

THEORIES
OF
INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATION

Renáta Panocová



**ACTA FACULTATIS PHILOSOPHICAE
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Renáta Panocová

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Theories of Intercultural Communication

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PREFACE

The purpose of this textbook is to introduce students to key theories, concepts, terms and topics in the study of intercultural communication. It is designed for Master level students of translation studies and interpreting and PhD level students of British and American Studies and other philology studies.

It is generally accepted that the task of translators and interpreters is not only about finding equivalent words in the target language. The process is much more complex and a proficient knowledge of language including idiomatic expressions, proverbs, proper names, etc. is not the sole requirement for a successful output. Still, there are always challenging concepts which remain untranslatable and may cause misunderstanding or lack of comprehension. This is the main reason why it is essential to acquire knowledge about other cultures, their history and heritage. Translation and interpreting of ideas expressed in one language by a particular social group into appropriate expressions for another group necessarily requires cultural decoding, recoding and encoding. Currently, in this age of globalization, cultures come into increasingly closer contact, which makes intercultural considerations even more important.

This textbook is organized in eight chapters. Chapter 1 contextualizes the field of intercultural communication and provides students with different perspectives of key terms and concepts. Chapters 2–7 present a selection of current theories. Chapter 2 presents in detail the model of cultural dimensions proposed by Geert Hofstede. The theory developed by Stella Ting-Toomey, which is an example of a theory focusing on identity management or negotiation is

presented in Chapter 3. Theories focusing on accommodation or adaptation represent another direction in the study of intercultural communication and the theory proposed by Howard Giles, described in Chapter 4, illustrates this. One of the central aims of theorizing intercultural communication is to explain effective communication and effective group decision. A good example of this kind of theories is the anxiety/uncertainty management theory developed by William B. Gudykunst and discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 concentrates on acculturation or adjustment and the theory developed by Young Yun Kim. The aim of Chapter 7 is to consider the relationship between thought and language from the perspective of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Finally, Chapter 8 gives a historical account of the connections between theories of intercultural communication and outlines directions and key questions to be addressed in future research.

My personal goal in this textbook has been to bring students to the point where they are prepared to confront theoretical issues in intercultural communication and start to think about the theory independently. I would like to thank the students of my class in Intercultural communication who gave feedback to an earlier version of this textbook.

Renáta Panocová

CHAPTER 1

DEFINING COMMUNICATION, CULTURE, AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER OUTLINE and KEY TERMS

- We will look at different approaches to defining the key concepts of **communication**, **culture**, and **intercultural communication**.
- We will consider in detail **eight dimensions** of **communication** that are helpful in describing its nature.
- We will explore the main approaches to defining **culture**.
- We will also discuss the differences between **intercultural communication**, **cross-cultural communication**, and **inter-discourse communication**.

1.1 Communication and language

If you were asked what comes to your mind when someone says *communication* it is very likely that *language* would appear on the list of the most immediate word associations.

Language is understood as the system of spoken and written communication used by a particular country, people, community, etc., typically consisting of words used within a regular grammatical and syntactic structure (OED, 2019: *language*, n. 1a). The main focus in this definition is on seeing language as a system used by a speech community in spoken and written interaction. The definition is an example of a general dictionary definition, but it is very easy to find a number of other, more scientific definitions, especially in linguistics.

Sapir (1921: 8) views language as “a purely human, non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols”. Lyons (1981: 4–5) is critical of Sapir’s definition, especially doubting the properties ‘purely human’ and ‘non-instinctive’. Among other scholars who have written about this, Pinker, treats language as an instinct and gives a detailed argumentation of this idea in his 1994 book *The Language Instinct*.

Hall (1968: 158) understands language as “the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols”. The emphasis on language as a tool of communication among people makes it very similar not only to Sapir’s definition but also to the general definition in OED. Language includes first of all words and most words can be seen as arbitrary symbols. Lyons (1981: 5) explains what Hall means by ‘habitually used’. Hall’s definition of language is historically from the period of behaviourism,

featuring the stimulus-response theories of language and psychology of language as proposed by Bloomfield (1933), which was later re-evaluated as having ‘a restricted applicability in both linguistics and in the psychology of language’ (Lyons, 1981: 6).

Jakobson (1960: 352) emphasizes that “for any speech community, for any speaker, there exists a unity of language, but this over-all code represents a system of interconnected subcodes; each language encompasses several concurrent patterns which are each characterized by a different function”. For Jakobson, it is necessary to investigate language from the perspective of its functions. Fig. 1.1 gives Jakobson’s model of any act of verbal communication.



Figure 1.1 Jakobson’s model of verbal communication.
Adapted from Jakobson (1960: 353).

The model by Jakobson given in 1.1 outlines six constitutive factors playing a role in verbal communicative situation. The **Addresser** (or sender, encoder or transmitter in other presentations) sends a **Message** to the **Addressee** (or receiver, decoder in other presentations). The **Message** is set

in a particular **Context**. The Addresser and the Addressee must be at least partially familiar with the **Code**. A final factor is represented by **Contact**, which is a physical channel and at the same time a psychological link between the Addresser and the Addressee making it possible to continue communication. According to Jakobson (1960: 353) each of these factors determines a different **function of language** shown in Fig. 1.2.



Figure 1.2 Jakobson’s schematic representation of six functions of language. Adapted from Jakobson (1960: 357).

Fig. 1.2 shows a scheme with all six functions of language Jakobson (1960: 357) distinguishes. It is natural that individual verbal messages fulfil more than one function or in other words all functions can be present in the message but in a different hierarchical order. This also means that the message may have one dominating function. Each language function in Fig. 1.2 corresponds to the factor in the same position in Fig. 1.1., e.g. the **emotive function** is oriented towards the Addresser, the **conative function** towards the Addressee, and context has a **referential function**, etc.

An example of the **emotive function** is, for instance, the utterance “I enjoy cooking a lot.”, which clearly puts emphasis on the feelings of the Addresser.

The example “Could you possibly help me with washing up?” focuses on the Addressee and therefore represents the **conative function**.

The **poetic function** highlights the message as it includes a well-thought approach to its structure, e.g. “A friend in need is a friend indeed” is a rhyming summary of folk wisdom, or “Once upon a time, there...” typically introduces a story or a fairy tale. It is important to note that the poetic function does not necessarily mean a direct link to poetry as the examples above demonstrate.

When context is central, we speak of the **referential function**, which can be exemplified by “John graduated in 2019.” where content information is the most important. Other examples are headlines in daily newspapers such as “Rescued migrants disembark in Italy”, “Paris paralysed by massive strike over pensions”, or “Flash floods in Spain kill at least five”.¹

The **phatic function** is connected to the Channel. We make sure that communication takes place and emphasis is more on social aspect of conversation, e.g. “How are you?”, or “Hi, what’s up?”. Especially with informal greetings, we do not even expect a factual reply to our questions, we are rather testing the channel.

We speak of the **metalingual function** whenever we use language to define another element of the same language. Definitions are good examples, for instance, if you are not certain about the meaning of the word *locavore*, OED

¹ These headlines are from the BBC News available at www.bbc.com, retrieved 15 September, 2019.

(2019) explains that it is a person whose diet consists only or principally of locally grown or produced food.

Jakobson's model of six essential elements of a verbal act and the corresponding six language functions is one of the most cited models (Brown and Rogers, 2002: 40). This model has been influential especially in approaching communication from a linguistic perspective.

This section started with the relationship between communication and language. It was emphasized that language is a means of communication whereas communication is a process of transferring a message among participants in a communicative situation. Communication is a broader concept than language. Signs, symbols, and words are central in language while the message is the main focus of communication. Language is a system of verbal and non-verbal codes used to transfer information. The way of exchanging messages or information between two or more people is communication.

This discussion brings us to the question of **defining communication**. Similarly, as there is no generally accepted definition of *language*, there are a number of different definitions of *communication*. OED (2019: *communication*, 5b) defines *communication* as the transmission or exchange of information, knowledge, or ideas, by means of speech, writing, mechanical or electronic media. Neuliep (2010: 10) says that although it is hard to agree on a universally valid definition of communication, "most communication scholars agree on certain dimensions of communication that describe its nature". These dimensions are the following properties of communication: **processual, dynamic, interactive-transactional, symbolic, intentional, contextual, ubiquitous**, and **cultural** (Neuliep, 2012: 11). In (1) there is a list of eight statements about communication emphasizing each property (Neuliep, 2012: 11).

- (1)
 - a. Communication theory reflects a process point of view...you cannot talk about the beginning or the end of communication. (Berlo, 1960: 24)
 - b. Communication is a transaction among symbol users in which meanings are dynamic, changing as a function of earlier usages and of changes in perceptions and metaperceptions. (Bowers and Bradac, 1982: 3)
 - c. Communication occurs when two or more people interact through the exchange of messages. (Goss, 1983)
 - d. All the symbols of the mind, together with the means of conveying them through space and preserving them in time. (Cooley, 1909: 61)
 - e. Communication has as its central interest those behavioural situations in which a source transmits a message to a receiver(s) with conscious intent to affect the latter's behaviour. (Miller, 1966: 92)
 - f. Communication always and inevitably occurs within some context. (Fisher, 1994: 22)
 - g. Communication is the discriminatory response of an organism to a stimulus. (Stevens, 1950: 689)
 - h. Culture is communication....communication is culture. (Hall, 1959)

The first property, **process**, is reflected in the quotation from Berlo (1960) in (1a). The processual nature of communication is highlighted by nearly all communication theorists. Communication is viewed as ongoing, ever changing, and continuous. For instance, if you have a strong exchange of opinions with your parents, you probably continue thinking about it after you leave home and so do your parents. Both sides develop thoughts further and your

next communication encounter will be affected by the argument and your own thinking process. You may regret what you said, but your parents may also regret their words. This will certainly influence your further interaction.

The **dynamic** aspect is closely related to that of process. In (2b) we see that “what makes communication a process is its dynamic nature” (Neuliep, 2012: 11). Communication is dynamic in the sense that it is impossible to capture it exactly in a model, we can only experience dynamism of the process of communication when we are part of it.

In (1c) the focus is on the **interactive-transactional** property of communication. Jakobson’s model in Fig. 1.1 already showed that communication is two-sided, which means it is **interactive**. **Transactional** means that we react to messages also in the process while they are being sent. For instance, if you ask your friend a question, you may see their non-verbal response when you are in the middle of your utterance. This also affects what message you send in the end. Given the non-verbal signs of your friend you can decide to reformulate the message in the middle and modify the information you send. In other words, *transactional* means that we are sending and receiving messages at the same time.

The **symbolic** character of communication is presented in (1d). Symbols can be verbal and non-verbal. Verbal symbols are words. A basic property of words from a semiotic perspective is that they are arbitrary. In the Saussurean semiotic tradition, there is no direct link between orthographic or phonological form of *key* (word, symbol) and the extralinguistic thing (object, referent) denoted by it. To put this differently, the relation between the acoustic image (*signifiant*) and the concept (*signifié*) is not inherent. This explains why we have different acoustic images in different languages for the same concept, e.g. *key* in English, *klíč* in Czech, *Schlüssel* in German, etc. Arbitrariness also

applies to non-verbal signs. Typically hand gestures often have different meanings in different languages and cultures.

In (1e) the focus is on the feature **intentional**. Intentionality is an intensively discussed issue in communication theory and for a majority of scholars it is a central characteristic of communication. The example of a simple exchange “Would you like to have dinner with me tonight?” with a response “Yeah, I’d love to.”, can be interpreted as intentional in the sense that it exchanges information about intentions. In a different situation, during your presentation in a class, someone coughs. The cough can be interpreted as intentional and showing that something is wrong, or as a sign of disagreement, but it can be also unintentional when the person who coughs is not well. Then, although the cough is unintentional, it is informative for the audience.

The dimension of **context** is emphasized in (1f). It is obvious that communication depends on the context. Our communication is different at school with teachers or out with friends. It is also important whether it takes place in a quiet university library or a busy street.

The statement in (1g) tells us that communication is **ubiquitous**. This means that it is everywhere and all the time. It is based on an idea that Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) formulated as that *one cannot not communicate* in the same way as *one cannot not behave*.

Finally, the property in (1h) is **cultural**. Culture gives shape to communication. In general, people from different cultures communicate differently. For instance, in Arabic countries negotiation about prices is part of social communication, especially at markets and it shows respect to a seller. This contrasts with fixed prices in European countries.

The eight properties of communication are more or less accepted by the majority of communication theorists, which makes them useful in understanding the concept of

communication and communication theories in this textbook.

1.2 How to define culture?

Having read section 1.1 you will not be surprised that **culture** is another concept we commonly use but scholars do not agree on a single, generally valid definition. According to Williams (1983: 87) “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language”. Obviously, this claim is not restricted to English only.

Sorrells (2013: 4–11) distinguishes three perspectives in defining culture: **anthropologic**, **globalization**, and **cultural studies**.

Anthropology is the study of human beings or human nature. The **anthropologic** perspective is reflected in the definition of **culture** as “a system of shared meanings that are passed from generation to generation through symbols that allow human beings to communicate, maintain, and develop an approach and understanding of life” (Sorrells, 2013: 4). For instance, if a young man in Arabic countries wants to start dating a girl, it is normal to ask her father for permission. Such a practice in Slovakia would be interpreted as strange. At best it would be taken as a cultural difference. It is important to be aware of cultural differences and avoid judging actions on the basis of your own cultural system of shared meanings considering them automatically correct.

Another perspective of defining culture is in the context of **globalization**. Appadurai (1996) and Yúdice (2003) introduced the idea that at the present period of globalization it is better to view culture as a **resource** in the sense of economic and political exploitation. For example, TV music shows such as *Super Star* or *X Factor* gained popularity in a number of countries all over the world and

have become a resource for economic growth in global trade. According to Sorrells (2013: 9) culture is also used “as a resource to address and solve social problems like illiteracy, addiction, crime, and conflict”. An example may be funk music produced in *favelas* (low income areas) in Rio de Janeiro serving as a kind of platform to challenge racial discrimination (Yúdice, 2003).

In the **cultural studies** perspective, culture is understood as “a contested site of meaning” (Sorrells, 2013: 10). Culture is seen as operating as a kind of hegemony² or domination through consent as suggested by the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937). This perspective is not adopted further in this textbook and therefore it will not be explained in more detail. For more information, you can turn to Sorrells (2013), Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler (1992) or During (1999).

1.3 How to define intercultural communication?

In general it is understood that **intercultural communication** takes place when people from different cultures and ethnicities start communicating. Scollon, Scollon and Jones (2012) distinguish three areas of study in the communication between members of different cultures: **intercultural communication**, **cross-cultural communication** and **inter-discourse communication**.

Intercultural communication concentrates on studies of the actual interaction between members of different cultures, e.g. how French managers communicate when they

² In Marxist theory (esp. that of Gramsci): a dominant ideology which imposes or reinforces (through conditioned consent) a certain social order (OED, 2019: *hegemony*, 2a).

are not satisfied with the work of Slovak subordinates. Another example is a study by Bailey (2000) who explored communication patterns between Korean shop owners and African-American customers. The research was based on the analysis of video recordings of conversations in shops and conversations with shop owners and customers. The results revealed that Korean shopkeepers were very brief and to the point in their communication with African-American customers who felt offended by such conciseness. In contrast, African-American customers tried to start small talk and make communication more personal but felt ignored as the response to their attempts was not received with enthusiasm. As a result, African-Americans interpreted it as a lack of interest in communicating with them because of racist attitudes. On the other hand, Korean shop owners interpreted personalizing communication as a sign of bad manners.

Cross-cultural communication studies the comparison of two or more cultural communities, for instance, comparing conflict styles of German managers and Spanish managers. This might be illustrated with the research carried out by Lorenzoni and Lewis (2004). They focused on how Italian airline service staff and British service staff responded in situation when service went wrong. The staff worked for the same airlines and they claimed they would solve the problem in a similar way following the company rules. The results showed that Italian staff were more likely to adapt the rules in some cases, whereas the British were stricter in keeping the rules.

Finally, studies in **inter-discourse communication** focus on answering the question how culture is made relevant in a text or interaction and how cultural identity is formed through text and talk (Piller, 2017: 4). For example, Galasiński and Jaworski (2003) investigated the ways in

which people who live in tourist destinations are represented in travel writing. The material analysed was collected from the travel section of a British broadsheet newspaper. Galasiński and Jaworski (2003) identified three main strategies to describe people who live in tourist destinations. First, the newspapers used very general labels such as *locals*, or *women*. A second strategy was a description of a prototypical individual in a tourist destination and last, but not least, local people were described as willing to help tourists and being hospitable.

