin as their first language, which becomes the community's mother tongue, it is called a creole. The major difference between pidgin and Creole is that the former has no native speakers, but the latter has. In fact, when children of any community acquire any pidgin, it becomes Creole. At that time, it develops its new structures and vocabulary. In other words, when a pidgin becomes “lingua franca,” it is called Creole. Like pidgin, creole is a distinct language that has taken most of its vocabulary from another language, the lexifier, but has unique grammatical rules. Examples are Gullah, Jamaican Creole, and Hawaii Creole

English. The words “pidgin” and “creole” are technical terms used by linguists and not necessarily by language speakers.

**Classical language** is a language with literature that is classical. According to U.C Berkeley linguist George L. Hart, it should be ancient, it should be an independent tradition that arose mostly on its own, not as an offshoot of another tradition, and it must have a large and extremely rich body of ancient literature. Some languages have classical forms and everyday modern variations, e.g., Arabic. Greek and Latin are classical languages but not contemporary. Medical and legal professions use some Latin vocabulary.

**Lingua Franca** is defined as “a language which is used habitually by people whose mother tongues are different to facilitate communication between”. It may refer to a trade



language, a contact language, or an international language. It is a language that has developed in response to the needs of the people by using two different languages in everyday communication. *English is the world’s lingua franca, followed by French. Lingua Fracas may be spoken in different ways.* They are not only spoken differently in different places, but individual speakers vary widely in their ability to use language.

**Diglossia.** Ferguson has defined diglossia as “a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialect of the language, there is a very divergent highly codified superposed variation.” He identifies four language situations that show the diglossia’s major characteristics: Arabic, Swiss, German, Haitian, and Greek. In each situation, there is high language and low language. Each variation has its special function, and each is viewed differently by those aware of both. Often, one variation is a literary

or prestige dialect, and the other is a common dialect most of the population speak.

**Registers.** *The term register refers to the variations based on occupation characterized by variation in lexicon.* It is the specialist use of language related to various occupations. You might have observed that when we go to a doctor, we encounter words that we may not use in everyday conversations. For example, Pulse rate, Blood pressure, stethoscope, prescription. Similarly, we can think of the register of law, the register of advertising, the register of education and other professions. This specialist use of language, especially vocabulary, differs from how the same word is used in general practice or by a professional person. For example, the word sister has a different meaning in everyday language (sister–sibling) and the world of medicine (sister–nurse). According to Halliday, three variables determine registers: field, tenor, and mode. The field is the subject matter or the topic; the tenor is the relationship between the participants, and the mode is the channel of communication, i.e., written or spoken. For example, the field can be science: Speech Communication, tenor: student–teacher, mode: verbal/visual lecture.

**Styles.** Variations can also be characterized based on the social relations between the hearer and the speaker from the point of view of formality. *Style refers to a language variation divided based on speech or speaker's situation into formal or informal styles.* One can speak formally or informally; circumstances govern our style choice. The level of formality depends on several factors: a) the kind of occasion, b) the various social, age, and other differences that exist between the participants, c) the task that is involved, e.g., writing or speaking, d) the emotional involvement of one or more of the participants. There are five styles of spoken English based on the formality scale.

### **Summary**

- Sociolinguistics is the branch of linguistics that studies language in relation to society.



- Sociolinguistics is a scientific discipline that develops at the intersection of linguistics, sociology, social psychology, and ethnology.

- The linguist analyzes the language out of context, whereas the sociolinguist analyzes the language used in a social context.

- In sociolinguistics, we study society to know more about the language. In the sociology of language, we study language use to know more about society.

- Language variations indicate a speaker's origin or aspects of their social identity (social class or ethnic group). They also carry certain social values related to the speakers who use them and the contexts in which they are habitually used.

- All aspects of language (including phonemes, morphemes, syntactic structures, and meanings) are subject to variation.

- Variations can be classified based on users, uses, and social relations.

- A variation is also called a lect. It is a specific form of a language or language cluster. This may include languages, dialects, accents, registers, styles, other sociolinguistic variations, and the standard variation.

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

1. What does sociolinguists study?
2. Define the relations of sociolinguistics with linguistics, sociology, and other sciences.
3. What can be called a language variation?
4. Classify language variations.
5. What do lects include?
6. Draw examples of different language variations (languages, dialects, accents, registers, styles, etc.).

### **Recommended resources:**

1. Austin, J. T. (2021). Communication Theory: Racially Diverse and Inclusive Perspectives. Cognella Academic Publishing. 316 p.

2. Basa, R. S. (2019). *Language and Society*. Society Publishing. 216 p.
3. Freedland, V. *Language, and Society: What Your Speech Says about You*. URL: <https://www.thegreatcourses.com/courses/language-and-society>
4. Hyams, N., Rodman, R., and Fromkin, V. (2018). *An Introduction to Language*. Wadsworth Publishing Co Inc. 624 p.
5. Meyerhoff, M. (2018). *Introducing sociolinguistics*. Third edition. Tailor & Francis Ltd. 376 p.
6. *Social Factors that Necessitate Language Variations and Varieties*. URL: <https://www.languagesunlimited.com/social-factors-that-necessitate-language-variation-and-varieties/>
7. Sparks, G. (2022). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. McGraw-Hill Education. 578 p.
8. Turner, L., West, A. (2024). *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*. McGraw-Hill Education. 640 p.
9. Wardhaugh, R., Fuller, J. M. (2021). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Wiley Blackwell. 480 p.

## Lecture 8

### NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION



When we think about communication, we often focus on exchanging 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 viewing non-verbal communication as the opposite of or 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 the spoken language is transmitted through sound and picked up by our ears. On the other hand, all five senses can take in non-verbal communication 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 includes vocal and non-vocal elements, showing the relationship among vocal, non-vocal, verbal, and non-verbal aspects of communication. A vocal element of verbal communication is spoken words. Paralanguage is a vocal element of non-verbal communication, 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 using 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 biologically based, while verbal communication is *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 an older part of our brain processes non-verbal communication 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 when verbal and non-verbal messages conflict and when emotional or relational communication occurs. Conversely, verbal communication might have more meaning in some situations than non-verbal communication. In interactions where information exchange is the focus, such as a briefing at work, 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 to generate meaning for another person. In this sense, non-verbal communication is “irrepressible”.

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

We learned that language’s symbolic and abstract nature 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 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 usage patterns. Instead, we implicitly learn non-verbal communication norms, 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, non-verbal communication's involuntary or subconscious nature makes it less easy to fake, making 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 is how 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 – 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 be a substitute for verbal communication in various ways. Non-verbal communication can convey much meaning when verbal communication is ineffective 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 quiet situations where verbal communication is 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.

Finally, non-verbal communication can convey meaning by contradicting verbal communication. As we learned earlier, we often perceive non-verbal communication as 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, leading us to look for more information to determine which message is more credible. If we cannot resolve the discrepancy, we will likely 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 use deception for many reasons, including excusing their mistakes, being polite to others, or influencing others' behaviors or perceptions.

Aside from deception, we can use non-verbal communication to "take the edge off" a critical or unpleasant message to influence the other person's reaction. 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 must make moves and take turns without stepping on the other's toes. Non-verbal communication helps us regulate our conversations so we do not constantly interrupt each other or wait in awkward silence between speaker turns. Pitch, a part of vocalics, helps 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 we think will speak next. Conversely, we can "hold the floor" with non-verbal signals even when unsure what 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.

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

To relate to others successfully, we must possess some skill at encoding and decoding non-verbal communication. The non-verbal messages we send and receive influence our relationships positively

and negatively and can work to bring people together or push them apart. Non-verbal communication in tie signs, immediacy behaviors, and expressions of emotion are just three 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 symbolize another person or the relationship, actions like sharing the same drinking glass, or touch behaviors such as handholding. 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,” note 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 the 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 other impressions about who we are; 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 how other people perceive us.

Aside from our physical body, *artifacts*, the objects, and possessions surrounding 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 works in concert, combining to repeat, modify, or contradict the verbal message.

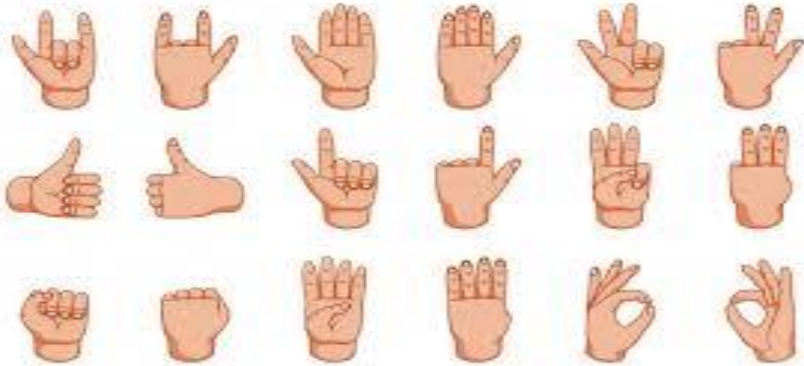
#### **Kinesics**



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 using 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. 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 still differ 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 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

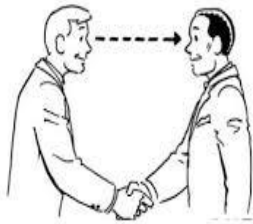
middle finger are emblems with an agreed-on meaning or meanings with a culture.

