

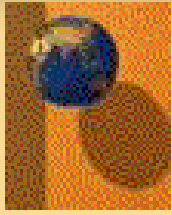
CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION





PLAN

- Communication and culture
- Styles and channels of communication
- Models of communication
- Approaches to communication studies
- Theories of communication
- Ethics of cross-cultural communication
- Barriers on the way of interpersonal understanding



1. Communication and culture

- **Communication**(Lat.communicare- to share) – act of imparting that which is common (esp.news); information given; intercourse. The activity or process of giving information to other people or living things. A letter or telephone call; a formal use
- **Communications** – the systems and processes that are used to communicate or broadcast information; the various methods of sending information between people and places; esp. official systems such as post systems, radio, telephone, etc. The ways which people use to form relationships with each other and understand each other's feelings



IT's weird

- ORIGINS: Greece, Aristotle *Rhetoric and Poetics* – described the process of communication as involving a speaker, the speech act, an audience and a purpose.
- Communication – act of interaction, link between to 2 or more individuals based on mutual understanding, transmitting information from one person to another
- Zen philosophy and Native Americans (the Tewa tribe from New Mexico in whose language “learning” and “breathing” are the same) value **acquisition** much more than **learning**.



Culture as information

- **Culture as information is divided into 2 kinds:**
Manifest culture (learned from words & numbers)
Tacit-acquired culture (in the process of growing up and being in different environment)
- Tacit-acquired culture – not verbal, consists of thousands microevents in the daily cycle of activity; the spaces we occupy, the way we relate to others, taken-for-granted, natural part of life



Communication and Culture

- 1966 Alfred G. Smith (preface to *Communication and Culture*) : "Culture is a code we learn and share, and learning and sharing require communication. Communication requires coding and symbols that must be learned and shared. Culture cannot be known without a study of communication and communication can only be understood with an understanding of the culture it supports.
- Edward T. Hall: “ **Culture is Communication**” – if a culture is a system for creating, sending, storing and processing information – then communication underlies everything.



PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION

- How communication is defined and used *varies* by culture.
- Communication is an *element* of culture.
- Communication and culture are **inseparable**.
- Communication is **intentional, symbolic** and involves at least two people.
- Communication occurs when symbols are manipulated by one person to stimulate **meaning** in another person.