The distinction between intercultural, cross-cultural and inter-discourse communication is not always used in the studies, books or textbooks of intercultural communication and if so not necessarily in the same sense. When reading any book on intercultural communication, it is recommended to start with delimiting basic terms and precise senses in which they are employed by different authors.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, communication is described in relation to language and culture. Language is seen as a tool of communication. Jakobson's model of verbal communication acts is discussed and the individual elements are linked to six language functions: emotive, conative, referential, poetic, phatic and metalingual. Although there is no single definition of communication, a number of communication theorists agree on basic dimensions that characterize communication. These dimensions include: process, dynamic, interactive-transactive, symbolic, intentional, contextual, ubiquitous, and cultural (Neuliep, 2012: 11). Culture is defined from three perspectives, anthropological with emphasis on shared meaning, globalization viewing culture as a resource, and cultural studies understanding culture as hegemony. Finally, intercultural communication covers the interaction of people belonging to different cultural backgrounds. Three approaches are distinguished: inter-cultural, cross-cultural and inter-discourse communication.

EXERCISES

1. Try to recall all the ways you used language to communicate in different contexts today or yesterday. Make a list with two columns: Description of Event, and Language Function. Compare it with other students and discuss the differences and similarities.
2. Consider the anthropological definition of culture and think of examples of how shared meaning is created. Can you think of any example of how shared meanings change over time?
3. Can you describe your own cultural background? Compare it with the cultural backgrounds of other students in your class.
4. Go to the website of the Journal of Intercultural Communication <https://www.immi.se/intercultural/>. Browse through the archive, read abstracts of the papers and look up three papers, each of them being an example of studies of intercultural, cross-cultural, and inter-discourse communication. Give reasons for your classification.

FURTHER READING

- Jakobson, Roman (1960), 'Linguistics and Poetics', in Sebeok, Thomas (Ed.), *Style in Language*. Cambridge Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, pp. 350–377.
- Neuliep, James W. (2012), *Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach* (5th edition). Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.
- Sorrels, Kathryn (2013), *Intercultural Communication: Globalization and Social Justice*. Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.

CHAPTER 2

HOFSTEDE'S MODEL OF CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

CHAPTER OUTLINE and KEY TERMS

- We will look at how Hofstede defines **culture**.
- We will consider in detail **six cultural dimensions** used to differentiate and characterize various cultures.
- We will also discuss the impact of cultural dimensions and findings by Hofstede on efficient intercultural communication.

The author of the model of cultural dimensions is **Geert Hofstede** (born 1928) who carried out a pioneering study of cultures across modern nations. He was Professor of Management and Professor of Organizational Anthropology and International Management. His affiliations include EIASM (European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management) in Brussels, Belgium, Maastricht University in the Netherlands, University of Tilburg in the Netherlands and also the University of Hong Kong. At present he is Professor Emeritus at Maastricht University although not active on a daily basis due to his age. Together with Bob Waisfisz he founded the Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation (IRIC) affiliated with Tilburg

University in the Netherlands. Geert Hofstede is the author or co-author of 7 scholarly books about culture, and more than 240 articles and book chapters. His work is recognized worldwide; he has been awarded a number of prestigious distinctions and honorary doctorates. In 2011 he was Knighted by order of Her Majesty Beatrix, Queen of the Netherlands, to the rank of “Ridder in de Orde van de Nederlandse Leeuw”.³

2.1 How to define culture?

In Chapter 1 we saw that the concept of culture can be understood and defined in many ways. Hofstede et al. (2010: 516) adopts an anthropological perspective to define **culture** as “the unwritten rules of the social game, or more formally the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another”. This definition requires further explanation.

The unwritten rules or metaphorical collective programming of the mind include patterns of feeling, thinking and potential behaviour in particular context. We learn most of them as children, typically first in a family, and we continue learning throughout our lifetime in neighbourhood, school, etc. For instance, a person from a poor background who worked hard to become a successful professional has a number of different mental programmes from a person who was already born to a successful and socially higher family and remained in such context for their whole life. Hofstede (2011) emphasizes that culture “is always a collective phenomenon, but it can be connected to

³ More bio data and list of publications is available at <https://geerthofstede.com/geert-hofstede-biography/>, accessed 3 August, 2019.

different collectives”. The main reason is that it is at least partly shared with people who live or lived within the same social context, which is the place where it was also learned.

As mentioned above, Hofstede approaches the task of defining culture from an anthropological perspective. **Social** or **cultural anthropology** is the science of human societies. It covers not only patterns of thinking, feeling and behaviour, but also common issues such as greeting, eating habits, showing or not showing feelings, keeping a certain physical distance from others, making love, and maintaining body hygiene. Hofstede et al. (2010: 6) distinguishes **culture** from **human nature** and from an individual’s **personality** as in Fig. 2.1.

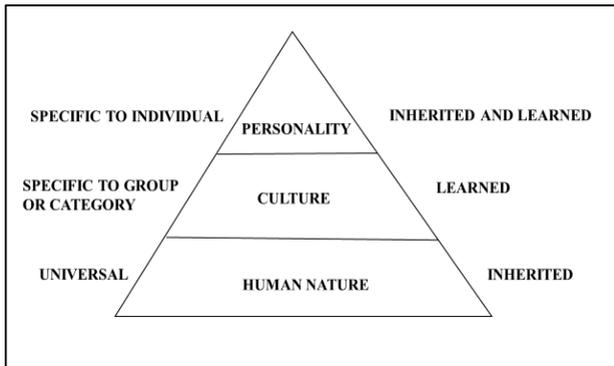


Figure 2.1 Three levels of uniqueness of mental programming. Adapted from Hofstede, Geert, Hofstede, Gert Jan & Minkov, Michael (2010: 6).

Human nature is at the bottom of Fig. 2.1 as the universal level, which is inherited in our genes. It also determines how human beings operate psychologically and physically.

Human nature covers the human ability to feel love, sadness, pride, shame, observe the world around us and share these observations with other humans. The way we express e.g. sadness or shame is determined by **culture**.

At the top of Fig. 2.1 we find **personality**. Personality is unique of an individual and does not have to be necessarily shared with other people. It is a combination of the inherited and the learned. The former means it is genetically determined and the latter means it is influenced by **culture** and individual personal experiences.

Culture is learned, not innate (Hofstede et al., 2010: 6). This means it comes from social environment. In Fig. 2.1 it may seem that the borderlines between culture, human nature and personality are clear-cut. However, this is not the case and it has been a matter of numerous scientific debates.

2.2 What characterizes culture?

A good way to explore differences among cultures is to consider the four main concepts that characterize culture: **symbols**, **heroes**, **rituals**, and **values** (Hofstede, 2001) .

Symbols include words, objects, pictures, gestures, etc. which have a meaning recognized and shared by members of a particular culture. Flags, dress, e.g. national costumes also belong to this category. Old symbols are replaced by new ones, some symbols are even shared or copied by other cultures or cultural groups. For instance, wedding rings symbolize love and marriage for life in a number of cultures, but not in all.

Heroes are people who serve as a model of acting because their personal properties are admired and valued in their cultural environment. Heroes can be fictitious or real people, alive or dead. In Slovakia, a prototypical example of a hero is Juraj Jánošík (1688–1713), the Slovak legendary

folk hero who used his great physical power to fight against injustice by the rich towards the poor. On the other hand, modern heroes appear, at present, often via television, e.g. Superman.

Rituals are collective activities which are considered socially important. Social ceremonies, such as weddings, funerals, greetings, the way of showing respect to other people are examples of rituals.

Values represent the essence of culture. Values tell us how people and actions are evaluated usually between two polar ends. For instance, good versus evil, decent versus indecent, beautiful versus ugly, permitted versus forbidden, moral versus immoral.

All of us started acquiring symbols as children through our native language or mother language. With this language we learned how to greet people, how to respond in various situations. When we started school, our repertoire of heroes, rituals and values extended and was influenced by other people than our family, neighbours, and friends. A similar extension takes place with every new environment we find ourselves in. This is the way we are shaped by culture or several cultures throughout our lives.

Although culture cannot be equated with nationality, it frequently happens that people tend to assess some features as “typically German” or “typically American”. Hofstede et al. (2010: 21–22) see another important advantage of using nation as a criterion for the investigation of cultural differences. Nations as political bodies collect numerous statistical data about their populations, which make surveying for cultural differences more feasible.

2.3 Research basis for Hofstede's cultural dimensions

In the 1970s Hofstede had access to a large database of questionnaires about values of people in more than 50 countries all over the world. They all were employed by the multinational corporation IBM. He used these data to find dimensions of cultural differences. In his research analysis Hofstede (1980) identified four main value dimensions in which cultures differ.

- **Power distance**
- **Uncertainty avoidance**
- **Individualism versus collectivism**
- **Masculinity versus femininity**

The first one in the list is **power distance**, which is related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality. **Uncertainty avoidance** is concerned with the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future. **Individualism** versus **collectivism** focuses on the integration of individuals into primary groups, and **masculinity** versus **femininity** maps the division of emotional roles between women and men. The IBM data analysed by Hofstede and his four cultural dimensions empirically supported the four basic problem areas defined earlier by Inkeles and Levinson (1969).

External validations of the data continued and resulted in a list of 400 significant correlations between the IBM-based scores and results of other studies, published in Hofstede (2001). According to Hofstede (2011: 7) also “recent validations show no loss of validity, indicating that the country differences these dimensions describe are, indeed, basic and enduring”.

Shortly after the first publication, Hofstede and Bond (1988) added a fifth cultural dimension, **long-term orientation** versus **short-term orientation**, based on the research carried out in the Far East. This dimension is related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present and past. Finally, in the 2000s, Hofstede et al. (2010) included a sixth dimension **indulgence** versus **restraint**, associated with the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life (Hofstede, 2011: 8).

On the basis of a score on each dimension, an individual country has been assigned a position, relative to other countries. The six cultural dimensions are statistically distinct and occur in all possible combinations, although some combinations tend to be more frequent than others (Hofstede, 2011: 8). In the next sections we will consider each cultural dimension in more detail.

2.4 Power distance

The **power distance** dimension is related to the acceptance of inequality as normal by people with very little power and influence in society. Hofstede (2011: 9) emphasizes that power and inequality are characteristic of any society and although all societies are unequal, some are more unequal than others.

Cultures with **low scores** on this dimension believe that power differences should be minimal. This means that people with hierarchically higher position are not considered superior to people with lower positions. Subordinates expect to be consulted and people at all levels reach out to people at all other levels. In addition, people with little power believe that they can gain more power through hard work and motivation (Hofstede, 1980). Low power distance cultures prefer having pluralist governments based on

majority vote and changed peacefully, where the occurrence of corruption cases is less frequent and scandals normally mean the end of a political career (Hofstede, 2011: 9).

An example of a country with a low index of power distance is Austria.⁴ This means that prototypical features of Austrian culture are independence and equal rights. A hierarchy exists, but it is rather a matter of convenience. At work, superiors are accessible, experience of team members is valued, subordinates are consulted. The communication style is direct and participative.

On the other hand, cultures with **high scores** on the power distance dimension accept differences in power in society as natural. The role of hierarchy is decisive. People in superior positions give instructions to subordinates and subordinates are not consulted, they act in line with the superior's orders. High power distance cultures often have autocratic governments. Corruption is frequent, with a strong tendency to cover up scandals (Hofstede, 2011: 9). There tends to be a large gap between income at the top and bottom of the hierarchy (Hofstede, 2011: 9).

Interestingly, Hofstede's interactive web tool labels Slovakia, as a high power distance country.⁵ The power distance index shows that in Slovakia it is taken for granted that some people have more power than others. It is also accepted and expected that these people use their power for the general well-being of others. Superiors are expected to supervise their subordinates. A good boss should be highly

⁴ This information is available at <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/austria/>, retrieved 11 August, 2019.

⁵ This information is available at <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/slovakia/>, retrieved 11 August, 2019.

visible and tells others what to do. Hierarchical organizations are accepted as a norm. According to Hofstede's web interpretation of the score for Slovakia, "a key issue for foreigners to understand is that in spite of the very high score, a manager still has to prove him or herself in order to make people respect and accept decisions from above or the (foreign) headquarter".

Hofstede et al. (2010) found that power distance scores tend to be higher for East European, Latin American, Asian and African countries and lower for English-speaking Western countries.

2.5 Uncertainty avoidance

The dimension of **uncertainty avoidance** "indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual" (Hofstede, 2011: 10). Hofstede emphasizes that uncertainty avoidance is not identical with risk avoidance, but "it deals with a society's tolerance for ambiguity" (Hofstede, 2011: 10).

Typically, cultures with **high scores** on the uncertainty avoidance dimension do not feel comfortable in ambiguous situations. Therefore, there are strict codes of behaviour and a tendency to support beliefs in absolute truths. Work organizations have precise rules and require punctuality (Jandt, 2004). Hofstede's research results indicate that "people in uncertainty avoiding countries are also more emotional, and motivated by inner nervous energy" (Hofstede, 2011: 11).

Greece is a nation that can be seen as a prototypical culture avoiding uncertainty in Hofstede's model. Bureaucracy, laws and rules are perceived as indispensable

to create a safe environment. The high score in this dimension also tells us that Greeks tend to show their emotions easily through body language. According to Hofstede, “the Greek myth about the “birth” of the world tells us a lot about high Uncertainty Avoidance: at the very beginning there was only Chaos but then Chronos (Time) came in to organize life and make it easier to manage”.⁶

In contrast, cultures with **low scores** on uncertainty avoidance accept ambiguity and less structured context more easily. Individual people are more open to innovations and in general to ideas which are different from what they are used to (Hofstede, 2011: 11). Rules are frequently ignored and punctuality has to be taught or reinforced (Dainton and Zelle, 2011: 185).

Among European countries, Sweden scores low on this cultural dimension. In everyday life this means that the attitude to norms and rules is more flexible. Swedes are also convinced that if rules do not work properly, they should be changed. In addition, a general expectation is that the rules must be meaningful. In workplace, schedules remain flexible, hard work is done only when required by the situation. On the other hand, people are not afraid of innovative ideas.⁷

Hofstede et al. (2010) report that uncertainty avoidance seems higher in East and Central European countries, Latin countries, in Japan and in German speaking countries.

⁶ This information is available at <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/greece/>, retrieved 11 August, 2019.

⁷ This information is available at <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/sweden/>, retrieved 11 August, 2019.

Typically lower scores are found in English speaking countries, Nordic countries and countries with Chinese culture.

2.6 Individualism versus collectivism

The **individualism** versus **collectivism** dimension addresses the issue of how people define themselves and their relationships with others. Hofstede (1980, 2011) considers this dimension fundamental in all societies world-wide. Hofstede (2011: 11) lists ten major features in which individualistic and collectivistic cultures differ and we will consider some of them in more detail.

First, individualistic cultures emphasize individual responsibility of taking care of oneself and one's immediate family. This contrasts with collectivists where people are part of larger groups from birth and it is a responsibility of the extended family or another larger group to protect individuals. In return, loyalty to such a larger social unit is expected.

The most obvious difference between the two ends of this dimension is the one between I-consciousness and We-consciousness. The former is often exemplified by the question *What's in it for me?*, perfectly acceptable especially in situations when an individual person is asked for something more standard. In other words, the focus on self is prioritized over other relationships.

The right of privacy is valued in individualistic cultures whereas in collectivistic cultures it is of less importance. For instance, in Western European cultures it is normal first to call and find out whether it is OK to visit a friend or a family member. The same practice is not followed by typically collectivistic cultures such as China or South Korea where it

is fully acceptable to enter the private life of members of the extended family.

Another feature of individualistic cultures is that they are often characterized as guilt cultures. This means that if someone breaks the rules, he often feels guilty, guided by an individually developed conscience that functions as a private inner pilot (Hofstede et al. 2010: 110). On the other hand, collectivistic cultures are described as shame cultures in the sense that if rules are broken, the whole group to which a person belongs to is ashamed of the behaviour of its individual member. Hofstede et al. (2010: 110) explain that “shame is social in nature, whereas guilt is individual; whether shame is felt depends on whether the infringement has become known by others. This becoming known is more of a source of shame than the infringement itself”.

In individualistic cultures it is expected that people freely express their personal opinions and speak their minds. In collectivistic cultures, opinions and votes are predetermined by the in-group and harmony is valued more than expressing individual personal opinions directly. In line with Hofstede et al. (2010), individualism tends to dominate in developed and Western countries, while collectivism prevails in less developed and Eastern countries. Prototypical examples of individualistic cultures are the United States, or the Netherlands, collectivistic cultures are represented by China or South Korea. Interestingly, for instance, Japan and Slovakia take a middle position on this dimension.