**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 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 and 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

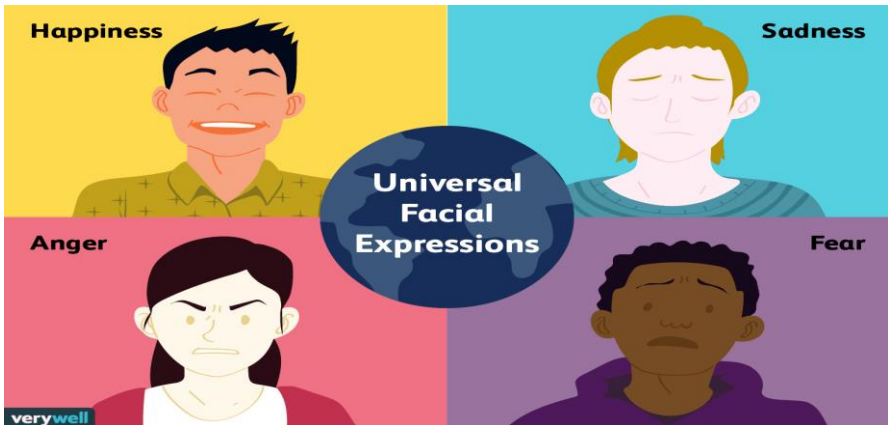
with our ears, our eyes take in most of the communicative information around us. The saying “The eyes are the window to the soul” is actually accurate in terms of where people typically think others are “located,” which is right behind the eyes. Certain eye behaviors have become tied to personality traits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

Eye contact serves several communicative functions, from regulating interaction to monitoring interaction to conveying information and 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 communicate 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 inconsistent, your audience could become confused by the mixed messages, leading 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 using touch than other 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 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**

Paralanguage refers to the vocalized but non-verbal parts of a message. Vocalics is the study of paralanguage, which includes the vocal qualities accompanying 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 a 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 paralanguage involving pitch until we are older.

Paralanguage provides important context for the verbal content of speech. For example, the **volume** *helps communicate intensity.* A louder voice is considered 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. Still, 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 resonance, pitch, and tone; some voices are more pleasing than others. People typically find pleasing voices that employ vocal variation, 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.

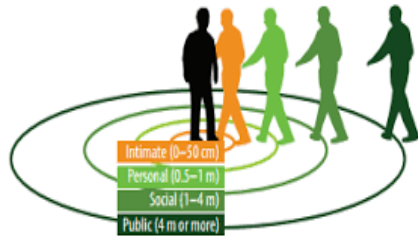
**Verbal fillers** *are sounds that fill gaps in our speech as we think about what to say next.* They are considered a part of non-verbal communication because they are not like typical words that stand in



for a specific meaning or meaning. Verbal fillers such as “um,” “uh,” “like,” and “ah” are common in regular conversation and are not typically disruptive. Using verbal fillers can help a person “keep the floor” during a conversation if they need to pause for a moment before continuing 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 to look at how space appears in common metaphors to see that space, communication, and relationships are closely related.



To understand how proxemics function 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 as 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 territory.

Secondary territories don’t belong to us or are exclusively under our control. Still, 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 taking further steps to reserve it. This happens in classrooms regularly. Students often sit in the same desk or at least the 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 categories, including biological, personal, physical, and cultural.

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

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

**Personal time** *refers to how individuals experience time.* How we experience time varies based on our mood, 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 they are future or past-oriented. People with past-time orientations may want to reminisce about the past, reunite with old friends, and spend considerable time preserving memories and keepsakes in scrapbooks and photo albums. People with future-time orientations may spend the same time making career and personal plans, writing to-do lists, or researching future vacations, potential retirement spots, or what book they will 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 more flexible schedules and may simultaneously engage in several activities. **Monochronic** people tend to plan their time more rigidly and do one thing at a time. A polychronic or monochronic orientation to time influences our social realities and interactions with others.

### **Personal presentation and environment**

Personal presentation involves our physical characteristics and the artifacts we adorn and surround ourselves with. 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 different 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 are referred to as paralanguage and include pitch, volume, rate, and non-vocal elements.
- Although verbal 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 to studying how time affects communication and how different time cycles affect communication.
- Personal presentation and environment refer to how the objects we associate ourselves and our surroundings with, artifacts, provide non-verbal cues from which others make meaning.

**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 communication?
5. Enlarge on the types of non-verbal communication. Define each type and draw examples.

**Recommended resources:**

1. Austin, J. T. (2021). Communication Theory: Racially Diverse and Inclusive Perspectives. Cognella Academic Publishing. 316 p.
2. Bowman, J. M. (2020). Nonverbal Communication: an Applied Approach. SAGE Publications, Incorporated. 240 p.
3. Chronemics and Proxemics. URL: <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/english-language/paralanguage-proxemics-haptics-chronemics-english-language-essay.php>

4. Cultural Differences of Nonverbal Communication Components and Its Importance in Business. URL: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/cultural-differences-nonverbal-communication-its-business-karata%C5%9F/>

5. Nonverbal communication: Learn how to encode & decode signals and cues. URL: <https://asana.com/ru/resources/nonverbal-communication>

6. Non-verbal Communication: kinesics, oculesics, proxemics, haptics (+ gestures, physical appearance, artifacts). URL: <https://medium.com/@inalisna17/non-verbal-communication-kinesics-oculesics-proxemics-haptics-gestures-physical-bf874692ec9c>

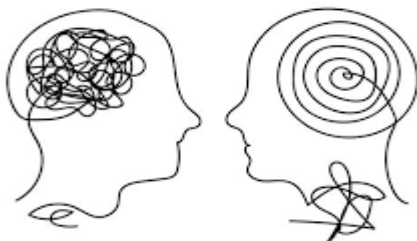
7. Sparks, G. (2022). A First Look at Communication Theory. McGraw-Hill Education. 578 p.

8. Turner, L., West, A. (2024). Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application. McGraw-Hill Education. 640 p.

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## Lecture 9

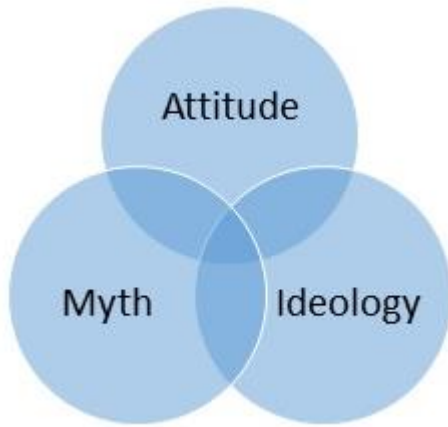
# LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND IDEOLOGY



Language is a social phenomenon; it arises, develops, and functions in society. Changes that take place in the life of society become a determining factor in the impact on language, as well as the intensity depends on the process of transformation of the language space from the intensity of changes in the political and socioeconomic spheres.

*Language is a communication system.* It is probably the most advanced and developed communication system humans employ. From this point of view, one could argue that language functions as a communicator; language is a social device. The social function of language is supported by hypothesizing that language is the carrier of our thoughts. In other words, if it were true that we dream and think in language, there would be no motivation to look further into what language is – language is necessary to make possible the human need to express consciousness to both oneself and others.

Everyone who uses language has ideas, be they conscious or subconscious, about what language is and how it should be used and can make judgments about this use. *In sociolinguistics, these ideas, feelings, and judgments are divided into three categories: language attitudes, language ideologies, and language myths.* Scholars try to describe each category and how they manifest in everyday life. However, there is a significant overlap between the three categories, so separating the three concepts is not always simple.



As conceptual tools, language ideologies and language attitudes were created by researchers in the second half of the 20th century to provide a means of treating speakers' feelings and ideas about various languages and linguistic forms as a critical factor in understanding processes of language change, language and

identity, and language in its socioeconomic context. Definitions of these concepts typically invoke speakers' feelings and beliefs about language structure or use.

We draw inferences about people from the way they talk. Our attitudes to different varieties of a language color the way we perceive the individuals who use those varieties. Sometimes, this works to people's advantage and sometimes to their disadvantage.

