



Chapter 1

The Nature of Intercultural Communication

Topics

- **Globalization**
- **Culture**
- **Stereotypes**
- **Enculturation/Acculturation**
- **Ethnocentrism**
- **Norms, rules, roles, and networks**
- **Subcultures and subgroups**
- **Cultural intelligence**
- **Communication barriers**
- **Multinational management orientations**

Example of Intercultural Miscommunication

Telex sent to a factory manager of a U.S. subsidiary in Lima, Peru:


“Please send a headcount of the people in your factory and in your office, broken down by sex. Information urgent.”


The local manager, a Peruvian, replied:

“Here’s your headcount: We have 30 in the factory, 15 in the office, 5 in the hospital on sick leave, none broken down by sex. If you must know, our problem here is with alcohol.”

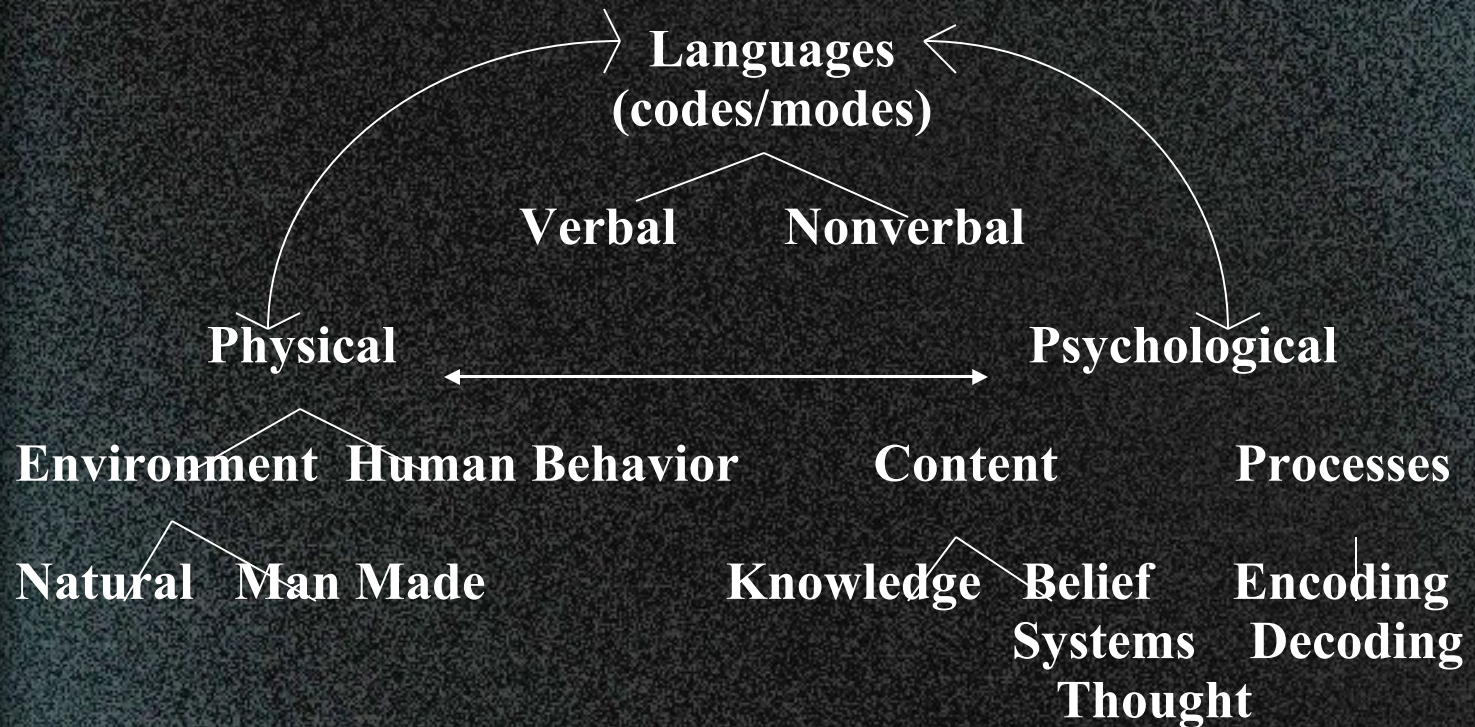
Definitions

- **International communication** — communication between governments or among nations
- **Intracultural communication** — communication between members of the same culture

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- **Intercultural business communication** - interpersonal communication within and between businesses that involve people from more than one culture
 - **Melting pot** - sociocultural assimilation of people of differing backgrounds and nationalities; implies losing ethnic differences and forming one large society (macroculture)

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- **Diffusion** - the process by which two cultures learn and adapt materials and adopt practices of each other
 - **World culture** – the idea that as traditional barriers among people of differing cultures break down, one culture will emerge
 - **Globalization** – the ability of a firm to take a product and market it in the entire civilized world

Dimensions of Culture



Can you describe your own culture?

- **American Values and Assumptions**
(Individualism and Privacy, Equality, Work, Informality, Time, Goodness of Humanity)
- **Communicative Style**
(Small Talk, Forms of Interaction)
- **Ways of Reasoning**
(Get to the Point and Prove it, Distrust of Theory and Generalizations, Truth Comes from Sight)



- **Differences in Customs**

(Holidays, Independence/Self-reliance, Punctuality, Treatment of Waiters/Secretaries, Treatment of Females, Need for Space)

- **Specific Aspects of American Life**

(Politics, Family Life, Driving, Shopping, Personal Hygiene, Behavior in Public)

What foreign students **WOULD** like to see incorporated into their own culture:

- Opportunity for individuals to raise their station in life
- Efficiency of organizations
- Hard work and productivity
- Freedom to express opinions openly
- General sense of freedom

What foreign students **WOULD NOT** like to see incorporated into their own culture:


- **Excessive individualism**
- **Weak family ties**
- **Treatment of older people**
- **Materialism**
- **Competitiveness**
- **Rapid pace of life**
- **Divorce**
- **“Free” male/ female relations**
- **Impersonality**

Perceptions and Stereotypes

- **Perceptions** are learned through the dimensions of culture. Culture is learned through perception.
- **Stereotypes** are perceptions about certain groups of people or nationalities, often based upon limited knowledge and/or exposure.