Animal communication

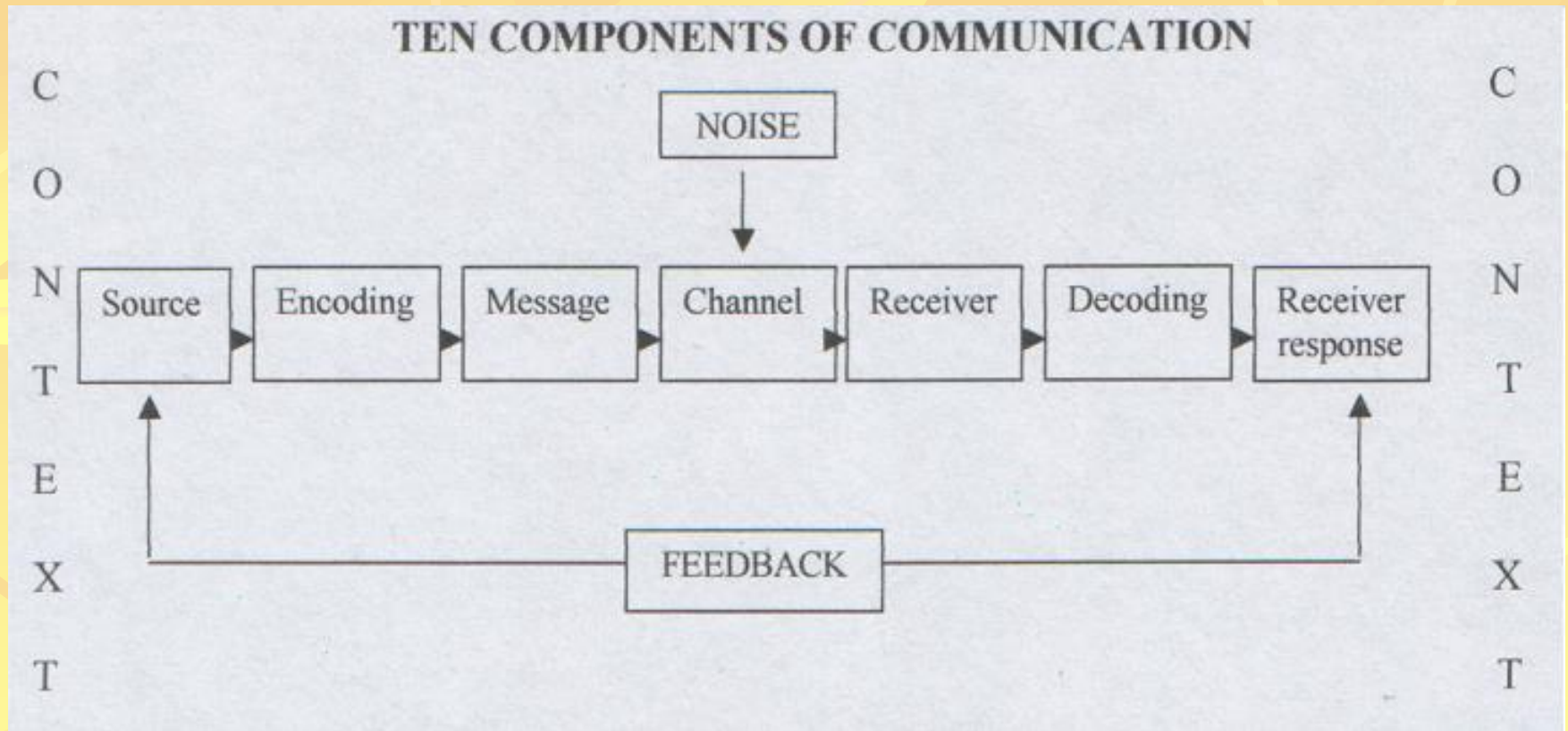
- Bird – birds, squirrels, bees
- Pheromone – releases a chemical in case of danger (ant)
- Dance movement – bee (conveys the location of food)
- BY all the three – apes and other primates (vervet monkeys and eagle-python-leopard calls) – symbolic signals that convey messages; the sender gives a signal that is received and “decoded” by the receiver who usually responds with a specific action or reply

Channels of communication

- language
- body stance,
- gesture,
- tone of voice,
- systems of signs and symbols – writing algebraic equations, musical scores, flags, road signs,
- painting and other means of culture transmission,
- print media (magazines and newspapers), electronic media (TV, radio, Internet)



TRANSMISSION MODEL



- Noise may be *external*(physical), *internal*(emotional, biological) and “*semantic*”. A lot of communication is a linear/one-way process. Context is situation, source-receiver relationships, environment, cultural settings as worldview.

HUMANISTIC MODELS

Transactional model – in addition to sending and receiving messages communicators take their relationship into account. *The exact same words can be spoken to diverse people with different messages.*

*The essence of **cross-cultural communication** is more releasing responses than sending messages. It is deeper and more complex than spoken or written messages*





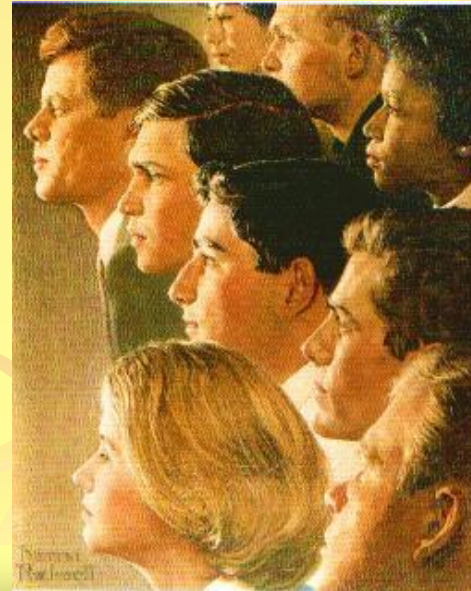
COMMUNICATION STUDIES APPROACHES

Global - the flow of mediated communication among countries, comparative mass communication systems, and communication between national governments