The classic definition of an attitude was given by Allport, who describes it as a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. Another commonly referenced definition is by Ajzen, according to whom an attitude is "a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event".

Based on this understanding of the multiple componential structures of attitudes in general, *language attitudes are traditionally defined as any affective, cognitive, or behavioral index of evaluative reactions towards different varieties and their speakers or, more inclusively, their users.*

Language attitudes have greatly interested researchers in the behavioral and social sciences and the humanities since at least the early 1930s. Since then, they have become an integral part of the

social psychology of language, the sociology of language, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and communication studies.

While the classic definition only refers to attitudes towards entire varieties (i.e., languages, dialects, accents), there is also a growing body of research regarding attitudes towards particular linguistic features and phenomena, including attitudes towards quotatives, vocal fry, code-switching, forms of address, and multilingualism.

*The inclusion of language users in the definition of language attitudes is due to the close link between language and social identity – that is, those parts of an individual’s self-concept linked to their membership in particular social groups.* Everyone has multiple social group memberships (based on, e.g., their age, gender, sexual orientation, cultural background, skin color, and mother tongue) and, therefore, also a repertoire of numerous social identities that vary in their overall importance to the self-concept. Not all intergroup differences have evaluative significance, and those may vary from group to group.

*Language is one of the most important symbols of social identity, an emblem of group membership, in language communities around the globe.* The symbolic nature of language naturally finds expression in people’s attitudes towards varieties and their users. If the language has social meaning, people will evaluate it in relation to the social status of its users. Their language attitudes will be social attitudes. Therefore, attitudes towards some varieties reflect people’s attitudes towards their users.

Since language attitudes are reflections of people’s attitudes towards the corresponding language users, language attitudes do not indicate either linguistic or aesthetic quality. Instead, they are always contingent upon knowledge of the social connotations specific varieties hold for those familiar with them, upon “the levels of status, prestige, or appropriateness that they are conventionally associated with in speech communities. From this, it follows that language attitudes are not static but can change when the status and prestige of the language users change.



Language attitudes are one of the change markers both in intergroup relations and in state language policy. According to Dragojevic, language attitudes can have many behavioral consequences, and negative attitudes usually contribute to prejudice, discrimination, and problematic social interaction. Forming a positive attitude is a key factor in the perception of language ethnolinguistic viability, which, in turn, is a stable indicator of language preservation.

Attitude towards language plays a significant role in maintaining, developing, and preserving a language or, on the contrary, its decline or even extinction. It can determine language stability in a certain period and predict the language situation in the future. There are various approaches and aspects to studying language attitudes. As a rule, language attitudes are studied through a sociolinguistic analysis of the language behavior of respondents, the language situation in the region/country, and language policy, which helps to reveal the direct evaluation characteristics of specific language codes, to find out their status, prestige / non-prestige, etc.

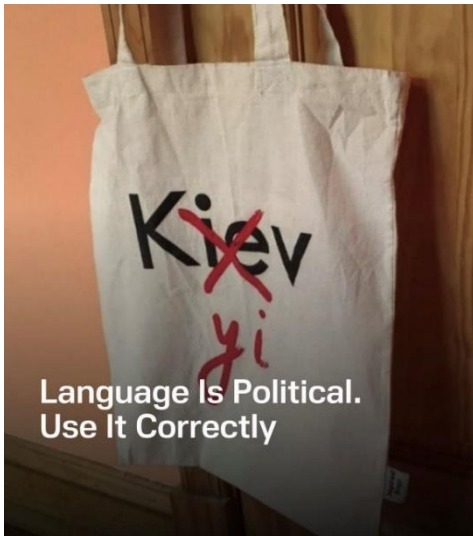
Most researchers define language attitudes as evaluations of social objects according to the following characteristics: good – bad, pleasant – unpleasant, positive-negative, as a feeling that people have about languages. In some studies, language attitudes are considered emotional reactions, a special knowledge filled primarily with evaluative or affective content, and a tendency to act in a certain way.

Dawes focuses on the fact that the attitude towards a certain object is learned (rather than inherited), can change in different periods, but always remains continuous, is always affective (that is, expresses an evaluative and emotional attitude) and contains a readiness to act in a certain way concerning its object.

*Language attitude largely depends on many sociocultural factors, including mass media, which play a significant role in the information society.* During the intensification of globalization processes and information flows, their power to influence people increases. Moreover, as the main source of knowledge for a large

part of society, the mass media has acquired the status of social value. Accumulating a system of moral and ethical dominants that can “grow” into the consciousness of a mass audience, they not only determine the value priorities of society but also change them. Thus, they can be recognized as a special axiological and informational mechanism that broadcasts, addresses, and, under certain conditions, changes values and attitudes towards them in society.

Language modifications are largely influenced by dominant ideological guidelines: the nature of power and leading political ideas are indicated in the language at each stage of its development. They condition it to form certain properties to adapt it to the relevant political goals.



Significant and constant interest in the issues of the interaction of language and politics, language and ideology, the influence of language on public awareness, the manipulative and propagandistic nature of political communication, as well as the lack of a systematic analysis of the language of a totalitarian society determine the relevance of the chosen topic.

In philosophical and sociological literature and linguistic research, ideology is considered a multifaceted phenomenon that includes a system of views, principles, ideas, guidelines, and value orientations that significantly influence social reality and people’s attitude to reality, claim to explain the past, present and determine the ways further social development

*Ideology is a system of thought based on a specific set of assumptions, beliefs, or viewpoints that appears to be a product of*

*common sense but is socially constructed.* Those strongly committed to a particular ideology have difficulty understanding and communicating with supporters of a conflicting ideology. The term was coined in 1796 by the French writer Antoine-Louis-Claude.

The study of language ideologies is related to language attitudes and perceptions about language. The study of language ideologies considers how speakers' beliefs and theories about different forms of language help them rationalize and relate highly complex social systems, such as access to power, and what social processes sustain those beliefs.

*Language attitudes are sometimes equated with language ideologies, and the two share several important characteristics.* For instance, like language attitudes, ideologies are never about language alone and linking linguistic features (such as spelling and grammar) with non-linguistic features (such as a language user's social background or personality traits). ***Language ideologies enact ties of language to identity, aesthetics, and morality.*** Through such connections, they sustain linguistic form and use and the notion of the person and the social group.

However, there are key differences between attitudes and ideologies regarding their structure and the extent of their prevalence. One of the earliest definitions of language ideologies characterizes them as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use". There is a consensus that ideologies consist of systematically held beliefs about language shared throughout a community. These beliefs even become naturalized to the extent that community members perceive them as "common sense". One of the key differences between language ideologies and language attitudes is that ideologies are a community-level phenomenon. At the same time, attitudes are affected by many factors relating to specific individuals and the community's beliefs. Another key difference is that in addition to the sets of beliefs that make up ideologies, the structure of attitudes also comprises feelings and behaviors.

Since language is the main means of communication in society, it affects identity formation, particularly its variety, such as national identity. However, to claim that the language depends on national identity, or vice versa, is impossible. There is rather an indirect relationship between language and national identity as the communicative behavior of the people is a set of norms and traditions of their communication.

According to Joseph, language is a key component of national identity for at least five reasons:

1. Groups of people who live in the same territory and believe they have common long-term interests have their own ways of speaking that distinguish them from similar groups. Language tends to determine the social traits on which nationality is based (although this is only a tendency since language commonality does not always imply national unity and language differences do not, on the contrary, necessarily divide the nation).

2. The ideology of national unity presupposes the idea that nations are people that make them up; a deep cultural unity is inherent, resulting from a common language. Language constitutes a text through constant interaction with which culture and identities are broadcast from the older generation to the younger.

3. The concepts that make up the national identity correspond to words in the national language and are embodied in the sacred texts of the nation, such as the constitution or key works of national literature, including the national anthem.

4. The “correct language”, the standards taught at school, plays a leading role in preserving and reproducing culture. At the same time, using “correct language” is inseparable from the idea of “correct” civil behavior.

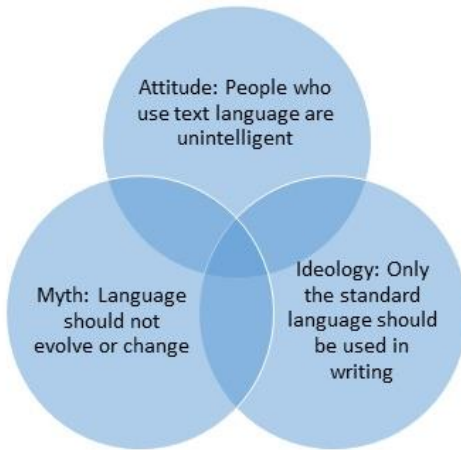
5. When a nation seeks to control those who can be in it, vote, and use the state’s advantages, it can use language as the most obvious criterion for solving whether a particular person belongs to it. Many modern nations require their members to have certain cultural qualifications, which often directly or indirectly include language

*A language myth is a popular belief about language and language varieties, which is embedded in culture and often has a long history.* In fact, such myths are often so entrenched in a society or culture that they can be said to be a part of the culture. This history sets a myth apart from an attitude or an ideology. Whereas ideologies and attitudes are more fluid and change over time, myths are more concrete and less likely to change from generation to generation. Rather, they are passed on over time.