2.7 Masculinity versus femininity

The next dimension focuses on the relationship between men and women and what is considered a gender-appropriate behaviour. It is important to understand that this dimension

is not about individuals, but about expected emotional gender roles (Hofstede, 2011: 12). A typical property of **masculine cultures** is that biological sex is taken as a basis for distinct roles for men and women. This means that men are expected to be assertive, ambitious and competitive whereas women's roles are supportiveness, nurturing and deference. These roles are also visible in the workplace. In masculine cultures, managers are supposed to be decisive and assertive (Jandt, 2004). Women are not treated equally, usually they are given lower salaries, less stable positions and fewer opportunities to make progress in their professional careers (Kim, 2001).

In contrast, in **feminine cultures**, biological sex is not taken as a firm basis for distinctions between gender roles. Men and women are equally assertive or deferent, competitive or nurturing. Feminine cultures concentrate on the facilitation of interpersonal relationships and concern for the weak (Jandt, 2004). When applied to the workplace, feminine cultures focus on a search for agreement and they tend to prefer quality of life over material success.

Hofstede's results show that Slovakia is a typical masculine country. This means that it is highly success-oriented. Only successful people can reach their goals. Status is an important aspect in this, especially status symbols like cars, impressive houses, branded clothes etc. People work hard to achieve a high living standard and be able to "show their achievements". Long working hours are needed in order to achieve this.⁸

On the other hand, the Netherlands has a typically feminine culture. As mentioned above, in feminine countries

⁸ This information is available at <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/slovakia/>, retrieved 11 August, 2019.

it is important to keep up the life/work balance. An effective manager is supportive to their people, and decision making is achieved through involvement. Managers aim for consensus and people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation and the Dutch are known for their long discussions until consensus has been reached.⁹

2.8 Long-term versus short-term orientation

The fifth dimension is grounded in Confucian thinking and was added after criticism of Hofstede's original four dimension for a Western bias. This dimension was added after obtaining data from Chinese scholars (Hofstede, 2011: 13).

A **long-term orientation** is connected with thrift, savings, perseverance, and the willingness to subordinate oneself to achieving a goal. Characteristic features of long-term oriented workplaces is a strong work ethic and having distant goals to achieve (Hofstede, 2011: 15). People believe that truth depends very much on context and time and they can adapt traditions easily to changed conditions.

A **short-term orientation** focuses on a desire for immediate satisfaction. People in short-termcultures tend to spend money on the same expensive objects as their friends or neighbours. They are worried about seeming less important socially than they are. People also prefer fast results to distant gain (Hofstede, 2011: 16). At work,

⁹ This information is available at <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/the-netherlands/>, retrieved 11 August, 2019.

immediate pay and benefits are preferred to achievements in the long term.

Long-term oriented cultures are found in East Asian countries, followed by Eastern and Central Europe whereas the United States and Australia, Latin American, African and Muslim countries are rather short-term oriented (Hofstede, 2011: 16). Slovakia is closer to the long-term end of the scale, which means it is clearly a pragmatic country.¹⁰

2.9 Indulgence versus restraint

Finally, the sixth dimension was added in Hofstede et al. (2010). **Indulgence** is characterized “by a perception that one can act as one pleases, spend money, and indulge in leisurely and fun-related activities with friends or alone. All this predicts relatively high happiness” (Hofstede et al., 2010: 281). At the opposite pole we find **restraint** understood as “a perception that one’s actions are restrained by various social norms and prohibitions and a feeling that enjoyment of leisurely activities, spending, and other similar types of indulgence are somewhat wrong” (Hofstede et al., 2010: 281). As this dimension is new, further research is needed, but according to Hofstede et al. (2010: 286) it “solves the paradox of the poor Filipinas who are happier than the rich citizens of Hong Kong”.

A closer look at individual countries and their scores on this dimension reveals that indulgence tends to prevail in South and North America, in Western Europe and in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. Restraint prevails in Eastern Europe, in Asia and in the Muslim world (Hofstede, 2011: 16). If we

¹⁰ This information is available at <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/slovakia/>, retrieved 11 August, 2019.

compare Slovakia and the Netherlands again, we find that Slovakia is a culture of restraint with people restricted by a number of social norms and feeling that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong. This contrasts with the Netherlands, clearly a culture of indulgence, at least the Catholic south. People tend to be optimistic, act and spend money as they wish.

SUMMARY

Hofstede's six cultural dimensions provide a framework for understanding differences among cultures and various social contexts. Individualism–collectivism concentrates on the relationship between the individual and the group. Power distance tells us how influence is distributed in a culture. Masculinity–femininity explains whether dominant values are assertive or nurturing. Uncertainty avoidance reflects tolerance of the unknown and acceptance of risk. Short–term orientation cultures tend to prefer immediate results to long–term gain whereas long–term cultures focus on the achievement of distant goals. Cultures close to the indulgence end of a cline are more open to approving enjoying life whereas those closer to the restraint end tend to regulate desires by strict social norms. Each dimension represents a cline where distinct cultures are positioned.

EXERCISES

1. Go to Geert Hofstede's website about cultural dimensions <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/> . The website includes an interactive tool to compare a maximum of four countries on the various dimensions. Select four countries, compare them on all six cultural dimensions, and analyse the results. Present the most interesting results in class.
2. Work in groups. Using the interactive tool from Hofstede's website in task 1, identify at least three countries which are on the extreme ends of individual Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Present the results of your searches in a table. Comment on your findings in class.
3. Give a detailed description of the dimension in Hofstede's model which you consider the most essential. Explain the motivation for your decision.
4. Here are the links to two free access journal articles criticising Hofstede's dimensions:
Williamson, Dermot. "Forward from a Critique of Hofstede's Model of National Culture." *Human Relations* 55, no. 11 (November 2002): 1373–95. doi:[10.1177/00187267025511006](https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267025511006).
Fischer, Ronald, C. Melanie Vauclair, Johnny R. J. Fontaine, and Shalom H. Schwartz. "Are Individual-Level and Country-Level Value Structures Different? Testing Hofstede's Legacy With the Schwartz Value Survey." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 41, no. 2 (March 2010): 135–51. doi:[10.1177/0022022109354377](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022109354377). Read them, present critical points from the paper and give your opinion.

FURTHER READING

- Hofstede, Geert (2001), *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hofstede, Geert, Hofstede, Gert Jan & Minkov, Michael (2010), *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (Revised 3rd edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hofstede, Geert (2011), 'Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context', *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1) <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014> .

CHAPTER 3

FACE NEGOTIATION THEORY

CHAPTER OUTLINE and KEY TERMS

- We will look at defining the concept of **face** and **facework**.
- We will consider different styles of **conflict management**.
- We will also discuss how they relate to **intercultural facework competence**.

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¹¹ More bio data and a list of publications are available at http://communications.fullerton.edu/faculty/hcom/ting-toomey_stella/index.php, accessed 25 July, 2019.

3.1 What is a face and what is facework?

Everyday social situations trigger a number of emotional responses such as being proud, complimented, praised, but also embarrassed or ashamed. Ting-Toomey (1985, 1988) labels them *face saving* and *face losing* concerns and they are crucial concepts of Face Negotiation Theory (FNT).

Face is understood as “a claimed sense of favorable social self-worth that a person wants others to have of her or him” (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998: 187). In other words, face is linked to emotional significance of our self-image in public and the way we want to present ourselves to others. This is then a good basis for our expectations of how others should treat us. For instance, the decision that the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship 2019 would be held in Slovakia is a good example of a public situation associated with national pride, dignity, prestige, and good reputation. All these properties can be covered by the umbrella term *face*. Earlier, Brown and Levinson (1987) had distinguished two dimensions of face, **positive face** and **negative face**. Positive face is concerned with a desire to be appreciated by others. In contrast, negative face is concerned with a desire to act without any constraints coming from other people. It should be noted that it is not possible to present positive and negative face at the same time. This means that if our aim is to get appreciation from others, it is normally not compatible with acting without constraints.

Facework is seen as “a set of communicative behaviours that people use to regulate their social dignity and to support or challenge the other’s social dignity” (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998: 188). This includes “specific verbal and non-verbal messages that help to maintain and restore face loss, and to uphold and honor face gain” (Ting-Toomey, 2005: 73). Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998: 188)

assume that face and facework are universal phenomena, but “framing” or interpreting the meaning of face and facework strategies in a particular context are culture-specific and differ from culture to culture. Striking differences were observed especially between individualistic and collectivistic cultures (see Chapter 2). A prototypical example of the former is the United States where “I” identity is emphasized and the latter China where “we” identity is a generally accepted norm. Numerous studies, for instance, Fiske (1991), Hofstede (1991, 2001), Triandis (1994, 1995), Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) confirm that the dimension of individualism and collectivism is helpful in explaining differences in face expectations in different cultures. For instance, Ting-Toomey (1999) found that in international business negotiation a strategy of assertive speaking is valued in individualistic cultures, whereas a preference for tactfulness and respect marks Asian cultures. In collectivistic cultures, assertiveness may be perceived negatively as an effort for personal gains.

It should be emphasized that face also covers awareness of other people’s face needs. Ting-Toomey (1999, 2005) distinguishes three **face concerns** given in (1).

- (1) a. self-face
- b. other-face
- c. mutual-face

The face concern in (1a) shows a protective attitude to one’s self-image in a conflict situation when one’s face is at risk. In (1b) the focus is on the face of the other party involved in the conflict. Finally, (1c) displays concerns for both parties’s images and relationships. Research into facework indicates that individualists tend to be more concerned with preserving and protecting their self-face, whereas

collectivists pay more attention to preserving mutual-face and other-face images (Ting-Toomey, 2005: 74). It is obvious that different facework strategies are used to achieve different face-concerns.

3.2 Facework strategies

Facework can fulfil several communicative functions especially in conflict situations. Communication theorists distinguish two types of facework strategies, **preventive facework strategies** and **restorative facework strategies**.

Preventive facework strategies are communicative patterns used to soften face loss situations. Some of the strategies identified by Cupach and Metts (1994) are illustrated in (2).

- (2) a. “I have years of experience dealing with”
- b. “Before you take a decision, let me tell you
- c. “Since we have all made fools of ourselves at different points in our lives, what I am going to tell you....”
- d. “Before I start, please accept my apology for...”
- e. “I may be way off base here, but please hear me out.....”
- f. “Since you are all experts in this area, and I am only a novice in this field

In (2a) we can see an example of an introductory clarification of status of the speaker, which may precede a more critical statement, which is referred to as **credentialing**. The function of a statement such as (2b) is to make a person to think twice before making a premature decision. This preventive facework strategy is called **suspended judgement appeal**. Self-disclosure of the

speaker to demonstrate understanding and support in (2c) has a bonding function. Such a strategy is labelled a **pre-disclosure**. Admitting our own imperfections and sharing them with others is usually a step towards a greater degree of closeness in communication. A **pre-apology** such as (2d) can help reduce feeling of shame and lower expectations from the other side. The main role of **hedging**, illustrated in (2e), is to decrease the chances of potential face loss in a difficult communicative context. A **disclaimer** such as (2f) is used to downtone potential face criticism.

As opposed to preventive facework strategies, **restorative facework strategies** are communicative patterns used to fix an already damaged or lost face. Sometimes the term *corrective facework strategies* is used. Cupach and Metts (1994) list the types of strategies exemplified in (3).

- (3) a. “I did not want to sign the contract, but the other group manipulated me into signing.....”
- b. “Yes, I signed the contract, but it’s no big deal, it’s only a three-month contract
- c. “No, nothing is wrong....” (slamming the door, sulking).
- d. “I am really sorry for being such a fool, I don’t deserve you accept my apology for.....”

In (3a) the speaker is trying to minimize their responsibility for an action by **excusing**. The example in (3b) downplays the degree of face loss by providing **justifications**. A typical situation of **passive aggressiveness** is given in (3c). Verbally the speaker claims that everything is fine, but they send out other signals denying it. Such behaviour often includes sarcasm, or complaining to a third person. The statement in (3d) is clearly **self-deprecating**, undervaluing

the speaker and offering alleviating face loss. Another corrective strategy is **humour**, making fun of the person's own mistakes may encourage the other side to soften their response. Topical **avoidance** to physical distancing from the conflicting situation where face loss occurred is also used. Screaming and physical violence used to repair face loss are examples of **direct aggression**.

Ting-Toomey (2005: 79–80) indicates that individualists would prefer using more restorative strategies such as excuses and justifications to fix their face loss. In contrast, collectivists would tend to use more preventive strategies e.g. pre-apologies and disclaimers to minimize potential face threatening situations.

3.3 Conflict styles

Conflict has been central in research of communication in general and intercultural communication in particular for a long time. **Conflict** is understood as the perceived or actual incompatibility of values, expectations, processes, or outcomes between two or more individuals (Ting-Toomey, 1994). **Conflict communication style** refers to the verbal and non-verbal patterns of responses to conflict in a number of conflict situations (Ting-Toomey and Oetzel, 2001). Ting-Toomey (2005: 78) stresses that facework is not equivalent to conflict styles. Generally, communication scholars (e.g. Rahim, 1983, 1992; Thomas and Kilmann, 1974) agree on five common conflict styles: **integrating**, **compromising**, **dominating**, **avoiding**, and **obliging**. These are often referred to as Western or North American styles as this is the location where they are most frequently attested.

To understand these five conflict styles, imagine a situation where you are part of a group of students who were assigned a task to prepare a presentation for your class. The

evaluation rule is that one and the same grade is given to all members of the group. The grade is important for you as your scholarship depends on it. One member of the group does not do a good job on their part and later than you agreed. Fixing their part may result in not delivering your presentation on time. Think of this situation in more detail and then look at the alternatives in (4) and decide what type of conflict management you would most likely adopt.

- (4)
- a. “I would be firm in pursuing my idea of the best solution.”
 - b. “I would do a bit of bargaining to prepare the ground for compromise.”
 - c. “I would “grin and bear it” if the other person suggests something I don’t like.”
 - d. “I would be open to the other person’s suggestions how to solve the problem and reach a joint solution.”
 - e. “I would try to avoid open discussion of the problem with the person.”

If you prefer a conflict style in (4a) in this particular situation, you would prefer a **dominating conflict style**, sometimes referred to also as a *competing style*. The attitude described in (4b) is typical of **compromising** or sometimes called *negotiating*. **Obliging** or accommodating is the conflict style in (4c). If the best alternative for you is (4d), your preferred conflict style is **integrating** or problem-solving. Finally, the **avoiding** style is illustrated in (4e).

Ting-Toomey, Oetzel and Yee-Jung (2001) identified three additional conflict styles: **emotional expression**, **passive aggression**, and **third-party help**. **Emotional expression** refers to as a response on the basis of feelings or a so-called gut reaction. Someone who relies on **passive**

aggression tries to make the other side feel guilty. Although this conflict style is more active than avoiding conflict, it is less active than open conflict. Many people tend to ask a person not directly involved in the conflict situation to mediate and this is referred to as **third-party help**.

Ting-Toomey’s (1988, 1991, 2005) FNT gives a complex view of conflict taking into account several dimensions. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2002) present a model of eight conflict management styles, in which type of culture together with self- and other-face concerns predicts the most probable types of conflict responses. The adapted model is given in Fig. 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Eight types of conflict styles. Adapted from Ting-Toomey, and Oetzel (2002).

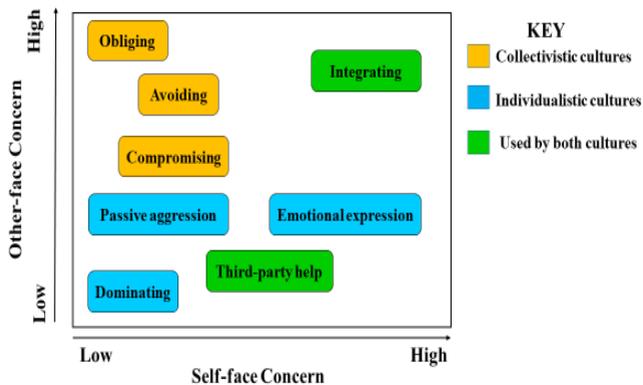


Fig. 3.1 shows that conflict style is based on two dimensions. The first dimension is a self-face concern or in other words the degree to which someone wants to satisfy their own interests in the conflict. The second dimension focuses on

other-face concern. It is the degree to which someone is cooperative in the sense that they observe what the other party needs during the conflict. The combination of these two dimensions serves as a basis for the classification of eight conflict styles. The model assumes that different types of culture, individualistic and collectivistic, or high-context and low-context (see Chapter 2), show different tendencies in their preferences for particular conflict styles. In Fig. 3.1 obliging and avoiding are marked yellow, which means they are often used in collectivistic cultures. These styles are perceived as appropriate for maintaining mutual-face interests and in-group harmony (Ting-Toomey, 1988). On the other hand, in individualistic cultures, obliging and avoiding may be perceived negatively, i.e. as a sign of escaping the conflict or being indifferent.