- **global** - trans-border transfer of information, data, opinions, and values by groups, institutions and governments
- **cross-cultural** - comparing phenomena across cultures
- **intercultural** - face-to-face interactions among people of different cultures

Institutions and Personalities in cross-cultural communication

- 1946 Foreign Service Institute to provide language and anthropological cultural training for foreign diplomats.
- 1959 Edward T.Hall *The Silent Language*.
- 1960s John Kennedy's *Peace Corps*



COMMUNICATION THEORIES



- Uncertainty reduction – Berger & Calabrese 1975
- Coordinated management of meaning – Cronen, Pearce & Harris 1982 (influence of social rules and norms)
- Interpersonal-intercultural communication takes place within perceived relationships. Or put another way, at its root, intercultural communication is an interpersonal process (Gudykunst)

THEORIES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ETHICS

Ethics – how we ought to lead our lives

Western

4 fundamental values May & Sharratt 1994

- Autonomy
- Justice
- Responsibility
- Care



African

- Well-being of the community
- Economic considerations over political rights

THEORIES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ETHICS



Buddhist

- Patience, compassion, self-sacrifice, kindness, love for the betterment of a person in this and next life

Hindu

- Ending human suffering through active intervention in this world, obliteration of all distinctions to merge with the absolute

Islamic

- Different rules of ethical conduct for men and women, non-Muslims and Muslims, highly activist and interventionist

ETHICS ACROSS CULTURES

Global values and ethical principles to guide intercultural interactions:

- ethical communicators strive for identification with people of other cultures, they should emphasize the commonalities of cultural beliefs rather than differences
- ethical communicators address people of other cultures with the same respect they would like to receive themselves
- ethical communicators seek to describe the world as they perceive it as neatly as possible
- ethical communicators encourage people of other countries to express themselves in their uniqueness



Barriers to cross-cultural communication



Cultural Communication is a success if there is attention to everything people do to survive, advance in the world.

Cultural communication fails if

1. Crucial steps are ignored as one has not mastered the system
2. One is unconsciously applying one's own rules to another system
3. One is deliberately rejecting the rules, trying to force one's own rules on another system
4. there are changes/ breakdowns of the system in the times of political or economic collapse/war/revolution

Listening as a way to overcome cross-cultural barriers

Plutarch: “Know how to listen and you will profit even from those who talk badly”

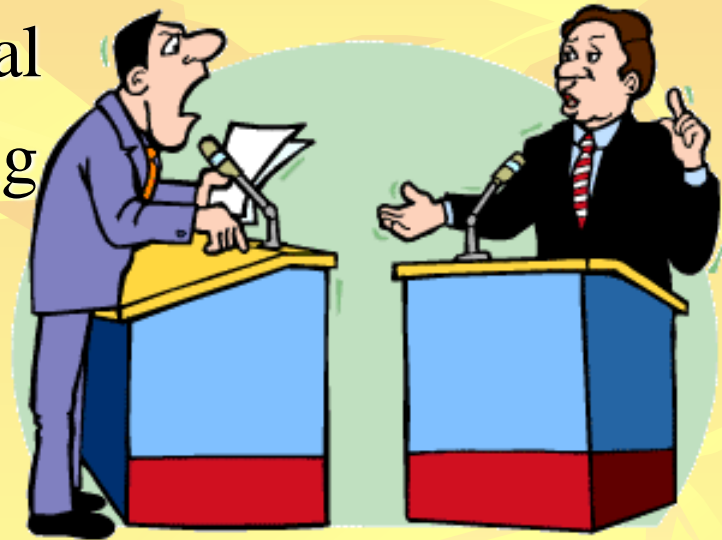
4 **purposes** of listening: empathic, informational, evaluative and appreciative

- Speech is a two-way process, that is why listening is as important as speaking
- -Good listening improves your speaking

Misconceptions about listening: We listen at different levels, you can hear without listening, same sounds produce different messages, people are not born good or bad listeners

Poor listening habits (barriers)

- faking attention
- listening only for facts
- avoiding difficult material
- avoiding the uninteresting
- criticising the speaker
- yielding to distraction
- defensive listening
- constant self-focus
- message overload
- thinking-speaking rate (150 words/min for speaking and 400 words/min for thinking)



Good listening

Listening involves 6 interrelated steps

1. ● hearing
2. ● attending (focusing)
3. ● understanding
4. ● remembering
5. ● evaluating
6. ● responding



What could contribute to misunderstanding in intercultural encounters?