Bauer and Trudgill's book *Language Myths* (1998) presents 21 common language myths, such as "French is a logical language," "German sounds ugly," and "I don't have an accent." A linguist questions each myth, and the "truth" behind the myth is revealed. To take the "French is a logical language" example, sociolinguists agree that no one language or variety is more logical than any other, nor could it ever be. However, this myth has been widely believed for centuries and continues to be believed.

The dictionary definition quoted above highlights how a myth is something that is "widespread" and "widely held," emphasizing that myths are shared and passed on through generations, forming a part of a culture or society's makeup. It also states that myths are "untrue or erroneous. "Myths are not lies; they are not told to deceive us. Although they may often be far from the truth, they are generally oversimplifications of ideas or concepts rather than lies, which have a more malicious connotation. Language myths, like other myths, are generally unfounded in linguistics or present oversimplified views about language. However, like ideologies, the history of language myths gives them power, and they exist in society as unquestioned facts about language.

*There is often significant overlap between attitudes, ideologies, and myths, and it is not always simple, or even possible, to separate the three concepts completely.* This is because each concept often informs the other. Let us look first at an example outside of linguistics to explain this further.



A common language myth states that a language should not change or evolve but rather should be preserved in its “pure” and standard form. As the myth suggests, the standard language is perfectly equipped for all written and spoken language scenarios, allowing minimal misunderstanding and maximally effective communication. An ideology that is linked to this myth is

that all written language should be produced using the standard language, for no other language variety can match the efficiency and effectiveness of the standard. For instance, this can have significant political and societal consequences in the educational system. Students must use the standard language in all written work. Even if their writing is intelligible and creative, it is deemed incorrect if it is not produced using standard spelling and grammar. This leads us to the language attitude: “People who use text language are unintelligent”. As a standard language society, we have linked the standard language to correctness and intelligence. Non-standard language, such as text language abbreviations “lol” and “ICYMI” (“in case you missed it”), has then become linked to a lack of intelligence and incorrectness.

## Conclusions

- The social function of language is supported by the idea that language is the carrier of our thoughts.
- Everyone who uses language has ideas about what language is and how it should be used and can make judgments about this use. In sociolinguistics, these ideas, feelings, and judgments are divided

into three categories: language attitudes, language ideologies, and language myths.

- Language attitudes are traditionally defined as any affective, cognitive, or behavioral index of evaluative reactions towards different varieties and their speakers or, more inclusively, their users.
- Language is one of the most important symbols of social identity, an emblem of group membership, in language communities around the globe.
- Attitude towards language plays a significant role in maintaining, developing, and preserving a language or, on the contrary, its decline or even extinction.
- Ideology is a system of views, principles, ideas, guidelines, and value orientations that significantly influence social reality and people's attitude to reality, claiming to explain the past and present and determining the ways to further social development.
- Since language is society's main means of communication, it affects identity formation, particularly its variety, such as national identity.
- A language myth is a popular belief about language and language varieties embedded in culture and often has a long history.

**Questions for practical classes:**

1. Social function of language.
2. What is meant by the language attitude?
3. What are current language attitudes toward your native language?
4. Define the language ideology.
5. How does ideology affect the national identity?
6. What is the language myth?

**Recommended resources:**

1. Austin, J. T. (2021). Communication Theory: Racially Diverse and Inclusive Perspectives. Cognella Academic Publishing. 316 p.

2. Basa, R. S. (2019). *Language and Society*. Society Publishing. 216 p.
3. Bowman, J. M. (2020). *Nonverbal Communication: an Applied Approach*. SAGE Publications, Incorporated. 240 p.
4. Humphries, E. (2018). *Language attitudes, ideologies, and myths*. StrictlyLanguage. URL: <https://strictlylanguage.wordpress.com/2017/04/18/language-attitudes-ideologies-and-myths/>
5. Kuznietsova, T. (2024). Language attitudes in the mass media: What attitude towards the Ukrainian language was formed by the Odesa media (2014–2023). *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, vol. 69, no. 3. 453-479.
6. Sparks, G. (2022). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. McGraw-Hill Education. 578 p.
7. Turner, L., West, A. (2024). *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*. McGraw-Hill Education. 640 p.
8. Wardhaugh, R., Fuller, J. M. (2021). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Wiley Blackwell. 480 p.



## Lecture 10

# CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION



The study of cross-cultural communication requires cross-cultural understanding, which is understanding and valuing 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 various cultures also vary, making the interpretation difficult.

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

**Culture** includes race, nationality, and ethnicity but also goes beyond those identity markers. 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 talking about culture, we refer to *belief systems, values, and behaviors that support a particular ideology or social arrangement*. Culture guides language use, appropriate forms of dress, and world views. This broad concept 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. Numerous scientists have debunked this theory, and it has been replaced with the understanding that there are greater genetic differences within racial groups, not between them. In addition, there is no scientific connection between racial identity and cultural traits or behaviors.

Three other distinct concepts are related to race: *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 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 unequal access to resources and power. Two other concepts that are usually 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. Still, occasionally, 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 comprises ideas, behaviors, attitudes, values, and language; *class* is how you think, feel, act, look, dress, talk, move, and walk.

Thus, *cross-cultural communication can be defined as the interpersonal interaction between members of different groups, which differ from each other regarding the knowledge shared by their members and 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”.

Before 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 at the Foreign Service Institute brought him into 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.

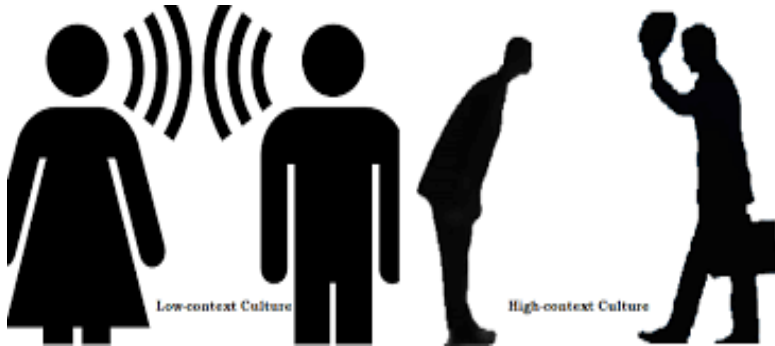
The main elements of Hall’s paradigm for cross-cultural communication were:

- 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 early 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 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 would 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, instead of just the words.** When we rely on the *translation of words to decipher a person’s meaning, this is considered 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 also are 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. Depending on your view, it may be described as descriptive, poetic, or too wordy.

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

The final style, **instrumental/affective**, refers to who is responsible 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 placing more responsibility on the listener. Here, the listener should pay attention to verbal, Non-verbal, and relationship clues 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 regarding their orientation to individualism. When looking at Hofstede's and others' research on individualism and collectivism, it is important to remember 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 not 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 require a willingness to accept and adapt to differences.

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 vital for anyone working across countries or continents, including those working for

multinational companies in either their home country or abroad (expatriates).

### **Globalization**

Globalization is central to theorizing about mass communication, media, and cultural communication studies. Cross-cultural communication scholars emphasize that globalization emerged from the increasing diversity of cultures worldwide and thrives by removing cultural barriers. The notion of nationality, or the construction of national space, is understood to emerge dialectically through communication and globalization.

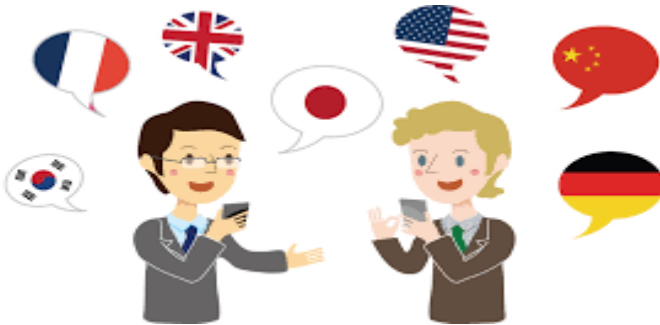
It is also crucial for anyone working with people from other cultures to avoid misunderstandings and even offense. Those studying languages often encounter issues of cross-cultural communication.