Interestingly, compromising is also used differently in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. For collectivists, compromise is understood as taking turns in giving in so each party shows willingness to do so. For individualists, compromise is offering something tangible in order to get something back and the output means that a midpoint was reached (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998: 195).

Fig. 3.1 indicates that third-party help is used both in collectivistic and individualistic cultures. Ting-Toomey (1988) points out, however, that there are important differences. Collectivists typically seek a person whom they admire and who is on good terms with both parties in the conflict. Individualists, by contrast, tend to prefer a mediator without any personal relationship to the persons in conflict, very often it is a lawyer, because knowledge of formal rules that apply is considered important.

The cultural framework still leaves space for individuals who may differ in their understanding of autonomy and group solidarity. Ting-Toomey and Kurogi

(1998) use the terms **independent self** and **interdependent self** to define „the degree to which people conceive of themselves as relatively autonomous from, or connected to, others“ (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998: 196). Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1994) use the term **self-construal** to refer to this dimension. Independent self-construal types tend to predominate in individualistic cultures or ethnic groups. On the other hand, the interdependent construal of the self involves an emphasis on the importance of relational connectedness typical of collectivistic cultures or ethnic groups (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Research shows that independent-self individuals tend to use more dominating conflict styles than do interdependent-self individuals, and interdependent-self individuals tend to use more avoiding, obliging, integrating, and compromising styles than do independent-self individuals (Oetzel, 1998, 1999).

3.4 Three approaches to conflict styles

In order to understand and characterize a particular person's conflict style, it is necessary to account for a complex assessment of a number of different factors reflected in different approaches to conflict. There are three approaches to studying conflict styles: the **dispositional approach**, the **situational approach**, and the **systems approach**.

The **dispositional approach** is based on the assumption that individuals have predominant conflict style tendencies in dealing with conflict situations in different cultures. It is important to realize that conflict style is learned through socializing in one's cultural or ethnic group. Personality traits are another factor that plays a role. Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012: 190) give the example that an extroverted person will more likely use a more dominating

or expressive style, but an introverted person will probably incline more to using a more avoiding or obliging style.

The **situational approach** emphasizes that the conflict topic and the conflict situation are essential to determine which conflict styles will be used in a particular conflict environment. Another crucial factor is the relationship.

The **systems approach** combines both dispositional and situational approaches. It takes into account the fact that cultural and family socialization conflict patterns have a strong influence on a person's predominant conflict style. The styles are then adapted depending on the particular conflict and the other side's reaction in this particular context. FNT is a clear example of the systems approach.

3.5 Intercultural facework competence

Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998: 206) point out that “facework management skills is a cooperative dance that needs both players to tango smoothly together. To dance in synchronicity, conflict disputants need to master trust-building skills. If disputants do not trust each other, they tend to move away (cognitively, affectively and physically) from each other rather than struggle-along with each other”. The central question is how to achieve the facework competence in intercultural context. Ting-Toomey (1994, 1997) finds three core dimensions of intercultural facework competence: **knowledge**, **mindfulness** and **interaction skills**.

Knowledge is the most important dimension. Ting-Toomey emphasizes that it is indispensable to understand why and in what ways we are different from each other. Basic insights into collectivistic and individualistic cultures, face concerns and conflict styles can be helpful in understanding communicative situations better and selecting appropriate communicative strategies to respond. Increased

knowledge about cultural and individual differences in facework management and conflict management enhances our mindfulness and interaction skills in overcoming communication differences.

Mindfulness means that we are willing to search for multiple perspectives of evaluating the same situation. For instance, if someone is late for an important meeting, you will not automatically assume that they are lazy and irresponsible. It may turn out that they were involved in a car accident on the way, or a family member had an urgent health issue. Being late might be the best they could do in this particular situation. Griffin (2006: 449) explains that being mindful means that you mentally switch off the automatic pilot and you are open to the novelty of unfamiliar behaviour. In such a way, you may reach new solutions taking advantage of different ways of thinking. According to Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998: 204) mindful observation involves an ODIS (observe, describe, interpret and suspend evaluation) analysis.

Interaction skills are our abilities to communicate appropriately, effectively and adaptively in a given situation (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998: 204). Many interaction skills can increase intercultural facework competence. The five interaction skills that can transform the knowledge and mindfulness dimensions to a concrete level are: mindful listening, mindful observation, facework management, trust-building and collaborative dialogue (Ting-Toomey, 1997).

Cupach and Imahori (1993) describe how different communicative patterns may lead to misinterpretation and disagreement. An American executive compliments a Japanese business partner on their excellent English in front of other Japanese colleagues. The American is convinced that this is the right way to show appreciation, which is face-enhancing. For the Japanese, this is rather the opposite, it

threatens their face. The reason is that in a Japanese context, singling out one individual damages the cooperative emphasis. Without appropriate knowledge, even the best intentions may easily lead to misunderstanding.

SUMMARY

Face Negotiation Theory (FNT) uses the concept of face to explain and predict cultural differences in conflict situations. Ting-Toomey's research proved significant differences between face concerns in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Different face needs in different cultures are associated with different preferences for conflict styles.

EXERCISES

1. Go to the online website about different conflict styles <https://www.builtinchicago.org/blog/conflict-styles-quiz>. Complete the quiz and discuss your scores. Do you agree with the interpretation? Is it compatible with the conflict styles identified by Ting-Toomey and her FNT?
2. Work in groups. Make a list of at least 5 potential conflict situations. What style of conflict management would each member of the group use? Discuss factors that affect the decision of each member of the group.
3. Compare FNT with Hofstede's dimensions of culture. What could possibly make a different theory better at explaining the situation?
4. Look up a conflict situation from any favourite movie you have or any other movie you saw recently. Prepare a

presentation analysing the conflict from different aspects of the FNT.

FURTHER READING

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- Ting-Toomey, Stella and Oetzel, John (2002), 'Cross-cultural Face Concerns and Conflict Styles', in W. B. Gudykunst and B. Moody (Eds.), *Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication*, Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage, pp. 143–163.

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNICATION ACCOMMODATION THEORY

CHAPTER OUTLINE and KEY TERMS

- We will discuss how people in intercultural situations adjust their speech i.e. **accommodate** their **communication style**.
- We will consider two main accommodation strategies, **convergence**, occurring when there is an effort to assimilate communication pattern, and **divergence**, taking place when individuals adjust their conversational style to be different from others.
- We will look at how communication is conceptualized in CAT.

Howard (“Howie”) Giles (born 1946) is a Distinguished Research Professor of Communication, former Head of Psychology and Chair of Social Psychology at the University of Bristol, England, and has been Professor of Communication at the University of California, Santa Barbara (with affiliations Linguistics and Psychology) since 1989. In the early 1970s he presented Communication

Accommodation Theory (CAT), which he refined and developed further several times since then.

Giles's main research interests include language, intercultural communication, interpersonal communication, health, and lifespan areas of communication. As such, he was editor of the 2012 *Handbook of Intergroup Communication* and together with Jake Harwood of the 2018 *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Intergroup Communication*.

Former President of the International Communication Association and the International Association for Language and Social Psychology, Howard Giles is founding Editor of the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* (1981–) and the *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* (1990–) as well as elected Editor of *Human Communication Research* (1995–1998). He is also General Editor for Peter Lang Publishers of a book series *Language as Social Action*.

Howard Giles also worked as a Reserve Detective Lieutenant in the Santa Barbara Police Department for 15 years. For this professional work he received over a dozen outstanding service awards.¹²

4.1 What is accommodation in CAT?

CAT is a theory with language as its main focus. The original version of CAT (Giles, 1973; Giles, Taylor, and Bourhis, 1973) investigated accent and bilingual shifts in speech styles in communication interactions. In the narrow context of CAT, the key term **accommodation** is understood

¹² More bio data and list of publications is available at <https://www.comm.ucsb.edu/people/howard-giles> and <https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/2015/01/22/howard-giles-researcher-profile/> accessed 16 August, 2019.

“as a process concerned with how we can reduce (and, in some cases, even magnify) communicative differences between people in interaction” (Giles and Soliz, 2015: 158–159). To illustrate it with an example, at present Turkey is a very popular holiday destination for Slovaks. Many Slovak travellers are delighted when Turkish small sellers greet them in Slovak and have learnt a few basic sentences. Very often, this experience is appreciated and shared with other potential Slovak holidaymakers. Giles and Soliz (2015: 159) consider accommodation as one of the main ways of reducing social or relational distance, because it puts emphasis on interpersonal similarities and therefore decreases uncertainties about the other. On the other hand, if Turkish sellers approached Slovak holidaymakers exclusively in Turkish or English, the distance in communication would increase.

Giles and Ogay (2007: 294–295) use a metaphor of “a barometer of the level of social distance” to explain accommodation. In other words, accommodation is a “constant movement toward and away from others, by changing one’s communicative behaviour” (Giles and Ogay, 2007: 295). This includes not only verbal language but also body language.

Two crucial concepts of CAT are **in-groups** and **out-groups**. Giles and Coupland (1991) define **in-groups** as social groups to which individuals feel they belong. Such groups may be based on ethnicity, gender, religion, race, marital status, or job. **Out-groups** are the very opposite, the social groups to which individuals feel they do not belong. For instance, a stock exchange specialist would probably feel out of place at a neurosurgical conference.

A significant reason which may contribute to exclusion and inclusion to the group is the use of professional language or even slang. Professional translators and also students of

translation are familiar with CAT tools. They know that CAT tools are neither associated with animals, nor specific to Communication Accommodation Theory, but that the abbreviation stands for Computer Assisted Translation tools.

Apart from language, other communicative symbols such as clothes, hair style, tattoo or eating patterns are used to signal identities of people and they play an important role in understanding CAT.

4.2 Accommodating through convergence

Convergence is a core concept of CAT and it is defined “as a strategy whereby individuals adapt their **communicative behaviours** in terms of a wide range of **linguistic** (e.g., speech rate, accents), **paralinguistic** (e.g., pauses, utterance length), and **non-verbal features** (e.g., smiling, gazing) in such a way as to become more similar to their interlocutor’s behaviour” (Giles and Ogay, 2007: 295). For example, teachers in kindergarten are trained to adapt their conversational style, they tend to speak slower, using vocabulary appropriate for pre-school children, in standard language (at least in Slovakia), in shorter sentences, etc. Thomson, Murachver and Green (2001) carried out research on accommodation in email communication. For each participant, one netpal used female-preferential language and the other used male-preferential language. Analyses revealed that the netpals’ language style, and not the participants’ gender, predicted the language used by participants in their e-mail replies. Female and male participants used the gender-preferential language that matched the language used by their netpals. The experiment results showed that both women and men converged to the language style (more female-like or male-like) of their email counterparts.

Giles and Powesland (1975) make a distinction between **upward convergence** or **downward convergence** in terms of its societal valence. An example of upward convergence would be a situation when a Slovak person who normally speaks a dialect comes to an official authority office and uses standard Slovak, which is normally required in such situations. This shows upward convergence to a more prestigious conversational style appropriate to the formal context. On the other hand, if an old person who speaks only a dialect comes to the official authority office and a clerk adapts to continue the conversation in dialect, we speak of downward convergence. These examples also indicate that a crucial motivation for convergence is “the desire to gain approval from one another” (Giles and Ogay, 2007: 296). The expectation is that the closer we get to our partner in conversation, the more respect and reward we will receive in return.

Convergence can also have negative consequences, such as possible identity loss, personal or social, or both (Hogg, D’Agata, and Abrams, 1989). For instance, in a class where a student converges upwards towards the conversational pattern of a teacher, he may be rejected and criticised by other students from his in-group. This does not exclude that the student feels satisfaction from the teacher’s response but on the whole this brings a mixture of feelings and insecurity about where he actually belongs (Giles and Ogay, 2007: 296).

Another example is given by Preston (1981) who observed that full convergence, in the case of foreign language learning, is not always desired by either the non-native speaker or the native speaker addressee. Preston’s research indicates that “native-speaker-like fluency, which corresponds to full convergence, is often considered with

distrust and seen as controlling by the addressee” (Giles and Ogay, 2007: 297).

4.3 Accommodating through divergence

Divergence is the strategy leading to “an accentuation of speech and non-verbal differences between the self and the other. Often (but not always) the motive behind divergence is precisely the desire to emphasize distinctiveness from one’s interlocutor, expressively highlighting contrasting group identities” (Soliz and Giles, 2016: 112). For instance, a person from Bratislava comes for holidays to the High Tatras, geographically closer to the eastern border. Individual geographical regions of Slovakia are marked by specific accents and native speakers of Slovak tend to recognize them easily. The person speaks with a heavy Bratislava accent in the hotel, restaurant, and other places he visits. In such a way he differentiates himself from others and emphasizes that he is from the capital city, which might be interpreted as prestigious.

The strategy of divergence can also be used to demonstrate disagreement or rejection. For instance, a teacher in kindergarten who normally speaks in a pleasant way may use a very different strict standard tone to indicate that children do not behave properly.

Similarly to convergence, a distinction between **upward divergence** and **downward divergence** is made. In our example with a person from Bratislava, if there is a situation where someone does not like the Bratislava accent and intentionally starts speaking in a much more cultivated standard Slovak to demonstrate what “proper” Slovak should sound like, this is a clear example of upward divergence. The example of downward divergence might be a context, in which a person with a low-rated accent, e.g. a

Košice accent in Slovakia, speaks like this on TV, or radio e.g. in an interview and the accent contrasts with the standard accent used by the TV interviewer.

A phenomenon similar to divergence is **maintenance**, where a person persists in his or her original style, perhaps for reasons of authenticity or consistency, without taking into account the interlocutor's style (Bourhis, 1979; Soliz and Giles, 2016). This occurs, for instance, when someone who always wears jeans, attends an important social event with a more formal dress code in jeans.

It is important to observe differences in accommodation carefully, especially in an intercultural work environment, as they may reveal a lot about the importance of perceived status, authority, and social and cultural identity. Larkey (1996) found that when evaluating race, ethnicity, and sex in the workplace, Euro-American male employees tend to diverge from what is defined as standard in the European and United States traditions. In contrast, minority employees are required to converge to the standard if they wish to achieve status and a better position.

4.4 Conceptualizing communication in CAT

Giles, Willemys, Gallois, and Anderson (2007: 147–148) formulated **four main principles of accommodation** that convey how communication is conceptualized within CAT:

Principle I: Speakers will, up to an optimal level, increasingly accommodate to the communicative patterns believed to be characteristic of their interactants the more they wish to

- Signal positive face and empathy;
- Elicit the other's approval, respect, understanding, trust, compliance, and cooperation;

- Develop a closer relationship;
- Defuse a potentially volatile situation; or
- Signal common social identities.

Principle II: When attributed (typically) with positive intent, patterns of perceived accommodation increasingly and cumulatively enhance recipients’

- Self-esteem;
- Task, interactional, and job satisfaction;
- Favourable images of the speaker’s group, fostering the potential for partnerships to achieve common goals;
- Mutual understanding, perceived supportiveness, and life satisfaction; and
- Attributions of speaker politeness, empathy, competence, benevolence, and trust.

Principle III: Speakers will (other interactional motives notwithstanding) increasingly non-accommodate (i.e. diverge from) the communicative patterns believed to be characteristic of their interactants, the more they wish to signal (or promote)

- Relational dissatisfaction or disaffection with and disrespect for the others’ traits, demeanor, actions, or social identities.

Principle IV: When attributed with (usually) harmful intent, patterns of perceived non-accommodation (i.e. divergence) will be

- Evaluated unfavourably as unfriendly, impolite, or communicatively incompetent; and
- Reacted to negatively by recipients (e.g. recipients will perceive the speaker to be lacking in empathy and trust).

Giles, Willemyns, Gallois, and Anderson (2007) give the principles as a summary of CAT without any further discussion as they consider them self-explanatory. In addition, they suggest that these principles are ready to be used, adjusted and/or converted to testable hypotheses for further research in concrete situations.

