Communication Between Cultures
7th ed.

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Chapter 8 Overview
Cultural influences on context:
the business setting

- **Communication context**
- **Communication variables**
- **Intercultural communication in business**

  Protocol

  Management

  Decision-making

  Negotiation

  Conflict management

Communication context:
Assumptions about communication

Communication is rule-governed

Rules define acceptable and unacceptable codes of thought, feeling, and behavior

Govern/guide verbal and nonverbal behaviors: what, where, and how to share

Context prescribes appropriate communication rules

Diverse contexts (settings, occasions) indicate what behavior is obligatory, preferred, prohibited

Communication rules are culturally diverse

Concepts of dress, time, language, manners, nonverbal behavior differ significantly

Communication variables in all communication settings

(1) Informality and formality

Informality

Idiomatic speech and slang liberally used; casual attire, relaxed posture (U.S.)

Formality

Formality seen in relationships, forms of address, caution/distance with acquaintances

(2) Assertiveness and interpersonal harmony

Assertiveness

Frankness, openness, directness valued in U.S.; advancing self-interest encouraged

Interpersonal harmony (harmonious relationships)

Agreement, loyalty, reciprocal obligation; avoidance of conflict/confrontation

(3) Status relationships

Egalitarian (U.S., Australia, Israel, New Zealand)

Encourages openness, stresses informality, status acquired through individual effort

Hierarchical (Japan, China, Latin America, Spain)

Protocols, formalities, rigid social structures (Internet alters perception of status)

Intercultural Communication in Business Context: Protocol

"**Death of distance**" due to international interdependencies and integration of business

- **Domestic business context**

  - *Minorities (birth and immigrant) fastest-growing segment of U.S. demography*
  - *Businesses must adapt operations to appeal to different ethnicities*
  - *Successful management demands awareness, acceptance of varying cultural values*

- **Business Protocol in cross-cultural interactions**

  - *Initial contact: 1) direct: face-to-face, cold call, letter of intro 2) use of emissary*
  - *Greeting behavior: 1) informality v. formality 2) verbal and/or nonverbal*
  - *Personal appearance: what constitutes appropriate dress (casual v. professional)*
  - *Gift-giving: distinction from bribes; to whom, what, when, and how to gift*
  - *Conversational taboos: politics, personal information, jokes*

Intercultural Communication in Business Context: Management and decision-making

Cultures have different views of what constitutes good and bad management techniques

U.S. erroneously believes our management theories universally apply

- **Leadership styles**

    U.S.: doing-oriented, reduced power distance, individual achievement rewarded
    Japan: hierarchical structure; achievements product of group
    Korea and China: boss is king (autocratic, paternalistic)
    Mexico: high power distance, order of inequality

- **Decision-making styles**

    U.S.: top-level individuals decide; implementation dependent on affected employees
    Arab/Nigerian: similar to U.S., authoritative control over rank-and-file
    Japan: group orientation, consensus-based decisions, emphasis on social stability

Intercultural Communication in Business Context: Business negotiations

Culture affects how negotiation process viewed as a whole, perception of counterparts, how bargaining sessions conducted

• **Comparison of negotiation styles**

 U.S.: direct/confrontational, desire to win, emphasis on short-term, max profit
 Japan/China: emphasis on long-term, desire to establish trust/build relationship
 Mexico: non-confrontational, win-win   Russia: uncompromising, desire to win
 Middle East: forceful/dynamic negotiator, sincere/commitment to belief

• **Negotiator qualities/selection - skill, status, age, gender**
 U.S.: competitive, proven managerial and verbal/persuasive skill
 Japan/China/Middle East: high-ranking officers; influential private individuals
 Korea/China: elders head negotiation team
 Saudi Arabia/Muslim countries: male negotiators preferred

• **Business ethics** and negotiations**
 U.S.: laws prohibit payment of bribes or gift-giving
  In Mexico, mordida; Southeast Asia, kumshaw; Middle East, baksheesh; Russia, blat

 ****Avoid violating ethical principles when encountering cultural practice**

Intercultural Communication in Business Context: Business negotiations, continued

Negotiation styles affect outcomes

- **Formality and status**
  Outside U.S., titles acknowledge/affirm status, identity; formality sought

- **Pace and Patience**
  Short-term view (U.S.) versus long-term

- **Emotional displays**
  Reliance upon versus discouragement of (nonverbal) emotional expression

- **Direct and indirect language**
  Getting to the point versus maintaining harmony, avoiding conflict

- **Evidence and truth**
  Objective/verifiable versus subjective/faith-based

Intercultural Communication in Business Context: Conflict management

Communication = dominant characteristic of conflict

- **Five approaches to conflict management**

  - *Avoidance   (not popular in U.S.)*
  - *Accommodation (concerned with relational)*
  - *Competition (fundamental American value; objective to WIN!)*
  - *Compromise (making concessions)*
  - *Collaboration (most sought-after method of settling conflict)*

- **Western conflict management style**

  Oriented toward personal goals of success, achievement (relationships impede)

- **Collectivists, other conflict management styles**

  - *Conflict seen as embarrassing, distressing, threat to harmony for collectivists*
  - *In Germany, conflict avoided by maintaining formality, social distance*
  - *French, Swedes seeks win-win*

Managing intercultural conflict

Identify the contentious issues

Keep an open mind

Do not rush

Keep the conflict centered on ideas, not people

Develop techniques for avoiding conflict

- **use collective pronouns**

- **repeat others' comments as objectively as possible to confirm you heard what they meant to communicate**

- **state as many points of agreement as possible**

Next …

Chapter 9
Cultural influences on context:
the educational setting