The problems in cross-cultural communication usually come from problems in message transmission and 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, how the receiver interprets the message will likely 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 due to 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, and 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, which 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 traveling abroad, knowing the main international etiquette rules is advisable. The culture and traditions of each country make people behave differently. Suppose the business executive does not know how to adapt to that behavior. In that case, 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

constantly disrespects the locals of the country you are visiting and humiliates yourself because you do not know the country's customs and traditions.

When traveling abroad, you want to ensure 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 respect for the country and its people, helps you fit in better, and ensures 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 must learn to understand the key themes that differ between countries and get specific tips when traveling in some of the world's nations.

Every country's unique culture translates into different conventions for conducting business. 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. Awareness 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.

People should use some basic tips on what to do and what to avoid that will help them 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 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 the one that 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 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 fulfilling two conditions. On the one hand, getting acquainted with the country’s culture is necessary, with representatives who must negotiate with each other. 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.

### **Summary**

- Culture includes race, nationality, and ethnicity but also goes beyond those identity markers. 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, specifically the relationship between the people, instead of just the words. When we rely on the translation of words to decipher a person's meaning, this is considered low-context communication.
- Other variations in communication can be described using Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey's four communication styles.
- Effective cross-cultural communication is vital for anyone working across countries or continents, including those working for multinational companies in their home country or abroad (expatriates).
- International business etiquette should be observed when 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. Talk about the history of cross-cultural communication.
4. Give information about the founders and followers of the cross-cultural communication theory.
5. Talk about the differences and similarities between high and low-context cultures.
6. What are the four communication styles?
7. Define international business etiquette.

### **Recommended resources:**

1. Austin, J. T. (2021). *Communication Theory: Racially Diverse and Inclusive Perspectives*. Cognella Academic Publishing. 316 p.
2. *Effective Communication in Cross-Cultural and Diverse Environments*. URL: <https://rcademy.com/effective-communication-in-cross-cultural-and-diverse-environments/>
3. Jackson, J. *Introducing Language and Intercultural Communication*. Routledge. 2019. 422 p.
4. Jandt, F. E. (2020). *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication – International Student Edition – Identities in a Global Community*. Sage Publications Ltd. 520 p.
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6. Holliday, A. et al. (2021). *Intercultural Communication. An advanced resource book for students*. Routledge. 340 p.
7. Sparks, G. (2022). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. McGraw-Hill Education. 578 p.
8. Turner, L., West, A. (2024). *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*. McGraw-Hill Education. 640 p.
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## Lecture 11

# COMMUNICATION BARRIERS



Communication is one of our basic needs. We need to communicate with many people for personal and professional purposes.

There are major elements in the communication process. The process starts with a sender who has a message for a receiver. The sender's message travels to the receiver through one or more channels chosen by the sender. The channels may be verbal or non-verbal. They may involve only one of the senses, hearing, for example, or all five of the senses: hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste. Non-verbal communication, popularly referred to as body language, relies primarily on seeing rather than hearing.

After sending the message, the sender becomes a receiver, and the receiver becomes a sender through feedback. Feedback is the receiver's response to the attempt by the sender to send the message. Feedback is the key to the sender's determination of whether the message has been received in the intended form. Feedback involves the channel choice by the receiver of the original message. The channel for feedback may be quite different from the original channel chosen by the sender. A puzzled look may be the feedback to what the sender considered a clear oral instruction.

The effect on the receiver completes the communication process. Effective communication is the original sender having the

desired effect on the receiver. Communication, at its best, minimizes misunderstanding between sender and receiver. The sender cannot transplant a message or idea. Ineffective communication means there was no effect on the receiver, or the effect was unexpected, undesired, and/or unknown to the sender.

*Problems with any component of the communication model can become a barrier to communication.* Sometimes, the message is not passed correctly or gets lost. There is a chance of misunderstanding between the sender and the receiver. Sometimes, the language used in the communication is not understood correctly. This results in a communication breakdown or communication failure. There are many reasons behind the problems in the communication process. All these problems develop communication barriers.

Thus, *any obstacle or problem in the process of communication that hinders/obstructs it is called a **barrier**.* Barriers are part of the process of communication. Whenever we communicate, we encode and decode. We use various channels for passing messages. At any level or at any moment or stage, there can be problems in the communication process. Sometimes the sender may not use proper language that the receiver will understand. The receiver may not be able to decode correctly. There can be a lot of noise in the surroundings, disturbing us. It rarely happens that barriers do not arise in the communication process. Many times, barriers occur in the minds of the sender and receiver. The intended messages are not sent to the receivers.

We face many barriers while communicating. These barriers can create obstacles in the communication process. There is no clear classification of communication barriers as they overlap. Roughly, they can be classified into the following types.

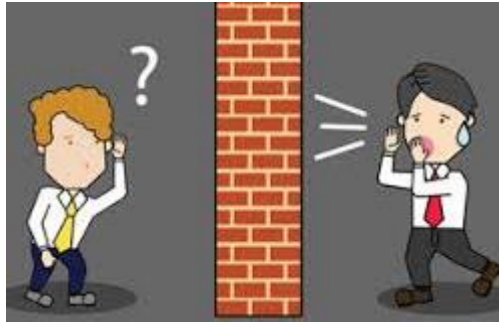
1. Physical or environmental barriers.
2. Physiological Barriers.
2. Language barriers.
3. Psychological barriers.
4. Cultural barriers.



**Physical Barriers.** Many barriers arise in the surroundings or our environment. These barriers create problems or confusion in communication.

- Noise. Traffic noise, or the noise of machines in a factory, creates disturbances in communication. “Noise pollution” is the biggest contributor to environmental pollution in big cities.

- Time and distance.



Physical distances between people can create major problems in communication. Time zones around the world are not the same. Due to differences in timings between countries, we must adjust to the time difference between countries. It may lead to delayed message feedback or misunderstanding.

- Defects in communication systems. Often, the instruments or machines used in communication, such as telephones, faxes, or computers, can develop problems. The Internet network can fail, or the microphone used in the programs can create a loud noise. Due to excess rains or natural calamities, it becomes difficult to use the instruments properly. The failure of electronic power also results in communication loss or messages not being sent properly.

- Wrong selection of medium. Medium means the objects used in communication, e.g., emails, mobile phones, telephones, etc. The correct medium is necessary.

**Physiological Barriers.** Physiological issues can also cause barriers to communication.

- Illness, poor eyesight or hearing difficulties, pain. Physical defects such as stammering, bad hearing, or bad handwriting also create misunderstandings when receiving and decoding the message.

- Physical barriers to non-verbal communication. Not seeing the non-verbal cues, gestures, posture, and general body language can make communication less effective.



**Language Barriers.** Barriers arising due to language, word choice, meaning, or pronunciation differences can confuse people. These are some of the examples of language barriers.

- Different languages or a lack of a common language can create obstacles to communication. A person who does not understand a foreign language or has a bad command of the native language cannot communicate well.

- Multiplicity of words' meaning. Words can have different meanings. For example, labor, case, etc., The word power is a gift to human beings, but simultaneously, multiple meanings or spellings of words can create problems in communication.

- Words with similar pronunciation but different meanings also create problems in communication. E.g., Except-accept, fair-fare, council-counsel, son-sun, principal-principle, etc.

- Jargon, meta language, professional terms, over-complicated, unfamiliar or technical terms. Sometimes, these words are used unintentionally, and other people or those who do not understand the meaning of these words face problems.

- Muddled messages are a barrier to communication because the sender leaves the receiver unclear about his intent. Muddled messages have many causes. The sender may be confused in his or her thinking. The message may be little more than a vague idea. The problem may be semantics, e.g., "A dog for sale. Eats anything. Especially likes children. Call 555-3609 for more information."

**Psychological Barriers** arise from motives, social values, different perceptions, etc., creating a psychological distance, causing misunderstandings, and hindering communication. These barriers are difficult to overcome as people do not accept that they encounter

obstacles or lack the proper understanding to face the situation. These are examples of the psychological barriers.

- **Selective Perceptions.** Our sensory receptors have their own limitations. As a result, we perceive not the whole spectrum, but a few selective symbols based upon our needs, motives, experience, background, etc. Because of our selective perceptions, we cannot communicate the whole. Because of different perceptions, neutral words conveying certain positive messages convey the opposite meaning as they reach the receiver. It results in misunderstandings and misinterpretations and makes communication ineffective.

- **Premature Evaluation.** It is a human tendency that we try to evaluate quickly. We do not listen or read the whole but try to infer from part of the message. The moment we try to evaluate, we stop further messages visible to our sensory receptors. As a result, effective communication does not occur because of premature evaluation. The premature evaluations are mainly because individuals are judgmental or prejudiced against communication.

- **Different comprehension of reality.** Reality is not an absolute concept; it is relative to different people. Each person's has unique sensory receptors and mental filters. As a result, our abstractions, inferences, and evaluations are different.