According to Giles and Soliz (2015: 163) although accommodation can be driven by interpersonal motives of gaining social acceptance and building social connections, leading to positive outcomes, the converse flow of these communicative mechanisms can also exist. This means that perceptions of accommodation from co-workers is likely to result in increased job satisfaction. On the other hand, it may be the case that job satisfaction may be interpreted in such a way that others are accommodating (Giles and Soliz, 2015: 163).

SUMMARY

CAT is a theoretical framework which predicts and explains accommodations which individuals make to create, maintain, or decrease social distance in communication. This theory concentrates on different strategies, convergence and divergence, in interpersonal communication. The more we like a person or a group, the more likely we are to adapt our conversational patterns. On the other hand, the more we want to demonstrate our difference, status or cultural identity, the more we are likely to use the speech patterns which emphasize this difference. Accommodation is not always effective, it may be received not only positively but also negatively.

EXERCISES

1. Read the text carefully and make a table presenting positive and negative consequences of accommodation strategies of convergence and divergence. Present and justify it to the class.
2. Choose any TV talk show or a regular discussion programme. Choose a 10-minute clip to analyse communication situation from the perspective of CAT. Try to include all aspects.

3. Choose a movie clip to illustrate convergence and divergence and present the movie and your analysis to the class.

4. Work in small groups. Here is a link to a personal experience with CAT <https://www.afirstlook.com/edition-9/theory-resources/by-type/applogs/Communication-Accommodation-Theory#listTop>. Read it carefully, discuss it and compare it with your own personal experiences. Choose the most interesting experience and share it with the class.

5. Here are the links to two free access journal articles about immigration:

Fail, Helen, Jeff Thompson, and George Walker. "Belonging, Identity and Third Culture Kids: Life Histories of Former International School Students." *Journal of Research in International Education* 3, no. 3 (December 2004): 319–38. doi:[10.1177/1475240904047358](https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240904047358).

Neto, FÉlix, JosÉ Barros, and Paul G. Schmitz. "Acculturation Attitudes and Adaptation among Portuguese Immigrants in Germany: Integration or Separation." *Psychology and Developing Societies* 17, no. 1 (March 2005): 19–32. doi:[10.1177/097133360501700102](https://doi.org/10.1177/097133360501700102). Read them and analyse them from the perspective of CAT. Then present your opinion to the class.

FURTHER READING

Giles, Howard (1973), 'Accent mobility: A model and some data', *Anthropological Linguistics*, 15, 87–109.

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context, and consequence’, in Giles, Howard, J. Coupland, Justine and Coupland, Nikolas (eds.), *Contexts of accommodation: Developments in applied sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp. 1–68.

Giles, Howard and Ogay, Tania (2007), ‘Communication Accommodation Theory’, in Whaley, Bryan B.; Samter, Wendy (eds.), *Explaining Communication: Contemporary Theories and Exemplars*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Giles, Howard and Soliz, Jordan (2015), ‘Communication Accommodation Theory: A Situated Framework for Relational, Family, and Intergroup Dynamics’, in Dawn O. Braithwaite and Paul Schrodtt (eds.), *Engaging Theories in Interpersonal Communication: Multiple Perspectives*, (2nd ed.), Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage, pp. 161–173.

CHAPTER 5

ANXIETY/UNCERTAINTY MANAGEMENT THEORY

CHAPTER OUTLINE and KEY TERMS

- We will define the concept of **stranger** in AUM.
- We will define **anxiety** and **uncertainty** in AUM and exemplify them.
- We will describe in detail the **schematic model of AUM**.
- We will consider **mindfulness** as a way to reduce anxiety and uncertainty to optimal levels.
- We will explore the most important **AUM axioms** presenting cause and effect in relation to intercultural contexts.

William B. Gudykunst (1947–2005) was a Professor of human communication studies at California State University Fullerton, the same affiliation as Stella Ting-Toomey (see chapter 3). Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory concentrates on effective interpersonal and intergroup communication and its reliance on managing uncertainty and anxiety (Gudykunst and Lee, 2003: 25). Gudykunst became interested in interpersonal communication especially at the time when he served in

Japan as an intercultural relations specialist in the U.S. Navy.

Gudykunst is the author of more than two hundred book chapters and articles in a number of leading journals, including the *International Journal of Intercultural Communication* and *Human Communication Research*. Gudykunst authored and edited more than 28 books, including *Theorizing About Intercultural Communication* (2004); *Bridging Differences* (2003), *Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication* (2003); and *Asian American Ethnicity and Communication* (2000). Two of his books, *Culture and Interpersonal Communication* co-authored with Stella Ting-Toomey, and *Communicating with Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication*, co-authored with Young Yun Kim, were announced as the outstanding books for 1989 and 1984, respectively, by the Speech Communication Association.

Gudykunst was also editor of the *International and Intercultural Communication Annual* (Vol. 7–9, 1983–85) and *Communication Yearbook* 24–26 (2000–2002) and served on several editorial boards, including *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *Western Journal of Communication*, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations and Communication Research*.

In 2002, William B. Gudykunst was awarded a “Lifetime Achievement Award” by the International Communication Association’s Intercultural and Development Division.¹³

¹³ More bio data is available at http://calstate.fullerton.edu/news/2005/116_gudykunst.html accessed 19 August, 2019.

5. 1 Who is a stranger? What is the difference between uncertainty and anxiety?

AUM theory was gradually developed on the basis of Uncertainty Reduction Theory by Berger and Calabrese (1975). Gudykunst (1985) extended their theory to intergroup communication and foresaw its application to intercultural effectiveness (Gudykunst, 1998: 227). Soon after, together with Mitch Hammer he proposed a general theory of intercultural adjustment which incorporated the concepts of anxiety and uncertainty (Gudykunst and Hammer, 1988). The name of the theory AUM was first used in Gudykunst (1993). Since then it was developed further and used to “design theory-based training programs to help trainees improve their communication or adjust to new cultures” (Gudykunst, 1998: 228).

In AUM theory, intercultural communication is viewed as one type of intergroup communication (Gudykunst, 2003: 169). Gudykunst (1988) uses the concept of the **stranger** proposed by the German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858–1918). The concept refers to “individuals who are present in the situation but are not members of the ingroup” (Gudykunst, 2003: 169). The notion of the stranger was used by Berger and Calabrese (1975) in their Uncertainty Reduction Theory. The basic assumption of this theory is that at the start of interaction with another person, the main aim of communication is to reduce the uncertainty about that person. Gudykunst (1983) extended the concept of the stranger to people who are members of other groups and who behave differently from what is expected in one’s own culture (Jandt, 2004: 81). When we meet strangers, we feel uncertainty and anxiety and we are not sure what is considered appropriate behaviour. **Uncertainty** means “the

inability to predict or explain others' attitudes, behaviour, or feelings" (Gudykunst, 2003: 169). **Anxiety** is used for the "feelings of being uneasy, tense, worried, or apprehensive" about starting interaction with strangers (Gudykunst, 2003: 169). AUM theory assumes that as soon as strangers manage their anxiety and uncertainty they will feel comfortable in the host culture (Gudykunst, 1998: 228). It should be understood that a certain level of anxiety is normal and desired to perform well in a particular situation. Such a level of anxiety is then referred to as optimal. AUM predicts that when anxiety is high, people tend to avoid interactions. On the other hand, when it is low, people tend to show very little interest in what is going on in the interaction (Jandt, 2004: 81). Perhaps all of us can recall experiences from a stay in a foreign country, with a number of situations when you were not sure how to interpret the situation, what to say and how to behave properly.

5.2 What makes communication effective?

When discussing models of communication (see Chapter 1) a common property was that the main goal of communication is mutual understanding. This is in line with Gudykunst (2004: 289) who maintains that "**communication is effective** to the extent that the person interpreting the message attaches a meaning to the message that is relatively similar to what was intended by the person transmitting it". When we are interacting with strangers we may or may not be aware of the fact that our communication is not effective. It is possible that we are convinced that we interpret the message correctly but the meaning we decoded may be very different from what our partner in conversation had originally intended. For instance, in a British context,

when someone says “That’s an interesting idea.”, this means the opposite of the literal meaning.

The opposite situation is also possible, we feel that there is something going wrong in the interaction and we may try to correct possible misinterpretations. This effort requires **mindfulness**, which “is the way that ingroup members and strangers can reduce their anxiety and uncertainty to optimum levels” (Griffin, 2006: 431). Gudykunst (2004: 289) writes that “when we are mindful, we need to negotiate meaning with strangers”. This means that being mindful involves being open to more perspectives of understanding of a situation and this leads to a better understanding of the interaction with a person from a different culture instead of judging it only on the basis of our own cultural norms. Effective communication and mindfulness are crucial concepts in the model of the AUM theory given in 5.1.

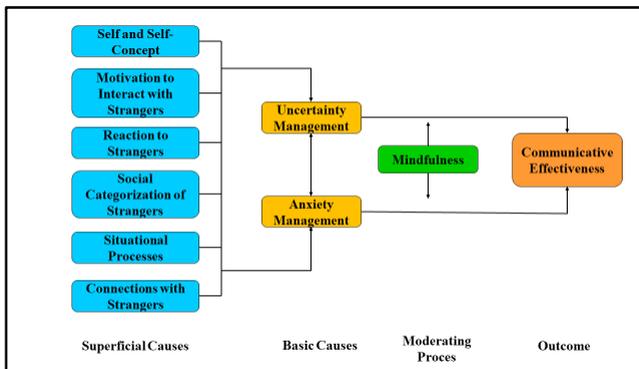


Figure 5.1 The model of the AUM theory. Adapted from Gudykunst, William B. (1998).

Figure 5.1 suggests a path of achieving effective communication. Communicative effectiveness is on the right and it represents the ultimate goal. Managing

uncertainty and anxiety, also labelled as **basic causes** of effective communication, shown in the yellow boxes in the middle, are considered the key to effective communication. In other words, uncertainty management is a cause of effective communication. Gudykunst understands uncertainty as cognitive whereas anxiety is emotional, or in other words, uncertainty is a thought while anxiety is a feeling (Griffin, 2006: 429). According to Gudykunst, people can achieve communicative effectiveness when levels of uncertainty and anxiety are at an optimal point between two extreme ends. If anxiety is too high, people are likely to be afraid so much that they are literally paralysed. If uncertainty is high people are confused because they cannot predict what their counterpart in communication will do and further communication may become useless. Being closer to the very low end of uncertainty and anxiety means that we are not paying attention, lose interest in the other person and react automatically, which may easily be misleading. AUM theory predicts that effectiveness in communication is likely to occur when levels of uncertainty and anxiety are somewhere in the middle. Keeping them in control requires the active role of mindfulness, shown in green in Fig. 5.1.

On the left, in blue, there is a list of **superficial causes** of effective communication. These represent a number of factors that typically trigger increases and decreases of uncertainty and anxiety especially in intercultural contexts. Superficial is understood in this sense that these are surface factors, which add to the underlying uncertainty and anxiety. Let us look at each of them in turn.

The **self-concept** is the way we see ourselves. Grieve and Hogg (1999: 926) argue that “people apply social categorizations to themselves and others to clarify their perception of the social world and their place in it and thus

render it more meaningful and predictable – identification reduces subjective uncertainty”. Social categorization determines our social identities, which influence how we act in social interactions. For instance, during my elementary school at the time of the former Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, visits from West-European countries were rare. The school I attended received such a special visit from a similar school in Wuppertal, a city in West Germany at that time. The teachers and us, pupils were extremely uncertain and anxious as we were afraid we would be looked down on by people from an economically more developed country. After the initial exchange, the German visitors showed their sincere admiration for the warm welcome. This resulted in increased self-esteem of our school representatives, which reduced their anxiety. Once their anxiety was under control, they could more easily predict behaviour of the German delegation.

The **motivation to interact with strangers** is another important superficial cause of effective communication. It is based on our need to trust strangers in the sense that we consider strangers reliable and predictable (Turner, 1988: 56). Gudykunst (2004: 295) explains that in the process of categorization of strangers our stereotypes are activated. If the behaviour of strangers makes sense to us and we perceive it as predictable, we confirm our self-concepts and we feel included. This feeling of inclusion is very important. According to Turner (1988) our motivation to communicate with strangers is influenced by the sense of whether our needs are met. If this is the case, we are more likely to manage our uncertainty and anxiety. For instance, in the situation with the German delegation, after the successful warming-up, the Slovaks felt included and were motivated to continue keeping their anxiety and uncertainty close to optimal levels.

The **reaction to strangers** includes our ability to show empathy to strangers, our willingness and ability to modify our behaviour to strangers, and our ability to cope with ambiguity.

The **social categorization of strangers** means that we tend to classify strangers on the basis of their physical appearance, accent, clothes, etc. (Clark and Marshall, 1981). We then use these categorizations to predict the strangers' behaviour. However, we all have a number of different social identities and our predictions may turn out false if, for instance, we base our predictions on ethnicity, but the strangers will base their behavioural pattern on a different category such as gender or social status.

Situational processes cover the conditions and contexts under which we encounter strangers and, consequently, these influence the degree of our uncertainty and anxiety. Gudykunst (2004) and Argyle (1991) claim that cooperation with strangers results in positive feelings toward the people with whom we cooperate. A cooperative working atmosphere creates a lower degree of anxiety and we feel more confident about predicting behaviour of strangers.

The nature of the contact with strangers determines what kind of **connections with strangers** we have (Gudykunst, 2004: 301). Sunnafrank and Miller (1981) found that we tend to like and be attracted to strangers we find similar to us. On the other hand, when we interact with strangers who are different from us, we tend to become attracted to them in the case of our interaction. As a result attraction reduces uncertainty and also anxiety or the reverse (Berger and Calabrese, 1975; Gudykunst, Chua and Grey, 1987; Stephan and Stephan, 1995). Intimacy of our relationship with strangers also determines the way we communicate with them. For instance, it makes a difference whether a stranger gradually becomes a close friend, in

which case communication usually becomes more synchronized and harmonic (Gudykunst, Nishida and Chua, 1987).

5.3 The AUM's axioms

Gudykunst worked on the AUM theory and developed it further for over a decade. The label *AUM* was first used in Gudykunst (1993). The assumptions of the theory were summarized in 47 **axioms**. Their final number was extended to 94 in Gudykunst (1995). In general, **axioms** are well-established or universally conceded principles (OED, 2019). Most of the AUM axioms are based on the cause and effect connection to uncertainty and anxiety. Such connections are common especially in an intercultural environment. Here I present a selection of 10 axioms of the AUM theory (Gudykunst, 1998: 242–250), which I find particularly useful. The axioms also include boundary conditions, which give details under what conditions the causal relationship is valid or not. The axiom numbers are taken from Gudykunst (1988: 242–250).

Self and Self-Concept

Axiom 1

An increase in the degree to which our social identities influence our interactions with hosts will produce an increase in our ability to manage our anxiety and an increase in our confidence in predicting their behaviour. The host is understood as a person from a different cultural background.

Boundary Condition:

This axiom holds only if hosts are perceived to be typical members of their culture.

Axiom 2

An increase in the degree to which our personal identities influence our interactions with hosts will produce an increase in our ability to manage our anxiety and an increase in our ability to accurately predict their behaviour.

Boundary Condition:

This axiom only holds for individualists. For a detailed explanation of individualism refer to Hofstede's theory in Chapter 2.

Motivation to Interact with Hosts

Axiom 10

An increase in the predictability of hosts' behaviour will produce a decrease in our anxiety.

Boundary Condition:

This axiom only applies to increases in predictability that bring uncertainty below our maximum thresholds.

Connections with Hosts

Axiom 36

An increase in the intimacy of our relationships with hosts will produce a decrease in our anxiety and an increase in our confidence in predicting their behaviour.

Boundary Condition:

This axiom only applies to broad trends across stages of relationship development. This includes the beginning of a relationship from being introduced to each other and getting to know each other better. Within any stage of relationship development or within specific conversations, anxiety and uncertainty will fluctuate.

Anxiety, Uncertainty, Mindfulness and Effective Communication

Axiom 39

An increase in our ability to describe hosts' behaviour will produce an increase in our ability to accurately predict their behaviour.

Boundary Condition:

This is only possible if we are mindful of the process of communication and our anxiety and uncertainty are between our minimum and maximum thresholds.

Axiom 40

An increase in our understanding the host culture's stock of knowledge will produce an increase in our ability to manage our anxiety and our ability to accurately predict hosts' behaviour. The stock of knowledge includes all information and experience about a different culture.

Boundary Condition:

This axiom only holds when we are mindful.

Axiom 42

An increase in our openness to new information about hosts and our interactions with them will produce an increase in our ability to accurately predict their behaviour.

Boundary Condition:

This axiom only holds when our anxiety and uncertainty are between our minimum and maximum thresholds.