- language barriers
- culture
- attitudes (e.g., prejudices) and stereotypes
- Conflict between people of different ethnic and cultural groups is occurring throughout the world today (e.g., between Bosnians and Serbians, Israelis and Arabs, Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland). The causes of the conflicts differ depending on the situation, but all incidents share one thing in common, namely *polarized communication*--the ability to believe or seriously considers one's views as wrong and the other's opinion as truth. Polarized communication exists when groups or individuals look out for their own interests and have little concern for others' interests, leading to *moral exclusion*, where certain groups are perceived as outside the boundary in which moral values, rule, and considerations of fairness apply.

Intercultural competence

transforms a monocultural person into multicultural person, the one who respect cultures and has tolerance for differences. His skills fall into 4 areas:

- **personality strength** (self-concept, self-disclosure, self-monitoring and social relaxation)
- **communication skills** (verbal & non-verbal behaviours, i.e. message skills, behavioral flexibility, interaction management, social skills-empathy)
- **psychological adjustment** (easy to acclimate to new environments, to handle culture shock, frustration, stress, alienation)
- **cultural awareness** (understanding of social customs and social system of the host culture)

We must become aware of how we communicate.

Howell (1982) argues that awareness and competence can be thought of as a four-stage process:

1. **Unconscious Incompetence** where we misinterpret other's behavior, but are not aware of it.
2. **Conscious Incompetence** where we are aware that we misinterpret other's behavior, but we don't do anything about it.
3. **Conscious Competence** where we think about our communication behavior and consciously modify it to improve our effectiveness (Gudykunst calls it **Mindfulness**)
4. **Unconscious Competence** where we have practiced the skills for effective communication to the extent that we no longer have to think about them to use them.

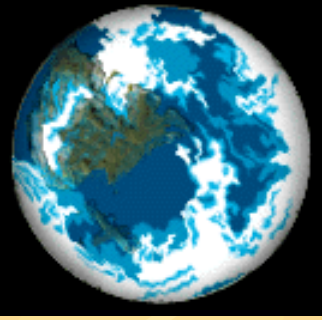
COMMUNICATION STYLES

Linear style- from point A to point B, establishing links between them, finally stating an explicit conclusion (USA, Northern European - males)+efficient, short-term task completion – simple and arrogant

Circular (contextual) style - +facilitation of a team building and consensual creativity – slow, vague, evasive, illogical (Africans, Arabs, Asians, Latins, Hispanics – women)

Direct confrontation (European and African Americans) **vs indirect** (Asians and Hispanics)





Some ideas for the end

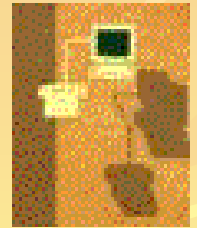
As emerging technology interconnects our globe in increasingly complex layers, the world seems to grow smaller. Yet, it is with this increased interconnectivity that our perception of the world as we presently know it grows and expands. Our social network begins to encompass individuals whom we have never physically met before, and possibly never will. It is these new relationships with distant individuals that may challenge us to expand our horizons beyond what we now know.

Whenever we venture to travel beyond the horizon, however, we oftentimes encounter people very different than ourselves. One of the most fundamental differences is culture. It is these intercultural relationships that challenge us to broaden our perspectives and grow in new directions.

The field of **Cross-cultural Communication** focuses on interactions between people of different cultures. It is an exciting field that continuously invites us to reflect on our own lives and our relationship with each other on this earth.



Home Assignment



Intercultural Experience (10 points)

Write a 1-page essay on an intercultural experience you had in the past. Discuss the following: What culture or co-culture did you interact with? Where did the encounter occur? What communication problems did you experience, i.e.; language, behavior, appearance, attitude and values? Would you consider it a positive, neutral, or negative experience? Why? What are the similarities and differences of that culture and your own? What did you learn from the intercultural encounter?