- **Distrust.** Distrust between the sender & receiver may act as a barrier to effective communication. If two people do not trust each other, they may either try to hide or withhold information or not try to understand the message in the original sense. In fact, they may be suspicious towards each other and try to find hidden meanings in the message.

- **Feelings and emotions.** Anger or sadness can taint objectivity. Also, being extremely nervous, having a personal agenda, or needing to be right "no matter what" can make communication less than effective. This is also known as emotional noise. Emotional disturbances of the sender or receiver can distort or change the communication process.

- Emotional barriers and taboos. Some people may find it difficult to express their emotions, and some topics may be completely “off-limits” or taboo.
- Self-image. A positive or negative image of self is the way of looking at the world. A negative self-image can destroy or hamper communication. Such people always think negatively and do not look at things or events properly.
- Stereotyping is a barrier to communication when it causes



people to act as if they already know the message that is coming from the sender or worse as if no message is necessary because “everybody

already knows.” Both senders and listeners should continuously look for and address thinking, conclusions, and actions based on stereotypes.

- Lack of feedback. Feedback is the mirror of communication. Feedback mirrors what the sender has sent. Feedback is the receiver sending back to the sender the message as perceived. Without it, communication is one-way. Feedback should be helpful rather than hurtful. Prompt feedback is more effective than feedback saved up until the “right” moment. Feedback should deal with specifics rather than generalities.

- Poor listening skills. Listening is difficult. A typical speaker says about 125 words per minute. The typical listener can receive 400-600 words per minute. Thus, about 75 percent of listening time is free time. Free time often sidetracks the listener. The solution is to be an active rather than passive listener.

- Interruptions. The interruptions may be due to something more pressing, rudeness, lack of privacy for discussion, a drop-in

visitor, an emergency, or even the curiosity of someone else wanting to know what two other people are saying. Regardless of the cause, interruptions are a barrier to communication.

**Cultural Barriers.** Culture is a way of life, values, or principles. Cultural differences between people can create misunderstandings and hindrance in effective communication. Due to globalization and liberalized policies in business, people around the world are traveling and working in multinational corporations or companies. This led to mixing or intermingling between people. However, due to differences in language, religious practices, dressing styles, and food habits, people often get confused and cannot understand each other properly. This led to communication failure. The following are examples of socio-cultural barriers:

- Time perception. Time is not perceived similarly across cultures. In Western culture, time is important. In Asian culture, time is taken leisurely. The concept of punctuality differs in cultures.

- Space perception. The concept of space differs from culture to culture. In some cultures, close distance between people is not approved. In some cultures, close distance is accepted.

- Religion. Following different religions can be a major misunderstanding between people as it involves beliefs and rituals that can be contradictive and unacceptable for the communicators.

- Food preparation methods or serving methods are not the same. There are certain expected norms for eating food in meetings. These are called dining etiquettes.

- Body Language. Non-verbal behavior methods around the world are not the same. There can be misunderstandings because of this.

- Value systems are not the same across cultures. Values, good behavior, or ethical principles guide our lives. However, the methods of these value systems are not the same worldwide.

How to overcome the barriers in communication?

**Physical Barriers.** By removing defects in a communication system by controlling noise and physical distance, physical barriers can be overcome to some extent. Though we can't overcome

physical barriers such as time, distance, or machine defects, we can somewhat control physical barriers. To make communication effective, the participants of the communication process must make efforts to overcome physical obstacles.

**Language Barrier.** A lot of effort is required to overcome language barriers. There should be respect for any language before learning a new language. It requires an effort to learn a foreign language. So, by learning the correct pronunciation and accent and improving vocabulary, we can master a language. We must enhance our listening skills and only understand the language properly.

**Psychological Barriers.** It is true that psychological barriers are difficult to overcome or solve. There must be acceptance of one's mistakes or limitations. This will lead to an understanding of human life. People do not accept their faults or limitations. This leads to many problems. We must be humble and respectful towards other people. Often, the sender and the receiver are not in the proper frame of mind. Thus, this creates problems in communication. Misunderstanding, lack of interest, and mental and physical disturbance can cause problems because of that. Efforts should be taken by superiors and all reporting people to overcome the difficulties.

**Cultural barriers.** These barriers can be overcome by properly studying other cultures. It is very much essential to learn new cultural values, observe people, and accept their cultures. We must develop open-mindedness in this regard. It is worthwhile learning to understand the mannerisms of other people.

Thus, we can improve the communication process by removing specific barriers. Besides, the following general guidelines may also facilitate communication.

✓ Have a positive attitude about communication. Defensiveness interferes with communication.

✓ Work on improving communication skills. It takes knowledge and work. The communication model and discussion of communication barriers provide the necessary expertise. This

increased awareness of the potential for improving communication is the first step to better communication.

✓ Communication should be included as a skill to be evaluated along with all the other abilities in each person's job description. Help other people improve their communication skills by helping them understand their communication problems.

✓ Make communication goal-oriented. Relational goals come first and pave the way for other goals. When the sender and receiver have a good relationship, they are much more likely to accomplish their communication goals.

✓ Approach communication as a creative process rather than simply part of the chore of working with people. Experiment with communication alternatives. What works with one person may not work well with another person. Vary channels, listening techniques, and feedback techniques.

It is essential to overcome the barriers by identifying the causes that give rise to them; some obstacles are avoidable, whereas others are unavoidable, and an individual is not left with any option but to face the barriers. Keeping the technology updated, developing within oneself effective speaking and listening skills, being respectful, being fluent in the English language, not speaking to each other while working on an important assignment, developing effective leadership, stress management, anger management, time management skills and so forth, these are some of the ways that lead to avoidance of barriers; some of the obstacles are unavoidable such as inappropriate priorities when these kinds of barriers come up then the individual should develop within himself the confidence and aptitude to deal with such kinds of barriers. Implementing solutions to remove those barriers leads to effective communication and efficiency in achieving the desired goals and objectives.

Thus, barriers come up within the course of communication. Still, to effectively communicate, individuals should possess efficient speaking and listening skills, they should make sure that the listeners understand their viewpoints and concepts, make use of simple language, whether it is oral or written communication, be courteous

and polite so that individuals do not misinterpret any kind of communication, possess efficient knowledge of the concepts and ideas that they are communicating. There should be no personal bias or discrimination between people of different religions, cultures, races, ethnicities, creeds, and socio-economic backgrounds.

### **Summary.**

- Problems with any component of the communication model can become a barrier to communication.
- Any obstacle or problem in the process of communication that hinders or obstructs it is called a barrier.
- Physical barriers arise in the surroundings or our environment.
- Physiological issues such as bad health, poor eyesight, hearing difficulties, or pain can also cause barriers to communication.
- Language barriers arise due to language, word choice, meaning, or pronunciation differences.
- Psychological barriers arise from motives, social values, and different perceptions, creating a psychological distance, causing misunderstandings, and hindering communication.
- Cultural differences between people can create misunderstandings and hindrance in effective communication.
- We can improve the communication process by removing specific barriers and following general guidelines to facilitate communication.

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

1. Define the communication barrier.
2. What types of communication barriers can you name?
3. Draw examples of physical, physiological, and psychological barriers.
4. Talk about the role of language barriers in communication.
5. Why do cultural barriers arise?



6. What are the ways and methods to overcome communication barriers?

**Recommended resources:**

1. Effective Communication in Cross-Cultural and Diverse Environments. URL: <https://rcademy.com/effective-communication-in-cross-cultural-and-diverse-environments/>
2. Giovannoni, F., & Xiong, S. (2019). Communication under language barriers. *Journal of Economic Theory*, 180, 274–303.
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6. Holliday, A. et al. (2021). *Intercultural Communication. An advanced resource book for students*. Routledge. 340 p.
7. Sparks, G. (2022). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. McGraw-Hill Education. 578 p.
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10. Yusof, A. N. A. M., & Rahmat, N. H. (2020). Communication barriers at the workplace: A case study. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 7(10).

## Lecture 12

# ADVERTISING AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION



The most characteristic feature of communication is its diversity: it ranges from the mass media and popular culture through language to individual and social behavior. But it identifies links and coherence within this diversity.

Advertising influences our thoughts, feelings and lives; we need to be aware of how it operates and equip ourselves with information and ideas on how far we think it a necessary and useful form of social communication.

We see and hear many advertisements daily and for most of our lives. Even if you don't read a newspaper or watch television and walk around the streets with your eyes down, you will find it impossible to avoid some form of publicity, even if it's only a trade display at a local store, uninvited handbills pushed through the letter box or cards displayed in the window of the corner newsagent.

We usually take advertisements for granted because they are so pervasive. Still, they are one of the most important influences in our lives. Advertisements sell goods and services, but they are also commodities themselves.