Stereotypes of U.S. Persons

- **Informal relationships**
- **Rather formal in business attire (suits for men and dresses or suits for women)**
- **Workaholics**
- **Embarrass foreign businesspeople by doing manual labor**
- **Overly concerned with time, money, and appointments**

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- **Make decisions on hard, objective facts**
 - **Consider contracts and the written word as very important**
 - **Are aware of status differences within the organization; however, no display of superiority or inferiority is made**
 - **Are very mobile**
 - **Convey superiority in their actions**

Stereotypes of People of Other Nationalities

Culture

- **English**
- **French**
- **Italian**
- **Latin American**
- **Asians**

Image

- conservative, reserved, polite, proper, formal
- arrogant, rude, chauvinistic, romantics, gourmets, cultural, artistic
- demonstrative, talkative, emotional, romantic, bold, artistic
- mañana* attitude, macho, music lovers, touchers
- inscrutable, intelligent, xenophobic (fear/hatred of strangers/foreigners), golfers, group oriented, polite, soft-spoken

Stereotypes of Other Cultures

As viewed by Japanese and U.S. Students

| | <u>Japanese</u> | <u>U. S. Americans</u> |
|-----------------|--|--|
| English | gentlemanly, polite | formal, proper, polite, intelligent |
| Irish | cold, patient, religious | drinkers, jovial, hot-tempered, loud |
| Chinese | diligent, serious, laboring | quiet, small, industrious, smart |
| Mexicans | cheerful, passionate, spicy-food eaters | lazy, poor, loud, dirty, uneducated |
| Russians | cold, dark, closed, secret, selfish | cold, respect authority, hard-working |
| Israelis | religious, faithful, warlike, Jewish | religious, quarrelsome, wealthy, greedy |

Terms

- **Enculturation** - socialization process you go through to adapt to your society
 - **Frontstage culture** - cultural information that you are willing to share with outsiders
 - **Backstage culture** - cultural information concealed from outsiders
- **Acculturation** - process of adjusting and adapting to a new and different culture
 - **Cultural synergy** - two cultures merge to form a stronger overriding culture
 - **Multicultural** - people who can move between two or more cultures very comfortably

Terms

(cont.)

- **Ethnocentrism** - the belief that your own cultural background is correct
- **Mindsets** - ways of being that allow us to see, perceive, and reason through our own filter

Dimensions of Acculturation

- **Integration** - persons become an integral part of the new culture while maintaining their cultural integrity
- **Separation** - individuals keep their culture and stay independent of the new culture
- **Assimilation** - persons are absorbed into their new culture and withdraw from their old culture
- **Deculturation** - when individuals lose their original culture and do not accept the new culture

Norms, Rules, Roles, and Networks

(Situational factors that influence encoding and decoding of verbal and nonverbal messages)

- **Norms** - culturally ingrained principles of correct and incorrect behaviors which, if broken, carry a form of overt or covert penalty
- **Rules** - formed to clarify cloudy areas of norms
- **Roles** - include behavioral expectations of a position within a culture and are affected by norms and rules
- **Networks** - formed with personal ties and involve an exchange of assistance

Subcultures and Subgroups

- **Subcultures (or microcultures)** - groups possessing traits that set them apart from others within the macroculture.

U.S. examples: senior citizens, Catholics, disabled persons, Asian Americans

- **Subgroups** - groups with which the microculture does not agree and has problems communicating.

U.S. examples: youth gangs, prostitutes, embezzlers

Cultural Intelligence

- **Linguistic Intelligence**
- **Spatial Intelligence**
- **Intrapersonal Intelligence**
- **Interpersonal Intelligence**

Communication Barriers

- **Physical** - time, environment
- **Cultural** - social, ethnic, religion, social
- **Perceptual** - viewing from your own mindset
- **Motivational** - mental inertia of listener
- **Experiential** - dissimilar experiences or life happenings

Communication Barriers

(cont.)

- **Linguistic** - unusual vocabulary
- **Emotional** – personal feelings, likes or dislikes
- **Nonverbal** – how something is said, or how the person behaves or gestures
- **Competition** – listener's having the ability to do other things

Cultural Iceberg

- **Above the waterline—what we can see; behaviors that are visible**
- **Below the waterline—what we cannot see; behaviors that are not visible or that do not make sense**

Domestic and Global Mindsets

Domestic Mindset

- Functional expertise
- Prioritization
- Structure
- Individual responsibility
- No surprises
- Trained against surprises

Global Mindset

- Bigger, broader picture
- Balance of contradictions
- Process
- Teamwork and diversity
- View change as opportunity
- Openness to surprises

Multinational Management Orientations

Ethnocentric Management - All workers treated the same; no allowance for cultural differences in the work force

Polycentric Management - Considers the cultural needs of the worker in the area in which the firm is located

Regiocentric Management - Considers the region rather than the country in which the firm is located

Geocentric Management - A synergy of ideas from different countries of operation

Ten Commandments for Going International

- **Be well prepared.**
- **Ask questions; be observant; listen.**
- **Make an effort.**
- **When problems develop, assume the main cause is miscommunication.**
- **Be patient.**
- **Assume the best about people.**
- **Be sincere.**
- **Keep a sense of humor.**
- **Try to be likable.**
- **Smile.**