

Communication Between Cultures

7th ed.

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Chapter 1 Overview

Communication and Culture

- **The world stage: Global interdependence**
- **Communication and culture defined**
- **Intercultural communication challenges**

Societies around globe interdependent
economically, technologically, politically, socially

Six areas impacting your life

- **Globalization**
- **International conflict, security**
- **Competition for natural resources**
- **Environmental challenges**
- **Health care issues**
- **Population shifts**

Globalization = Connectedness

Product of:

- growth in world trade
- improvements in telecommunications
- ease of data storage and transfer
- increased business, leisure travel

Global mega-corporations continue to expand,
increasing intercultural interaction

Actions, processes involve entire world;
results worldwide in scope

International Conflict, Security

- **Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction pose threat**
- **Cultural training, coordinated international programs needed to resolve ethnic violence**

Intensified competition for natural resources

- **Rising prices**
- **Food scarcities (e.g. vegetable oils, fish stock)**
- **World Bank warns of economic crisis**

Environmental challenges

- **Global warming effects**
 - water shortages**
 - increased instability in poor regions**
- **Natural disasters**
- **Intercultural challenges in intervening, assisting**

World health issues

- **AIDS**
- **SARS**
- **Avian flu**
- **Mad cow disease**
- **Other atmospheric-transported maladies**

Shifting populations

- **Current world population (6.6 billion) growing**
- **Immigration increase continuing**
 - U.S. growth driven by immigration, not birth**
 - U.S. elderly population to double by 2050**
- **Mixed heritage population increasing**

Definitions

Communication - dynamic process of people sharing their internal states with others through use of symbols

Intercultural communication - when a member of one culture produces a message for consumption by a member of another culture

Dominant culture - a group of people as a culture; the group in power (white males at center of dominant culture in U.S.)

Co-culture - groups exhibiting characteristics distinct from other groups, communities, dominant culture

Four functions of communication

- **Gathering information about other people**
- **Fulfilling interpersonal needs (friendship, enjoyment)**
- **Defining your personal identity**
- **Influencing others**

Principles of communication

- **Dynamic process**
- **Symbolic (verbal, nonverbal; varies culture to culture)**
- **Contextual**
 - Cultural setting (social norms)**
 - Environment (physical surroundings)**
 - Occasion**
 - Time**
 - Number of people**
- **Self-reflective**
- **Learned**
- **Consequential**

Culture and communication

- **Culture is learned through communication**
- **Communication reflects culture**
- **“Culture is to a human collective what personality is to an individual” (Hofstede)**

A group's common fund of knowledge, shared meaning

Culture defined

A set of human-made objective and subjective elements that have increased probability of survival in the past and resulted in satisfaction for participants, and thus became shared among those who could communicate with each other because they had a common language and lived in the same time and place. (Triandis)

Functions of culture

- **Enables people to adapt to surroundings**
- **Enables people to function effectively in their social environment**

Five primary elements of culture

- History - highlights culture's origins
- Religion - dominant, organized belief system influencing social, political, business, and individual behavior
- Values - culturally defined standards; guidelines of behavior
- Social organizations - establish communication networks, regulate norms of conduct
- Language - allows members to share information; chief method of transmission of culture

Characteristics of culture

- **Learned - meanings are assigned**

Enculturation: total process of learning one's culture

Informal: interaction, observation, imitation

Formal: schools, churches

*Proverbs, folktales, legends, myths: values, beliefs
taught*

Art: reflecting, reminding how a culture sees the world

*Mass media: depicts, shapes cultural life; mass social
learning*

- **Shared**
- **Transmitted generation to generation**
- **Based on symbols**
- **Dynamic**
- **Integrated system**

Problems inherent to studying intercultural communication

- **Individual uniqueness** - people are not subject to all lessons of their culture
- **Stereotypes** - collection of false assumptions that *people in all cultures* make about characteristics of members of various groups

Be cautious about cultural generalizations!

Ethnocentrism found in all cultures (belief that one's own culture is superior to others)

- **Objectivity** - state of being just, unbiased, and not influenced by emotions or personal prejudices

Next ...

Chapter 2: The structure of culture