In a sense, advertising is the "official art" of the advanced industrial nations of the West. It fills our newspapers and is plastered all over the urban environment; it is a highly organized institution involving many artists, writers, and film directors and comprises a

large proportion of the output of the mass media. It also influences the policies and the appearance of the media and makes them of central importance to the economy. Advertisements advance and perpetuate the ideas and values indispensable to a particular economic system. Advertisers want us to buy things, use them, throw them away, and buy replacements in a continuous and conspicuous consumption cycle.

To simplify, *“advertising” means “drawing attention to something or notifying or informing somebody of something.”* You can advertise by word of mouth, quite informally and locally, and without incurring great expense. But if you want to inform many people about something, you need to advertise in the more familiar sense of the word, by public announcement, involving mass communication.

Advertising is possibly the most prevalent cultural form of our time and will probably have the greatest longevity. Business needs to advertise. Language has a powerful influence over people and their behavior. This is especially true in the fields of marketing and advertising. The choice of language to convey specific messages with the intention of influencing people is vitally important. Visual content and design in advertising greatly impact the consumer, but it is the language that helps people identify a product and remember it.

According to the existing data, advertising began around 3200 BC when the Egyptian stenciled inscriptions of the names of kings on temples were built. Later they wrote runaway-slave announcements on papyrus. Signboards were placed outside doors in Greece and Egypt around 1500 BC. Historians believe that outdoor signs above shop doors were the first forms of advertising. As early as 3,000 BC, the Babylonians, who lived in what is now Iraq, used such signs to advertise their shops. The ancient Greeks and Romans also hung signs outside their shops. Few people could read, so merchants used symbols carved in stone, clay, or wood for the signs. For example, a bush indicated a wine shop, and a boot advertised a shoemaker’s shop. In ancient Egypt, merchants hired criers to walk through the streets and announce the arrival of ships and their cargo.

By the AD 900's, town criers, which called out the news, were common in European countries. They were hired by merchants to direct customers to their shops.

Advertising has gone a long way and evolved so much. Still, it was not until 1704 that paid advertisements were printed in the United States (now the leading nation in the annual volume of advertising). The first modern advertising agency was N.W. Ayer and Son, Incorporated was founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1869. Ayer introduced the commission system in the 1870s by convincing newspapers to give discounts; the agency then charged the client full price for the space used. This same concept later spread to magazines, radio, and television. Commercial radio dates only from about 1920, when Westinghouse began to utilize its vast investment in radio research and the manufacture of radio equipment during World War I. Advertising reaches people through various forms of mass communication. These media include newspapers, magazines, television, and radio. Advertisers buy space in newspapers and magazines to publish their ads. They buy time on television and radio to broadcast their commercials.

There are many kinds of advertising: *commercial consumer advertising* is perhaps the kind most visible in our society. It commands more expenditure, space, and professional skill than any other type and is directed towards a mass audience. However, the other types are worth mentioning briefly:

*Trade and technical advertisements* are usually confined to special interest magazines like Hi-Fi News, Amateur Gardener, or Engineering Today. They are aimed at the expert, professional, or hobbyist. Most trade advertising is informative and useful; the customers can usually evaluate the claims of cost, value, use, and so on. The advertiser/supplier probably regards the customer as a "user" and not a "consumer".

*Prestige, business, and financial advertising* is a growing advertising industry sector. Ads for large companies or publishing yearly financial results in newspapers are usually designed to promote public confidence and favorable business images. Such

advertising is not usually intended to influence sales directly. You will often see ads on television for such enterprises as giant petrochemical firms or large clearing banks, which present themselves as disinterested pieces of public information and are designed to make us think of these private corporations as benevolent, public-spirited, and socially responsible. The inherent message in this type of campaign is the promotion of the capitalist enterprise and the values of the acquisitive society.

*Small ads* are usually straightforward and informative. They are the small print of the classified sections of newspapers or such journals.

*Government and charity advertising* is usually non-profit but often uses the persuasive techniques of commercial advertising.

To survive, powerful commercial interests must keep in almost constant touch with the mass public and continually try to persuade them. Advertisers use mass communication media: commercial television and radio, the national and local press, and magazines. Originally, newspaper owners used advertising as a necessary and manageable support cost. Today, it suffuses the whole mass communication system, and some economists argue that the media are, in fact, not just a part of the economy but its servants. The media convert audiences into markets, and because they exist through selling audiences to advertisers, they generally preclude the services that the media could perform, such as providing adequate consumer information to the public.

*Advertisements do not simply manipulate us; they create structures of meaning that sell commodities not for themselves as useful objects but in terms of ourselves as social beings in our different social relationships.* Products are given “exchange-value”: ads translate statements about objects into statements about types of consumer and human relationships. For example, the ad for diamonds (“*A diamond is forever*”) in which they are likened to eternal love: the diamond means something not in its own terms as a rock or mineral but in human terms as a sign. A diamond cannot buy love, but in the ad, the diamond is made to generate love and comes

to mean love. Once this initial connection has been made, we almost automatically accept the object for the feeling. People and objects can become interchangeable as in, for example, the slogans “*The Pepsi generation*” and “*The Martini set*”.

Advertising, like language, is a system consisting of distinct signs. It is a system of differences and oppositions crucial in transferring meaning. In the commodity market, many products, such as soap, detergent, cosmetics, breakfast cereal, margarine, beer, and cigarettes, are identical. Therefore, ads for these products have created differences and distinctions using signs arranged in structures.

The most obvious way of distinguishing between products and making one stand out is to give it a distinctive image. Perfume ads, for instance, try to create an image of the product because of the lack of any “hard” information that can be given about its properties. And cigarette ads use brand images extensively. For instance, the ads for Marlboro cigarettes trade on the well-established image of cowboys, cattle round-ups, wild horses, wide-open prairies, etc., drawn from the mythic world of cowboy films. These images of the old Wild West transferred to the world of cigarettes act as *signifiers* for the *signified: adventure, masculinity, freedom, etc.* The product substitutes for the scene and is meant to signify these attributes too.

*Advertising language is a loaded language.* Its primary aim is to attract our attention and dispose us favorably towards goods or services on offer. Advertisers use language quite distinctively: there are certain advantages in making bizarre and controversial statements in unusual ways and communicating with people using simple, straightforward language.

Copywriters are well known for playing with words and manipulating or distorting their everyday meanings; they break the rules of language for effect, use words out of context, and even make up new ones. However, plain and direct language and modes of address can still be used to attract attention and add emphasis to a picture. The use of the imperative mode is, of course, very common in advertising: “*Buy this*”, “*Try some today*”, “*Don’t forget...*”.

*“Treat yourself”, “Indulge yourself with...”* as a play on words or puns: *“Short, Black, and Sides”, “Soot black rifles, drink black coffee”*. There are some ads that are completely devoid of verbal elements, relying on the visual image of the product to speak for itself.



Catching our attention and imagination and aiding memory are perhaps the primary functions of advertising language: unusual or stylish words and short, crisp sentences are easy to

repeat and remember. Brand names, slogans and taglines, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, jingles, snatches of song or verse, and endless repetition also serve our memories.

In addition to conveying meanings and feelings through judicious and experimental use of vocabulary and syntax, language can function as *a sign system and a sign* itself. For instance, some ads rely more on the language style than its actual content. In ads for, say, a foreign product like French cheese, wine, or cigarettes, the speech or writing might be in the French language. We are not expected to understand the literal meaning of the words used nor to decipher the details of the sales message but to recognize that it is French – a sign that signifies “Frenchness”. Similarly, colloquial language can be used to indicate everyday life, and childish language to connote childishness. Different typographical and calligraphic techniques can also be used as signifiers so that language can signify the product directly by uniting language and product.

*Language is a symbol system in human culture.* As Levi-Strauss stated, language symptoms are not only limited to the meaning of written or oral language but also all social phenomena of broader culture in society, such as clothes, food menus, rituals, and others. In this case, advertisement discourse in mass media is also seen as a language phenomenon. In the beginning, the function of

language is as a tool of communication naturally, to build collective social understanding in society. Then, the existence of language is known as cultural text and will describe socio-cultural reality. Language is no longer limited to meaning as a reflection of social reality but has the ability (power) to form or construct social reality.

In its development, language is not solely a means of communication or a code system toward values, which refer to one of monolithic reality meaning. Socially, language is continuously constructed in a certain social setting. As the representation of certain social relations, language always forms subjects, strategies, and certain discourse themes. Language is visual, in the form of visual pictures or symbols, and has the power to construct certain ideologies that will also affect and form subjectivity and our awareness. Visual language is also very effective as written language and oral language. In advertisements, language reflects the naturality of use value toward advertised goods or services. Language is also a medium to spread capitalistic consumerism ideology to society.