Axiom 43

An increase in our ability to place hosts in new categories (or recognize how hosts are different from other members of their cultures) will produce an increase in our ability to accurately predict their behaviour.

Boundary Condition:

This axiom only holds when our anxiety and uncertainty are between our minimum and maximum thresholds.

Axiom 44

An increase in our awareness of the perspectives hosts use to interpret our messages (and the perspectives hosts use to transmit their messages to us) will produce an increase in our ability to accurately predict their behaviour.

Boundary Condition:

This axiom only holds when our anxiety and uncertainty are between our minimum and maximum thresholds.

Axiom 47

An increase in our ability to manage our anxiety about interacting with hosts and an increase in the accuracy of our predictions and explanations regarding their behaviour will produce an increase in strangers' ability to adjust to new cultures.

Boundary Condition:

This axiom only holds when we are mindful. Anxiety and uncertainty below our minimum thresholds will not produce increases in our adjustment; anxiety and uncertainty above our maximum threshold will produce decreases in adjustment.

5.4 The AUM theory and Hofstede's dimensions

Gudykunst carried out research in his AUM theory linked to Hofstede's cultural dimensions (see Chapter 2). In relation to **individualism** and **collectivism**, Gudykunst (1995) and Gudykunst and Lee (2003: 25) argue that people from individualistic cultures "need to sustain their independent self construals, allow personal identities to influence their behaviour, and self-monitor more with strangers than do members of collectivistic cultures". He observed that people from collectivistic cultures are concerned with social

appropriateness when interacting with strangers more than people from individualistic cultures (Gudykunst and Lee, 2003: 25). These findings are captured in axioms 48–94 (Gudykunst, 1998: 247–250).

Uncertainty avoidance is a dimension which Gudykunst linked to the reaction to strangers, social categorization, and situational processes. His findings suggest that people from cultures with high scores on uncertainty avoidance tend to be less tolerant towards ambiguities when interacting with strangers, and to have negative expectations about how strangers behave (Gudykunst and Lee, 2003: 25).

Power distance may also be connected to AUM theory. High power distance cultures tend to be less cooperative with strangers than representatives of low power distance cultures. Two axioms, 59 and 75, focus on power distance (Gudykunst, 1998: 247–248).

Masculinity and **femininity** is linked to motivation, self-concept, social categorization and reactions to strangers and Gudykunst and Lee (2003: 26) maintain that masculine cultures show less interdependence between themselves and strangers as opposed to cultures with high scores on femininity. This is also included in AUM axiom 82. (Gudykunst, 1998: 249).

SUMMARY

The basic assumption of AUM theory is that effective communication takes place when we are able to manage uncertainty and anxiety mindfully. AUM concentrates on understanding the factors which influence the achievements of effective communication. These factors include superficial causes and basic causes. The concept of *stranger*, a person who stands outside an ingroup, is central. AUM includes a list of cause-and-effect axioms written from the perspective of the stranger, superficial causes, basic causes and mindfulness.

EXERCISES

1. Work in groups of 3 or 4. Read the axioms in section 5.3. Choose 5 of them and illustrate each of them with an example. The example may be based on your personal experience, a movie, a book, or it may be made up. Present your examples to the class.
2. Read the following critical discussion of AUM theory: Yoshitake, Masaki. "Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory: A Critical Examination of an Intercultural Communication Theory." (2002) available at [https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Anxiety%2FUncertainty-Management-\(AUM\)-Theory%3A-A-of-Yoshitake/3f1a912e29f766294826afd86337ea9d3974bf62](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Anxiety%2FUncertainty-Management-(AUM)-Theory%3A-A-of-Yoshitake/3f1a912e29f766294826afd86337ea9d3974bf62). Make a list of critical points, explain them and discuss them in small groups and then in class.
3. Now read Gudykunst's response to the criticism from Exercise 2 in his paper Gudykunst, William B. "Understanding Must Precede Criticism: A Response to Yoshitake's Critique of Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory."(2003) available at https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/969f/850ddeef8d3226f90fdc42703a7db34637dd.pdf?_ga=2.80964439.156571518.1566416602-406080184.1566416602. Discuss Gudykunst's counterarguments. Do you agree with them?
4. Read Gudykunst (1998) from the Further reading section below. Read all axioms related to Hofstede's cultural dimensions and listed in section 5.4 and analyse them using the web tool on cultural dimensions from the exercises in Chapter 2.

FURTHER READING

Gudykunst, William B. (1995), 'Anxiety/Uncertainty management (AUM) theory: current status', in

Wiseman, R. L. (ed.), *Intercultural communication theory*, Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage, pp. 8–58.

Gudykunst, William B. (1998), ‘Applying anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) Theory to intercultural adjustment training’, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Volume 22, Issue 2, pp. 227–250, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(98\)00005-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(98)00005-4).

Gudykunst, William B. (2003), ‘Intercultural Communication Theories’, in Gudykunst, W. B. (ed.), *Cross-cultural and intercultural communication*, Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage, pp. 167–189.

Gudykunst, William B. (2004), ‘Anxiety/Uncertainty management (AUM) theory of Strangers’ Intercultural Adjustment’, in Gudykunst, W. B. (ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication*, Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage, pp. 419–458.

CHAPTER 6

THE INTEGRATIVE COMMUNICATION THEORY OF CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION

CHAPTER OUTLINE and KEY TERMS

- We will discuss the process of **cross-cultural adaptation** in relation to **enculturation**, **acculturation** and **deculturation**, and **assimilation**.
- We will consider the main factors that influence the process of cross-cultural adaptation, namely, **communication**, **environment**, **predispositions**, and **transformations**.
- We will look at a definition of **culture shock**, its stages and symptoms.

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twelve books. In developing a theory, Kim's central research focus is the communicative engagement in adapting to an unfamiliar or changing environment. Kim has conducted studies among immigrants and ethnic minorities in the United States. Her integrative, general theory of cross-cultural adaptation was first presented in *Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation* (1988) and subsequently in *Becoming Intercultural* (2001).¹⁴

6.1 The complexity of cross-cultural adaptation

Kim's theory of cross-cultural adaptation explains how people born and raised in one culture adapt to a new and completely unfamiliar cultural environment. This includes immigrants and refugees in search of a better life in an another country, frequently with a different cultural background. Among these people, we can distinguish immigrants, refugees and sojourners. **Immigrants** are people who come to live permanently in a foreign country. **Refugees** are people who were forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.

Sojourners represent another special group, which undergoes a different process of adaptation to a new cultural context. Sojourners live in a foreign country for a limited time, usually more than six months and up to five years. The purpose of their stay is usually education and/or profession

¹⁴ More bio data and list of publications is available at <http://www.ou.edu/cas/comm/about/people/faculty/young-kim> and <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780123750006001154?via%3Dihub>, accessed 1 December, 2019.

(diplomats, employees of a global corporations, military personnel, etc.).

Finally, there is a group of **domestic migrants** who face a challenge of adapting to new routinized behaviours. Domestic people who leave their homes in one part of a country and settle in a more distant part of the same country often go through a very similar adaptation process as immigrants or sojourners.

Cross-cultural adaptation is understood as “the entirety of the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish (or re-establish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environments” (Kim, 2001: 31). The aim of cross-cultural adaptation is to **fit** into a new cultural environment. The factors and components of this process of cross-cultural adaptation are represented in Fig. 6.1.

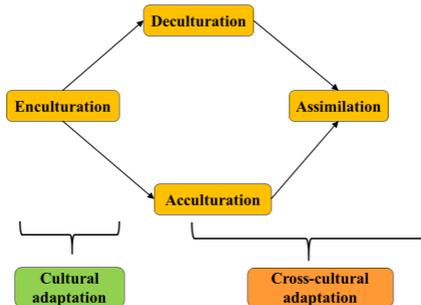


Figure 6.1 Relationship among terms linked with cross-cultural adaptation. Adapted from Kim (2001: 53).

In Fig. 6.1 we can see the relation of enculturation, acculturation, deculturation and assimilation in the proces of

cultural and cross-cultural adaptation. When we are in a new cultural environment, we automatically enter it with behavioural patterns we acquired during our childhood through an **enculturation** process. When confronted with a host culture, we find out that it may be necessary to give up assumptions we have learnt in our home culture and learn a new cultural system. The willingness to adopt new habits, which develops gradually, is labelled as **acculturation**. In Fig. 6.1 we can see that acculturation is not “a process in which new cultural elements are simply added to prior internal conditions” (Kim, 2017a: 3). Adaptation includes **deculturation** of some original cultural habits, at least temporarily. Kim (2017a: 3) emphasizes that the interaction between deculturation and acculturation may result in changes of previously accepted cultural beliefs and values, views of life, and personal cultural identity. Fig. 6.1 shows that deculturation and acculturation lead to **assimilation**. The term *assimilation* refers to “a more comprehensive psychological, social, and cultural change whereby individuals become mainstreamed into the host society” (Kim, 2017b: 3). Assimilation is understood as a theoretical construct, an ideal state. It is viewed as the highest end of the cross-cultural adaptation continuum. Individuals greatly vary in the level of adaptation they reach. Complete assimilation is rare but a relatively high degree of assimilation is observed over generations (Kim, 2017a: 3).

The model in Fig. 6.1 demonstrates how cultural adaptation associated with enculturation is linked through deculturation and acculturation to assimilation. Conceptualization of cross-cultural adaptation in Kim’s model (2001) is based on assimilation, which ultimately includes some degree of acculturation and deculturation.

6.2 Key factors in the adaptation process

Kim's theory explains that "the process of adapting to an unfamiliar culture unfolds through the **stress-adaptation-growth dynamic**" (Kim, 2017b: 1). Immigrants or sojourners are exposed to a new cultural environment, which naturally causes **stress**. Stress produces inner imbalance or conflicting feelings that accompany acculturation and deculturation. Stressful situations of this type are very likely to occur especially at the start of immigration or sojourn. There has been a lot of research on this, for instance, Adler (1975), Ruben and Kealey (1979), Adler (1987), and Ward, Bochner, and Furnham, (2001).

Stress, however, plays an important role in **adaptation**. Immigrants and sojourners experience stressful events, which results in gaining new knowledge. They themselves discover cultural similarities and differences in their daily routine activities and they learn something new. This leads to what Kim labels as **growth**, "a successful, long-term, and cumulative management of the stress-adaptation disequilibrium" (Kim, 2017b: 5). It is important to emphasize that the process is not a smooth linear process, but rather "a cyclic and fluctuating draw-back-to-leap pattern" (Kim, 2017b: 5). This means that each stressful experience triggers a kind of temporary setback. This, in turn, sets in motion an adaptation process resulting in new types of experience in the host environment. Over time, the fluctuations of stress and adaptation may become less difficult.

Kim's theory also explains why some immigrants and sojourners reach a higher level of adaptation than others during the same time in a host environment. Kim presents a set of complex explanations in her **structural model**. The model shows key factors that may speed up or slow down

the adaptation process. In addition, it indicates the relations between individual factors.

Central in her model is communication. It is understood that adaptation is relevant only in communication between strangers and representatives of a host culture. By observing and communicating, strangers learn what is crucial in everyday practices of the host cultural environment. Kim emphasizes **host communication competence**, which includes “the overall internal capacity of a stranger to decode and encode information in accordance with the host cultural communication practices” (Kim, 2017b: 7). It consists of three subcategories: cognitive competence, affective competence, and operational competence.

Cognitive competence refers to the knowledge of the host culture, language, history, institutions, and rules of behaviour. Recent research in the United States indicates that English language learning in immigrants is as fast or even faster now than it was among mainly European immigrants in the 20th century, with most immigrant children speaking only English by the third generation (Preston, 2015). Undoubtedly, knowledge of the host language is crucial in understanding how to communicate with native speakers in ways that are appropriate in local cultural situations.

Affective competence includes the motivational and emotional capacity to deal with a number of new situations linked to living in the host environment. In general, a positive attitude to the host culture and openness to new cultural experiences increases chances of making personal connections with the locals.

Finally, **operational competence** is the ability of strangers to select the combinations of verbal and non-verbal patterns that fit specific social situations in the host context.

Host communication competence has a central position in Kim's model represented in Fig. 6.2.

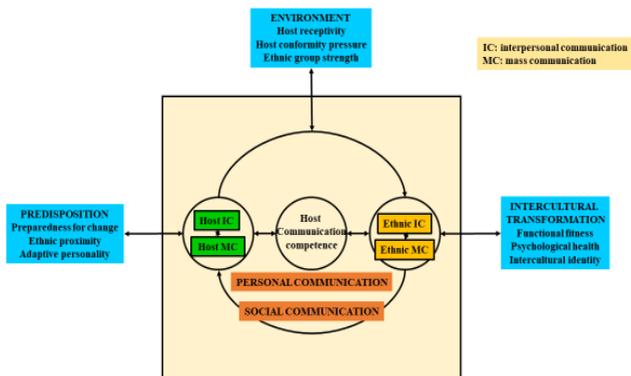


Figure 6.2 The structural model of cross-cultural adaptation. Adapted from Kim (2001: 87).

In Fig. 6.2 we can see that host communication competence affects and is affected by taking part in social activities in the host environment. This is achieved through **host interpersonal communication (Host IC)** and **host mass communication (Host MC)**. The former includes situations in which strangers have a chance to discuss with locals what is appropriate or not in particular situations. It is also an opportunity to build up a mutually supportive relationship between strangers and locals. The latter involves, for example, radio, television, internet sources, newspapers, magazines, movies, art, and literature. This also means that in host mass communication strangers interact with the host cultural environment indirectly. Mass communication activities of this kind are useful and helpful in broadening

the scope of learning something new (culturally) without an immediate direct social exchange.

Fig. 6.2 also shows the importance of **ethnic interpersonal communication** and **ethnic mass communication**. In a number of societies at present a regular contact with co-ethnics or co-nationals is maintained. For instance, ethnic mutual-aid or self-help organizations, or religious organizations offer their emotional support, useful information, or material support to strangers. On the other hand, with access to the internet, strangers can be in contact with their local home media, newspapers, television, etc. Ethnic mass communication seems especially important during the initial stages of the stay of strangers in a new cultural environment.

At the top of Fig. 6.2 we can see three key **environmental factors** that influence the process of adaptation: **host receptivity**, **host conformity pressure**, and **ethnic group strength**. We will now turn to each of these in more detail.

Each environment can display more or less willingness to accept strangers and support them. For instance, in Slovakia, people are more open to strangers from Western European countries than to people from Asia or Arabic cultures. This tendency is driven by racial and ethnic prejudices in the society or at least some parts of the society. The extent to which the environment is open to strangers is referred to as **host receptivity**.

The second environmental factor is **host conformity pressure**, which is the degree to which the society requires strangers to adopt their norms and behaviour patterns. According to Kim (2017a: 9), “more culturally and ethnically diverse societies such as the USA tend to show greater openness and acceptance of cultural and ethnic differences” and they put less pressure on strangers to

change their habits. Even in one country, more heterogeneous and cosmopolitan urban areas tend to display less host conformity pressure (Kim, 2017b: 9).

The third environmental factor in Kim's model is the **ethnic group strength**, which refers to "the collective status and power of the group of which the resettler is a member" (Kim, 2017b: 9). If an ethnic group is large and enjoys a good status or power in the host society, it can be very helpful and supportive especially shortly after arrival of strangers to a new environment. On the other hand, strong ethnic groups may prevent successful adaptation to a new environment by encouraging especially ethnolinguistic maintenance which is present in ethnic groups with political aspirations (Kim, 2017b: 10).

The cross-cultural adaptation process is also influenced by the internal **predispositions** of strangers, placed on the left in Fig. 6.2. Each stranger is equipped with a different set of pre-existing properties. This is called a **stranger's adaptive potential** and it includes **preparedness for change**, **ethnic proximity** or distance and **personality predispositions**. Research carried out by David (1969); Black and Gregersen (1990); and Searle and Ward (1990) confirms that voluntary immigrants and sojourners, and in general strangers who carefully planned relocation, are better prepared for adaptation than their involuntary counterparts. This was frequently the case of the Czechs and Slovaks who planned to leave the former socialist Czechoslovakia. They often invested a lot into learning the language of and making contacts in the host country with the expectation of a smoother adaptation process.

Ethnic proximity or distance from the host environment has a direct impact on the ease or difficulty of acquiring communication competence in a new environment. For instance, if a person from the Czech

republic moves to Slovakia, it is very likely that the process of cross-cultural adaptation will be smoother than for a person from Korea. First of all, a Korean will be immediately spotted as a stranger due to physical differences and they will have a higher language barrier than a Czech. Height, skin colour, facial features, together with a foreign accent in speech patterns negatively affect the extent to which locals accept or reject cultural strangers. This was confirmed, for example, in a research study of Mexican immigrants in the United States by Vazquez, Garcia-Vazquez, Bauman, and Sierra (1997).