When we choose a word, we do more than name an object, person, or situation; we also convey feelings about what we describe. Words describe things and communicate feelings, associations, and attitudes – they bring ideas to our minds. For instance, the names of these lipsticks bring certain ideas to mind *sleek peach, hanky pinky, quiet flame, warm coral*. When products like carpets, paints, or make-up come in *several shades, colors, or patterns*, the advertisers choose attractive names for them, which are designed to do more than just separate and distinguish one from another. When we read or hear the description of coffee, “*Sweet caramel and hazelnut mingle with mild citrus to form a creamy body,*” *our sensory imagination* starts working, awakening associations and the desire to taste.

The language of advertising is, of course, normally very positive and emphasizes why one product stands out compared to another. Advertising language may not always be “correct” language in the normal sense. For example, comparatives are often used when no real comparison is made. An advertisement for a detergent may say, “*It gets clothes whiter,*” but whiter than what? A study of



vocabulary used in advertising listed the most common adjectives and verbs in order of frequency. They are adjectives: *new, good/better/ the best, free, fresh, delicious, full, pure, clean, wonderful, special, crisp, fine, big, great, real, easy, bright, extra, safe, rich*. Verbs: *make, get, give, have, see, buy, come, go, know, keep, look, need, love, use, feel, like, choose, take, start, taste*.

Advertising can be considered a universal means of communication across nations. It has a huge cultural potential that can affect an individual and society. To some extent, advertising speaks the language of the brand being advertised. According to Geoffrey Nunberg, “The great brands don’t belong to any single language – they’re part of a new global tongue, the Esperanto of the check-out stand. You may not know how to say “soft drink” or “athletic shoe” in Italian, but nowadays you can always get by in Rome by asking for a Coca Cola or Nikes. From an international point of view, those are the real common nouns now. We’re all drawn together under the international *lingua branda*, with only our separate verbs to keep us apart”. Advertising is creative, aims to entice and entertain the consumer, and is primarily associated with selecting linguistic means most suitable for implementing communicative goals. *Advertising is also a carrier of multimodal texts, whose non-verbal component is the most difficult to interpret. Commercials (short advertising films) are a syncretic combination of verbal, visual, and audial modes.*

Regarding sociolinguistics, advertising is a valuable phenomenon as it is a carrier of multimodal texts, and the non-verbal component is the most difficult to interpret. A multimodal text is a text that consists of two nonhomogeneous parts: verbal and non-verbal.

*A multimodal text is a synthesis of modes – semiotic resources of different natures.* Modules are not autonomous and permanent; they are formed through social processes; they are mobile and changeable. Modules are not universal but specific to a particular environment with a shared understanding of their semiotic characteristics. A verbal mode of multimodal advertising texts

contains a certain code (language), and native speakers of this language possess the code. Non-verbal signs do not belong to any code; they are universal and, therefore, polysemantic.

Every society has its approach to interpreting different codes. The same visual information may be perceived differently in countries with different cultural and national backgrounds. A verbal text stops the chain of ambiguity. In practice, we still read the image first, not the text that forms it; the role of the text ultimately comes to what makes us choose one of the possible meanings. However, everything changes when a multimodal text is perceived in a different linguistic and cultural environment. International advertising is undergoing intense changes with the development of international relations, international marketing structures, and transnational corporations. In advertising, the world practice should be integrated as a whole, and at the same time, fundamental cultural principles should be preserved and respected.

Modern society is characterized by increased national or ethnic consciousness instead of modern global communications. Namely, an ethnic group is a bearer of the language (verbal and non-verbal), the culture that originates from the historical past, and the modern traditions of the country. Therefore, the importance and existence of cross-cultural differences should not be ignored.

Advertising has a huge cultural potential that can affect an individual and society. However, this activity is interactive: advertising should reflect a particular society's national and cultural features. Almost all advertising promotes national character, even when the same product is advertised in different countries. Advertising is a mirror of the country. The most effective advertising campaigns include facial expressions, nuances, and other area specializations. Therefore, the importance of advertising cannot be discussed. Most non-verbal codes are subconscious. Like the language, many non-verbal codes are perceived and interpreted depending on the culture of origin. They are inherent in the national identity – idioethnicity (Greek, *idios* “own, special, original”, and *ethnos* “people”).

Comparative studies of the non-verbal behavior of different cultures and ethnic groups suggest that one must abandon naive ideas about the universality of non-verbal components of emotions, feelings, and attitudes and treat non-verbal patterns as the formations of dynamic social and cultural influences. National and cultural factors significantly impact the elements of the language code, the non-verbal components of communication, and the verbal and non-verbal components ratio. Neglecting national and cultural characteristics, history, the mentality of the people of another country, and the specificity of cross-cultural communications greatly reduces the effectiveness of the advertising campaign and may lead to failure.

The same mistakes can occur while adapting non-verbal elements of multimodal advertising texts since each nation's visual or symbolic culture is specific and authentic. *Advertising text adaptation is not just a translation of words; it is also a translation of ideas.* It is necessary to translate the spirit and context of the advertising appeal. Before creating an advertisement for consumers of another cultural and linguistic background, one should acquire information about traditions, customs, and norms of behavior in this environment. Cultural differences, different social and economic development and standard of living, consumer mentality, customs, and even household habits of different countries lead to different perceptions of native and non-native advertising. Advertising is often just an outward display of the culture. In times of globalization, every country tries to preserve its national culture and unique character. These factors find their manifestation in advertising. The most interesting advertisement is the one that uses its national peculiarities.

### **Summary.**

- Advertisements are one of the most important influences in our lives. They sell goods and services but are also commodities themselves.

- Advertising means drawing attention to something or notifying or informing somebody of something.
- There are many kinds of advertising: commercial consumer advertising, trade and technical advertising, prestige, business, and financial advertising, small ads, and government and charity advertising.
- Advertisements do not simply manipulate us; they create structures of meaning that sell commodities not for themselves as useful objects but in terms of ourselves as social beings in our different social relationships.
- Advertising, like language, is a system consisting of distinct signs. It is a system of differences and oppositions crucial in transferring meaning.
- Advertising language is a loaded language. Its primary aim is to attract our attention and dispose us favorably towards goods or services on offer.
- Language is a symbol system in human culture. Language symptoms are not only limited to the meaning of written or oral language but also all social phenomena of the broader culture in society, such as clothes, food menus, rituals, and others.
- Advertising can be considered a universal means of communication across nations. It has a vast cultural potential that can affect an individual and society.

**Questions for practical classes:**

1. Define advertising from the marketing perspective.
2. Define advertising as a linguistic phenomenon.
3. Talk about the forms of advertising.
4. Prove that advertising is a means of communication.
5. Why can advertising be a universal tool to communicate across cultures?
6. Talk about failures in cross-cultural advertising.

## Recommended resources

1. Fennis, B. V., & Stroebe, W. (2020). *The Psychology of Advertising*. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 466 p.
2. Fill, C., & Turnbull, S. (2023). *Marketing Communications: fame, influences and agility*. Pearson Education Limited. 656 p.
3. Giovannoni, F., & Xiong, S. (2019). Communication under language barriers. *Journal of Economic Theory*, 180, 274–303.
4. Herman, H., Sulistyani, S., Ngongo, M., Fatmawati, E., & Saputra, N. (2022). The structures of visual components on a print advertisement: A case on multimodal analysis. *Studies in Media and Communication*, 10(2), 145–154.
5. Povoroznyuk, R. (2022). Intersemiotics of multimodality: Advertisement in translation. *Astra Salvensis-revista de istorie si cultura*, 10(19), 587–616.
6. Sparks, G. (2022). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. McGraw-Hill Education. 578 p.
7. Turner, L., West, A. (2024). *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*. McGraw-Hill Education. 640 p.
8. Ushchapovska I., Movchan D., and Chulanova H. (2020). Idioethnic Features of Multimodal Advertising Texts: a Case Study of Coffee Commercials. *SKASE Journal of Theoretical Linguistics*, Vol. 17, № 5. 208-222.
9. Ushchapovska I. (2021). Structural and Semantic Features of the Brand Language: a Case Study of Coffee Brands. *Academia Letters*. URL: [https://www.academia.edu/51037447/Structural\\_and\\_Semantic\\_Features\\_of\\_the\\_Brand\\_Language\\_a\\_Case\\_Study\\_of\\_Coffee\\_Brands](https://www.academia.edu/51037447/Structural_and_Semantic_Features_of_the_Brand_Language_a_Case_Study_of_Coffee_Brands).
10. Warren, T. (2017). *Cross-Cultural Communication – Perspectives in Theory and Practice*. Taylor & Francis Ltd. 140 p.

Електронне навчальне видання

**Ущатовська Ірина Василівна**

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