In addition to preparedness for change and ethnic proximity, the **adaptive personality** of a stranger plays an important role in the adaptation process. Caligiuri, Jacobs, and Farr (2000) and McCrae and Costa (1985) found that openness, understood as flexibility, open-mindedness, and tolerance for ambiguity, makes it possible to interpret various situations in the host environment without ethnocentric judgements. A positive attitude is in general an advantage in the new cultural environment.

Intercultural transformation, positioned on the right in Fig. 6.2 is another key factor of cross-cultural adaptation. This transformation is based on environmental factors and predispositions which affect communication situations. Interaction of all these factors is then reflected in a different degree of intercultural transformation of strangers in a particular point in time of their adaptation. Kim (2017a: 10) identifies three facets of the internal change which takes place in strangers: increased **functional fitness** in carrying out daily transactions, improved **psychological health** in dealing with the environment, and the emergence of an **intercultural identity** orientation. At the start, strangers may feel lost and confused. However, with an increased level of adaptation they achieve a so-called functional

fitness, which means that they can function effectively in daily communication contexts in the host environment. After the time of psychological adaptation, strangers feel less marginalized, less frustrated and have more satisfactory and supportive relationships with the locals. Finally, adaptive changes also involve the emergence of an intercultural identity. This is understood as “a gradual and largely unintended psychological evolution beyond the boundaries of childhood enculturation, an orientation toward self and others that is no longer rigidly defined by either the identity linked to the home culture or the identity of the host culture” Kim (2017b: 12).

To sum up, all these factors explained above and represented in Fig. 6.2 yield a system of explanations why cross-cultural adaptation differs among individual strangers and why some strangers are more successful in their cross-cultural transition than others.

6.3 The concept of culture shock

Independently of whether we consider a short-term adaptation of sojourners or a long-term adaptation of immigrants in a host culture, it is probable that strangers will experience **culture shock**. The term was introduced by Oberg (1960) to describe the feelings of anxiety and confusion that many people experience for some time when they live in the host environment. Anxiety results from the understanding that basic assumptions about life and basic patterns of behaviour the strangers acquired during their enculturation at home do not fit in the new context.

Adler (1975), Pedersen (1995) and other scholars distinguish five stages of culture shock. The first stage is referred to as the **honeymoon stage**. For example, Erasmus exchange students are typically enthusiastic about the new

environment. They may also idealize the host country because their expectations are positive. The second stage brings **disintegration**, in which differences between home culture and host culture lead to uncertainty, confusion, alienation and even frustration. It frequently happens that even if strangers understand the words, the context is completely new to them and they cannot respond appropriately. For instance, if an exchange student in the USA asks where the bus stop is and the answer is “At 7UP”, they may not know that it is at the machine with a soft drink called 7UP. If similar situations occur more often, exchange students may feel isolated and emotionally distressed. This psychological and emotional distress continues to the third stage referred to as **reintegration stage**. In this stage, exchange students are typically convinced that individuals from the host culture are responsible for most of the problems they come across. They are trying to find a balance between defending the culture they come from and allegiance to the new one. Simultaneously, they begin to understand norms and values of the host culture better. Usually, stressful feelings are reduced during the **autonomy stage**, in which strangers become more comfortable in the new environment and they also feel more accepted by the host culture. The final, fifth stage is the **interdependence stage**. In this stage, they develop the ability to deal with the home and host cultures and they appreciate their bicultural or even multicultural personality. Full adaptation may take a much longer time.

It sometimes happens, especially when a stranger adapts exceptionally easily to the new culture that upon their return back home they experience a **reverse culture shock**. This means that nothing is as they expected at home, home culture is perceived critically and the new culture is admired (Jandt, 2004: 311).

Strangers often experience physical and psychological symptoms of culture shock. **Physical symptoms** include, for example, overconcern about cleanliness of food, extreme stress about safety, fear of physical contact with people from the new environment (Jandt, 2004: 311). A list of **psychological symptoms** involves insomnia, fatigue, isolation, loneliness, nervousness, self-doubt, irritability, anger, depression, emotional and intellectual withdrawal (Jandt, 2004: 311). Therefore, the awareness of culture shock, its stages and symptoms may help people from the new culture be more sensitive to strangers experiencing it. Strangers can also benefit from this knowledge and manage their negative or even hostile feelings in the new environment.

SUMMARY

The Integrative Communication Theory of Cross-cultural Adaptation is a theoretical framework which explains key factors influencing the process of resettling. This involves immigrants, refugees, and temporary sojourners, as well as domestic migrants settling in a new cultural environment. The adaptation process typically begins with the psychological and physiological experiences of disorientation commonly known as culture shock. Central to the adaptation process are one's ability to communicate in accordance to the norms and practices of the host culture and continuous and active involvement in the interpersonal and mass communication activities of the host society.

EXERCISES

1. Work in small groups. Choose a country you know reasonably well. Discuss what challenges immigration presents to the country. Share the most interesting points of your discussion with the rest of the class.
2. Choose an appropriate movie clip to illustrate an example of culture shock.
3. Work in small groups. Discuss how countries could use Kim's model of cross-cultural adaptation in facilitating the integration of immigrants. Share the most interesting points of your discussion with the rest of the class.
4. Here is a link to a TED talk about refugees: https://www.ted.com/talks/luma_mufleh_don_t_feel_sorry_for_refugees_believe_in_them#t-16673. Give your opinion about the representation of integration and culture shock.
5. Here is a link to a website about immigration in the USA: <http://www.pbs.org/destinationamerica/index.html>. Read in detail all sections and present the most interesting information from the perspective of integration and culture shock.

FURTHER READING

- Kim, Young Yun (2005), 'Adapting to a new culture: An integrative communication theory', in W. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, pp. 375–400.
- Kim, Young Yun (2012), 'Beyond categories: Communication, adaptation, and transformation', in J. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of language and intercultural communication* New York: Routledge, pp. 229–243.

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- Kim, Young Yun (2017), 'Integrative Communication Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation', in Y. Y. Kim (Ed.). *The International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication*,
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CHAPTER 7

THE SAPIR-WHORF HYPOTHESIS

CHAPTER OUTLINE and KEY TERMS

- We will discuss the essence of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.
- We will consider differences between **linguistic determinism** and **linguistic relativity**.
- We will look at three empirical case studies of linguistic relativity. The first one concerns colour terms across languages, the second grammatical gender assignment of objects and its effect on their descriptions in bilingual speakers, and the final one, object classification by bilingual speakers.

Edward Sapir (1884–1939) was an American linguist and anthropologist and is often considered one of the founding fathers of American formal descriptive linguistics.

He was born in Lauenburg, Western Pomerania, Prussia, now Łębork, Poland. When he was five years old, he emigrated with his family first to Britain and then to the United States. Sapir was a talented student and at the age of 14 he won a Pulitzer scholarship to attend the Horace Mann school in New York, a prestigious college-preparatory high

school at that time. Sapir decided to attend a public high school instead and defer the award until he could use it as a college scholarship at Columbia University, where he was admitted in 1901. There he first studied Germanic and Indo-European philologies. During his studies he got interested also in anthropology. He attended some courses led by Franz Boas (1858–1942), the father of American anthropology, who recognized his talent and encouraged him in his studies. Boas also inspired Sapir to study Native American languages.

In the years 1910–1925 Sapir founded the Anthropological Division in the Geological Survey of Canada in Ottawa. He designed a comprehensive research programme to survey the languages of Canada. Nootka, a language of Vancouver Island, Tlingit, from the northwest Pacific coast, Sarcee, in Alberta, and Kutchin and Ingalik, languages of Northern Canada, were some of the languages he worked on during these years. Particularly important was his seminal book *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech* (1921), which was an introduction to the discipline of linguistics as Sapir envisioned it.

In 1925 he moved to the University of Chicago. There he was promoted to Professor of Anthropology and General Linguistics within two years. He also continued his descriptive linguistic work, including fieldwork on Hupa and Navajo languages. In this period he became deeply concerned with questions of the relation of culture and individual psychology. His contribution to the discussion of the role of Linguistics as a discipline distinct from both Philology and Anthropology was crucial.

In 1931 he moved to Yale University where he stayed until his death in 1939. He was offered the Sterling professorship of Anthropology and Linguistics at Yale, which was a prestigious position. He was invited to Yale to

lead a newly formed Anthropology Department and set up a new interdisciplinary research programme with social sciences. Although the beginning seemed promising, the relationship with social sciences at Yale turned out to be problematic. Therefore Sapir concentrated almost entirely on linguistics and anthropology there. In 1937 he had his first heart attack and never fully recovered. Two years later, in 1939, he died shortly after his second heart attack at the age of 55.¹⁵

Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941) was a very talented American amateur linguist whose work on the study of indigenous languages of Mesoamerica impressed professional scholars. He was born in Winthrop, Massachusetts. In 1918, Whorf graduated in chemical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). His professional career was mainly outside academia, he worked as a fire prevention inspector at the Hartford Insurance Company in Hartford, Connecticut. Whorf started studying linguistics and attended courses by his mentor Edward Sapir in 1931 at Yale but he never had an ambition of formal completion of a university degree in linguistics. At that time he focused on Hopi, a Uto-Aztecan language spoken by the Hopi people of north-eastern Arizona, United States. In 1936 he was appointed honorary research fellow of anthropology at Yale. A year later he was awarded a Sterling fellowship and he was a lecturer of anthropology in 1937–1938. His most important works were

¹⁵ An insightful and detailed biography of Edward Sapir was published by Darnell (1990).

published posthumously in *Language, Thought, and Reality* (1956) edited by John Bissel Carroll.¹⁶

7.1 The hypothesis

It may seem strange to start a discussion of the **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis** with the information that neither Sapir nor Whorf explicitly formulated the hypothesis (Alford 1981; Grace 1987; Blount 2009). It was Harry Hoijer (1904–1976), another student of Edward Sapir’s, who introduced this label to refer to the notion that the language people speak shapes their perception of reality (Hoijer, 1954: 92–105).

Let us have a more detailed look at the evidence leading to the formulation of the hypothesis. The field study of Hopi led Whorf to the observation of crucial differences in the interpretation and categorization of the world around us. Whorf compared Hopi, as a non-European language, with familiar European languages, which he labelled **Standard Average European** (Whorf, 1956). He assumed that European languages presupposed an identical view of the world due to their long shared culture. Whorf observed that, for instance, the Hopi do not use plurals of nouns referring to time such as *days* or *years* but they tend to view time as a duration without structure. He also observed that grammatical tenses in Hopi are not expressed on verbs. The most striking observation is “that various grand generalizations of the Western work, such as time, velocity, and matter, are not essential to the construction of a consistent picture of the universe” (Whorf, 1940: 216).

Perhaps it is not so surprising that this idea, concerning the degree to which the language people speak influences the

¹⁶ More information about Benjamin Whorf and whorfianism can be found in Shook (2005).

way they think, triggered numerous research studies, many of them resulting in criticism of and counterevidence to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Some interpretations of Whorf resulted in the distinction between two versions of the hypothesis, strong and weak. The strong version, referred to as **linguistic determinism**, claims that the structure of the language one speaks determines the thought patterns and the view of the surrounding world. **Linguistic relativity**, the weak version of the hypothesis, softens the deterministic claim from *determine* to *affect* or *influence*. In other words, as different languages map onto the world in a different way, they are associated with different cognitive structures (Harley, 2001: 81). Lucy (1992) points out that the strong version is obviously wrong, and the weak version is obviously right, but as hypotheses, they are simply too general to be amenable to systematic investigation. By contrast, some scholars, for example Blount (2009), reject the division into strong and weak hypothesis as false and based on a misinterpretation of Whorf's ideas.

The aim of this chapter is not to decide which attitude is more valid, but rather to illustrate some interesting consequences of the Sapir-Whorf theory that add new, relevant information about the relationship between language, thought and culture. Therefore, we will now turn to some interesting applications of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

7.2 Colour coding

Colour terms represent a particularly favourable area for the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and for a long time linguists took it for granted that it should apply to colour (Sampson, 1980: 95). In 1969, Brent Berlin and Paul Kay, two anthropologists of the University of California, Berkeley

published their book *Basic Color Terms*. They carried out research of colour terminologies of twenty world languages. Basic colours, which they called **focal colours**, were defined as monomorphemic words, for instance *blue* but not *navy blue*, not contained by another colour, for example *red* was included but not *scarlet*, not restricted in their use, so for instance *blond* was excluded. As a result, they identified eleven basic colour terms corresponding to the English colour names *red, pink, orange, yellow, brown, green, blue, purple, black, white, grey*. The main finding of this study was that cross-linguistically, basic colour terms form a **hierarchy**. If a language has only two basic colour names, they correspond to *white* and *black*. If three basic colours are available, *red* is added. A four-colour system includes *white, black, red* and either *green* or *yellow*. A five-term system will cover *green* and *yellow* in addition to the basic three colours. A six-colour system will add *blue*, a seven-colour will add *brown*, and so on. Berlin and Kay (1969) argued that although there are differences between world languages, typical basic colour terms or focal colours tend to be identical across languages. In the light of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, this result is unexpected. It would be predicted that Berlin and Kay's initial assumptions would stand the test of experiment but their actual findings fail to confirm the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

7.3 Grammatical gender

In recent years, linguistic relativity or a weak form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has enjoyed a resurgence. According to Harley (2001: 87) “there is a considerable amount of evidence suggesting that linguistic factors can affect cognitive processes”. One of the experimental studies concerned with the validity of linguistic relativity is Philipps

and Boroditsky (2003). Their main hypothesis was that the grammatical genders assigned to objects by a language influence people's mental representations of these objects.

In order to test their main hypothesis Philipps and Boroditsky asked bilingual speakers of German and Spanish to describe the properties of object which are of a different grammatical gender in both languages, e.g. *key* is feminine in Spanish (*la llave*) but masculine in German (*der Schlüssel*). The results revealed that German speakers tended to use adjectives such as *heavy, hard, jagged, and metal*. On the other hand, Spanish speakers preferred using words such as *lovely, intricate, golden, little, shiny, and tiny*. The respondents were also asked to describe features of suspension bridge, feminine in German (*die Hängebrücke*) and masculine in Spanish (*el puente colgante*). This time German speakers preferred using descriptors such as *beautiful, elegant, fragile, pretty, and slender* whereas Spanish speakers used adjectives such as *big, strong, dangerous, sturdy and towering*. Philipps and Boroditsky (2003: 933) arrived at the conclusion that even seemingly arbitrary gender assignment to nouns can influence people's ideas of concrete objects in the world.

7.4 Object categorization

Another interesting series of experiments demonstrating that differences in linguistic structure are reflected in people's habitual thinking processes was carried out by Ji, Zhang and Nisbett (2002) and summarized by Nisbett (2003).

First of all, they investigated whether the language influences the way people categorize objects. Ji, Zhang and Nisbett (2002) produced word triplets, for instance, *panda, monkey, and banana* to Chinese and American college students and asked them to indicate which two of the three

were most closely related. The Chinese students were either living in the United States or in China and they were tested either in English or in Chinese. The American students showed a preference for grouping on the basis of common category membership. This means that *panda* and *monkey* fit into the category of animals. The Chinese students showed a preference for grouping on the basis of thematic relationships. This means that they grouped, for example, *monkey* and *banana* on the basis of the relation: *Monkeys eat bananas* (Nisbett, 2003: 140–141).

Ji, Zhang and Nisbett (2002) hypothesized that if the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is valid, then it should make a difference which language the bilingual speakers are tested in. The prediction was that the bilinguals should be more likely to prefer relationships (monkey, banana) as the basis for grouping when tested in Chinese and more likely to prefer taxonomic category (panda, monkey) when tested in English. At this point it is important to clarify how bilinguals were defined.

Psycholinguists make a distinction between what they call *coordinate bilinguals* and *compound bilinguals*. **Coordinate bilinguals** are people who learn a second language relatively later in life and for whom its use is typically restricted to a limited number of contexts. For example, many people in Slovakia learn English later in life, usually starting from elementary school and use it in a rather smaller number of contexts. **Compound bilinguals** are people for whom the second language is learned early in their lives and is used in many contexts. For example, people in Hong Kong tend to learn English earlier and use it in many different contexts as English is the official language together with Chinese.

Ji, Zhang and Nisbett tested both types of bilinguals. Speakers from China and Taiwan were considered

coordinate bilinguals because they typically learn English relatively late and its use is limited mostly to formal school contexts. Speakers from Hong Kong and Singapore were classified as compound bilinguals because they learn English relatively early in life and use it in more contexts. Ji, Zhang and Nisbett hypothesized that coordinate bilinguals should group words differently when tested in Chinese than when tested in English.

The results for coordinate bilinguals were quite unambiguous. Chinese tested in their native language were twice as likely to group on the basis of relationships as on the basis of taxonomic category and this was true whether they were tested in their home countries or in the United States. When tested in English, they were much less likely to group on the basis of relationships.

In contrast, the results for compound bilinguals were different. While their groupings of objects were still based on relationships more than on taxonomic category, the preference was much weaker for them than for the coordinate bilinguals. The language of testing, Chinese or English, did not make any relevant difference in this group. Nisbett (2003: 161–162) arrive to the conclusion that there is an effect of culture on thought that is independent of language. A tentative answer to the Sapir-Whorf question is that language influences thought so long as different languages are reasonably associated with different systems of culture-determined representation (Nisbett, 2003: 162).

7.5 Current evaluation of the hypothesis

In the past decades, the interest in empirical evidence for the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis received attention in several disciplines. Lucy (1996) distinguishes three levels of potential influence of language on thought. First, the

semiotic level concerns how speaking any natural language affects thinking. The **structural level** examines how speaking a particular language (e.g. Hopi and English) influences thinking (Lucy, 2000: ix). The main focus is on the investigation how morphosyntactic properties can influence the way speakers of different languages think. The **functional level** examines whether the use of, for instance, scientific language can influence thought.

Currently, there seems to be a good amount of evidence indicating that linguistic factors can influence cognitive processes (Harley, 2001: 87). This also applies to colour perception, which shows some extent of language influence. The emergence of more promising empirical evidence suggests that the interest in linguistic relativity will likely remain a focus of further research.

SUMMARY

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis establishes the relationship between language, culture and thought. The strong version of the hypothesis stating that our language determines thought is generally less accepted. The weaker version says that language shapes our thinking to some extent.

EXERCISES

1. Work in small groups. Discuss how the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is reflected in the comparison of some grammatical properties present in your mother tongue and absent in English (e.g. the absence of articles or subjunctive in Slovak). Share the most interesting points of your discussion with the rest of the class.

2. At <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8uUjtiaXqE> you will find a discussion at the University of California, Berkeley about the connections between thought and language use. Watch it, make notes and discuss the points you find the most interesting and convincing.

3. Here is a link to a free access journal paper about testing the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: Hoosain, R., (1986). [Orthography and cognitive processes: Chinese perspectives for the Sapir Whorf Hypothesis.](#) *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 9, 507–525. Read it and present a summary of the paper. Consider whether you agree.

4. Here is a link to a TED talk by Lera Boroditsky about the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKK7wGAYP6k>.

Give your opinion on the presentation.

5. Work in small groups, preferably with mixed languages. Think of all possible equivalents of *beauty* and *ugliness* in English, Slovak and other languages you speak. Compare and discuss how the feeling of what is beauty and what is ugliness is expressed in different languages and what determines how it is expressed.

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CHAPTER 8

PROGRESS AND OUTLOOK OF THE STUDY OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER OUTLINE and KEY TERMS

- We will outline the main directions in the development of the study of **intercultural communication** as an independent discipline.
- We will compare the differences in the developments between the **United States, Japan, and Europe**.
- We will concentrate on highlighting the similarities and contrasting the differences in **research paradigms** in these geographical regions.
- We will consider directions for further research into intercultural communication.

8.1 The development of the field

Writing a historical account of intercultural communication as a theoretical discipline is a challenging task. The main reason is that “in the end it is also necessarily incomplete, constructed through our particular lens of experience, and invariably contested” (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh, 2012: 17). In addition, the study of intercultural communication developed differently at different times in various parts of the world (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh, 2012: 17). For instance, in the United States there were hardly any theories of intercultural communication in the 1970s (Gudykunst, 2003: 167).

In this chapter we will first explore how intercultural communication developed in different **geographical regions**. Second, we will have a closer look at its development from the perspective of **research paradigms** as defined by Kuhn (1970). In the Kuhnian sense, a *paradigm* is a set of general philosophical assumptions about the **ontology** (the nature of the world) and **epistemology** (how we can understand the world) of a discipline. These assumptions are usually shared by scholars working in the same scientific tradition. Paradigms typically support methodological procedures associated with these assumptions and they identify particular studies that are viewed as good examples of these assumptions and methods.

From a general perspective, examples of paradigms are philosophical positions such as realism, pragmatism, etc. For instance, the famous linguists **Vilém Mathesius** (1882–1945), **Roman Jakobson** (1896–1982), and **Nikolai Trubetzkoy** (1890–1938) belonged to the Prague School of Linguistics identified with the functionalist and structuralist paradigm (Frawley, 2003: 53). The representatives of the Prague School of Linguistics suggested that their methods of

studying the function of speech sounds could be applied both synchronically, to a language as it exists, and diachronically, to a language as it changes. They also developed a generally accepted method of structural analysis of literature.

Returning to the historical account of intercultural communication, in the **United States**, the beginning of the formation of intercultural communication as a scientific discipline dates back to the 1930s and 1940s. The work of American anthropologists, including **Margaret Mead** (1901–1978), **Ruth Benedict** (1887–1948), **Gregory Bateson** (1904–1980), and **Clyde Kluckhohn** (1905–1960), is viewed as the basis of the discipline of intercultural communication (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2011). National character, culture and personality were all properties that made people living in the same national boundaries similar. This was also the time of the emergence of the **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis**, which assumed that differences in the way languages encode cultural and cognitive categories influence the way people perceive the world around them (for a detailed overview see Chapter 7). These observations do not amount to a theory of intercultural communication, but they played an important role also in the later development of such theories (Rogers and Hart, 2002).

In 1947 the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) was established. FSI was an in-service, graduate-level training institute for State Department employees and others in the Foreign Service. FSI academic staff included the well-known linguists **George Trager** (1906–1992) and **Ray Birdwhistell** (1918–1994) and the anthropologist **Edward T. Hall** (1914–2009), who is often referred to as the “founding father” of the formal study of intercultural communication (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990). These scholars understood that it is not possible for one academic discipline to explain, predict, and also train people to communicate

efficiently in intercultural situations. Edward T. Hall and George Trager began working together on the revision of the anthropology curriculum at FSI. Hall's first book, *The Silent Language*, which appeared in 1959, introduced the concept of **proxemics**, the study of the use of personal space in the interaction with other people. Hall identified differences in the use of personal space across many countries and regions (Europe, the Middle East, Asia, North, Latin, and South America). He also observed that respecting these cultural differences is essential to make communication smooth and successful. Following the theoretical taxonomies already established in linguistics through the work of **Kenneth Pike** (1912–2000), Hall and colleagues applied similar taxonomies in various non-verbal meaning systems, including **kinesics** (gestures and body movements) with kinemorphs, **chronemics** (polychronic and monochronic time), and **proxemics** (personal space). Interestingly, Hall was not interested in establishing a new academic discipline (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh, 2012: 19). For Kuhn (1970), a crucial step in the establishment of a new field of science is the emergence of a first paradigm. In this perspective, intercultural communication did not have such a paradigm at this point in time.

The 1970s were characterized by further development towards an independent field of intercultural communication. The University of Pittsburgh and Michigan State University introduced the first courses of intercultural communication. In addition, the first textbooks were published, *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* by Samovar and Porter (1972), *Intercultural Communication* by Harms (1973), and *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication* by Condon and Yousef (1975). In 1977, the first issue of the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* appeared (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh,

2012: 20). By the 1980s, the number of universities offering graduate-level courses had increased to about sixty (Kitao, 1989).

In the 1980s, the field of intercultural communication became **paradigmatic**, in other words a first paradigm was established. This was the functionalist or sometimes also called postpositivist paradigm (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh, 2012: 21). The main focus then was not on anthropology and linguistics, but on social psychology. The **functionalist (postpositivist) paradigm** is built on the philosophical basis of the work of social theorists such as **Auguste Comte** (1798–1857) and **Emile Durkheim** (1858–1917) with the underlying assumption that the social world is composed of knowable empirical facts that exist separately from the scholar (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh, 2012: 21). Theorizing about intercultural communication has advanced tremendously since the 1980s and currently, there are at least 15 different theories of intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 2003: 167). These theories cover different perspectives of intercultural communication and Gudykunst (2003: 168) divides them into five classes. We will give a brief description of each of them in turns.

The first class includes **theories focusing on effective outcomes**. This means that the central aim of theorizing is to explain specific outcomes in intercultural communication, for instance, **effective communication** and **effective group decision**. Anxiety/uncertainty management theory (AUM) proposed by Gudykunst (1995) and explained in Chapter 5 is an example that fits into this class.

Theories focusing on accommodation or adaptation represent the second class. Here, the theory concentrates on how people in interaction adapt to each other. Communication accommodation theory (CAT) as proposed

by Giles (1973) discussed in Chapter 4 illustrates this category.

The third class covers **theories focusing on identity management or negotiation**. Theories falling into this category concentrate on the adaptation of identities and not on specific communicative behaviours, which contrasts with the first two classes. Face negotiation theory as developed by Ting-Toomey (1985, 1988), presented in more detail in Chapter 3 is an example of this class.

The fourth class includes **theories focusing on communication networks**. These theories are based on the assumption that how people behave is influenced by the relationships between individuals rather than by the characteristics of individual people. They are very similar to the theories in the next class and I did not distinguish them in this textbook.

Finally, Gudykunst's fifth class groups **theories focusing on acculturation or adjustment**. In many Western countries, the acculturation of immigrants and sojourners has been an acute issue for several decades. Integrative communication theory of cross-cultural adaptation by Kim (2001) presented in Chapter 6 serves as an example of this class. AUM theory can also be included in this class. This also means that Gudykunst's (2003) classes are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Let us now turn to other geographic regions where the study of intercultural communication also developed and sometimes in slightly different directions. In **Japan**, the development of the field of intercultural communication was parallel to that in the United States. In 1953, the Japan Center for Intercultural Communications (JCIC) was founded by private-sector volunteers to increase mutual international understanding after the second world war. As Japan and the United States became major economic powers, there was a

great deal of collaboration and exchange between Japanese and American researchers. Hall's (1959) *The Silent Language* was translated into Japanese by Masao Kunihiro and Mitsuko Saito. These two Japanese scholars were educated in linguistics and English which enabled them to identify Japanese concepts that have no equivalence in English and vice versa (Kunihiro, 1973). They understood that advanced knowledge of languages is not sufficient to achieve effective communication in intercultural contexts. They also emphasized the importance of contrasting cultural values and non-verbal patterns of communication (Kitao and Kitao, 1989). As Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh (2012: 20) describe, most of the early scholarly work focused on concepts directly connected to East-West cultural differences, comparing Asian collectivism with Western individualism. More recent research studies extend the earlier research and concentrate on identifying specific individualistic/collectivistic influences on various communication behaviours, including face negotiation and conflict resolution styles.

In **Europe**, the development of the study of intercultural communication differed in several aspects from that in the United States and Japan. Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh (2012: 21) identify four main differences: motivation, linguistic focus, disciplinary focus and preferred research paradigm. First, the study of intercultural communication in Europe was motivated by the influence of large numbers of immigrants in the more developed and industrialized countries. As an example, in the 1990s Finland introduced study programmes and courses in intercultural communication at universities in Jyväskylä, Tampere, and Turku.

Second, in contrast to the situation in the United States and Japan, where non-verbal communication was central,

the study of intercultural communication in Europe was focused on the role of language in intercultural interactions and the role of intercultural communication in language education (Corbett 2003, 2009; Dahl 1995; Kramsch 2001). It was obvious that the large numbers of immigrant non-native speakers needed above all language training. In addition, there was the concern to promote European unity through mutual understanding (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh, 2012: 22). This was reflected in the development of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001; Byram and Zarate, 1997; Byram et al., 2002). CEFR is based on a sociocultural approach to language learning/teaching that understands the importance of the cultural dimensions of language for language learners.

Third, intercultural communication researchers in Europe came from applied linguistics, linguistics, and language education rather than from anthropology (Berry and Carbaugh 2004; Kramsch 1998). Similarly to the universities in Finland, the University of Stavanger in Norway and the University of Göteborg in Sweden carried out research in the same direction. In the early 1990s, the Nordic Network for Intercultural Communication (NIC) was established. The network included many members in language training centres with interests in applied linguistics and intercultural communication.

The final contrast concerns the dominant research paradigm. Although some intercultural communication scholars in the European tradition followed a functionalist/postpositive paradigm, for instance Geert Hofstede, whose research is described in Chapter 2, most adopted the **interpretive research paradigm** (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh, 2012: 23). This paradigm is concerned with understanding the world through meaningful social activity,

as well as describing the subjective, creative communication of individuals. Communication is seen as the primary social process in which practices are culturally coded (Carbaugh, 1988, 1990; Philipsen, 1997). In the European tradition, scientists often concentrate on language and meaning-centred approaches. It should be noted that since the late 1990s several study programmes of intercultural communication have also been developing at Russian universities, including the University at Rostov on Don, Moscow State University and Tver State University, and in Italy at the University of Modena (Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh, 2012: 23).

In the 1990s, there was also a shift to more interpretive and critical approaches to studying intercultural communication in the United States. This was for reasons similar to the corresponding development in Europe, where language education, international business contacts, and political interactions were central in linguistic, cultural, or ethnographic study (Kelly and Tomic, 2001). China and Japan follow similar patterns in their further study of intercultural communication. This suggests that Europe was ahead in this development.

8.2 Further research

This brief outline of the history of intercultural communication studies demonstrates that intercultural communication has found its firm place among other scientific disciplines. The interest in setting up new academic programmes, journals and professional associations continues in many geographic regions. The diversity is increasing and makes it more difficult to give an exhaustive worldwide history of this field.

The history of intercultural communication emphasizes the multidisciplinary nature of the field. Simultaneously, it raises a number of questions and issues to be answered in future research. Martin, Nakayama, and Carbaugh (2012: 30) formulate a list of such questions, some of which are given below.

- Should intercultural communication studies be explicitly interdisciplinary? If so, does it risk losing its academic identity?
- How does it manage this interdisciplinary approach to building scholarship?
- How does the study of intercultural communication maintain the productive tension between the local and the global?
- How do intercultural communication scholars maintain this tension without oversimplifying or sacrificing one or the other?
- How would intercultural communication scholarship maintain its multiparadigmatic approaches when scholars are often trained in one methodological paradigm?
- What would multiparadigmatic research look like? Would it have to be done by multidisciplinary research teams?
- Finally, given the variety of relevant research that is not conducted by “communication” scholars in Europe, Asia, and other regions, should the study of intercultural communication be housed in departments of communication? Or is it transforming itself into something else that is not anthropology, not sociology, not language acquisition and pedagogy, and so on?

These and more questions will need to be addressed by intercultural communication scholars in the twenty-first century.

SUMMARY

This chapter presents the history of the development of the study of intercultural communication in different geographical regions and from the perspective of research paradigms as defined by Kuhn (1970). In the United States, the formation of the field of intercultural communication was influenced by anthropologists and linguists. Edward T. Hall is often considered the father of the study of intercultural communication. His book, *The Silent Language* (1959), introduced the concept of proxemics, the study of the use of personal space in the interaction with other people. It influenced a number of comparative research studies and was also translated into Japanese. In Japan, there was a parallel development of the study of intercultural communication. In Europe, by contrast, the study of intercultural communication focused on the role of language in intercultural interactions and the role of intercultural communication in language education.

EXERCISES

1. Work in small groups. Choose one theory or two theories presented in this textbook, and place them in the context of their research paradigm, give details of the methodology they apply and how it is reflected in the main works.
2. Here is a link to a free access journal paper by Schraml, C. (2014). [How is ethnicity experienced? Essentialist and constructivist notions of ethnicity in Rwanda and Burundi](#). *Ethnicities*, 14, 615–633. Read it, and present a summary of the paper and your critical comments.
3. Here is a link to a TED talk by the global strategist Parag Khanna who discusses global border conflicts: https://www.ted.com/talks/parag_khanna_mapping_the_future_of_countries#t-12210. Give your opinion on the presentation.
4. Here is a link to a TED talk by the mediator William Ury about conflicts and how to solve them: https://www.ted.com/talks/william_ury_the_walk_from_no_to_yes. Give your opinion on the presentation.

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