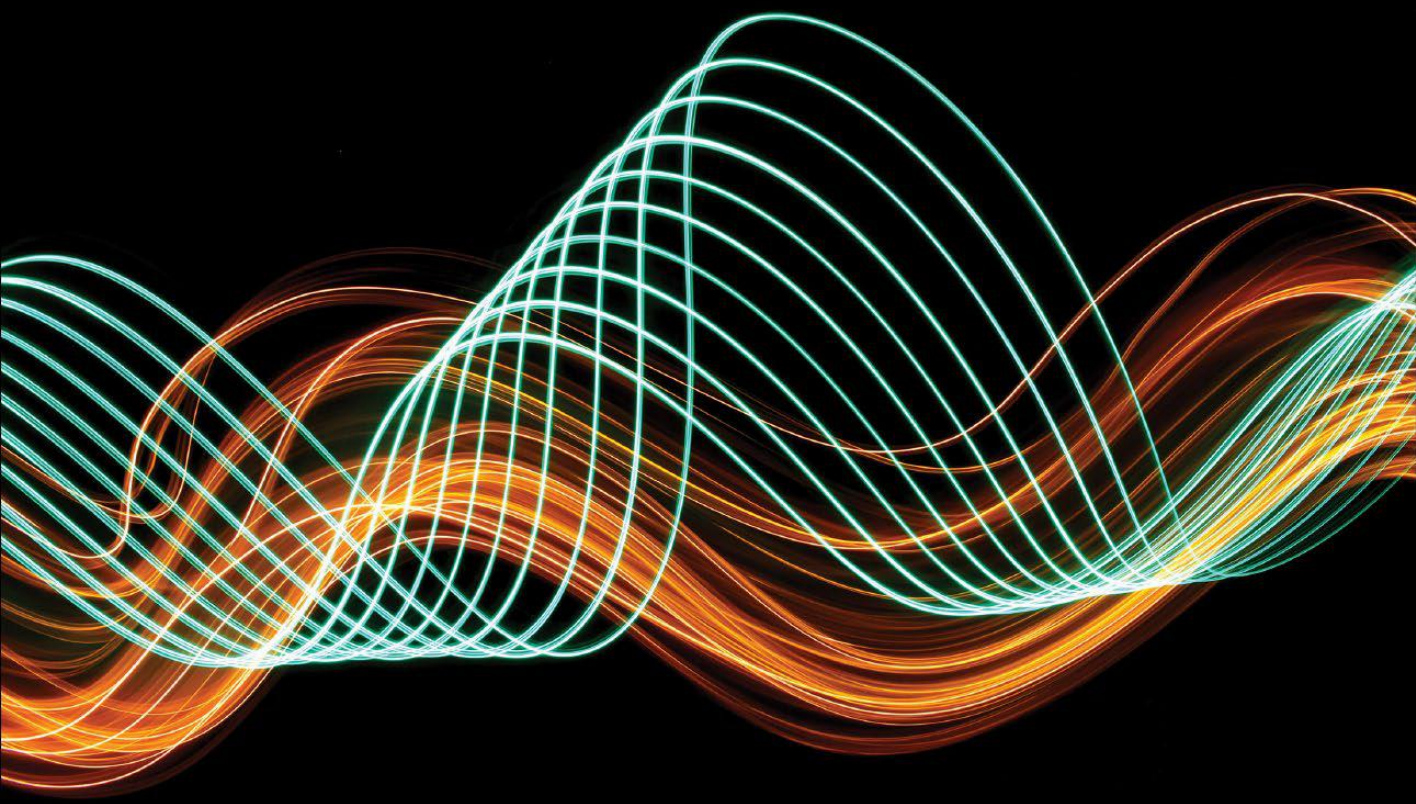
Intercultural Communication

8 EDITION

A Contextual Approach



James W. Neuliep

Intercultural Communication

Eighth Edition

This book is dedicated to my loving family, Steph, Mac, Midas, Eden, and Ellie

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James W. Neuliep

St. Norbert College

SAGE

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PREFACE

Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach (eighth edition) is designed for undergraduate students taking their first course in intercultural communication. The book introduces students to the fundamental topics, theories, concepts, and themes at the center of the study of intercultural communication.

ORGANIZATION

The overall organizational scheme of the book is based on a *contextual model of intercultural communication*. The model is based on the idea that whenever people from different cultures come together and exchange verbal and nonverbal messages, they do so in a variety of contexts, including cultural, microcultural, environmental, sociorelational, and perceptual. The model is conceptually and graphically consistent and is presented in Chapter 1. The organizational scheme of the eighth edition is consistent with earlier editions, but many substantive revisions have been incorporated. The role of modern technology and its impact on intercultural communication has been added to many chapters. Each chapter has been revised and updated to include the most recent research in the field.

FEATURES

The eighth edition contains many returning features that have been updated to enhance and improve on the existing content.

STUDENT VOICES ACROSS CULTURES: A continuing and exciting feature of this edition is Student Voices Across Cultures. Each chapter includes at least one essay from a student applying a concept from that chapter to his or her personal experiences. Young professionals and students from Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Norway, Russia, the Faroe Islands, Mexico, Guatemala, Germany, Colombia, Sweden, and the United States have contributed to this feature. These profiles provide the reader with real-life applications of theoretical concepts.

SELF-ASSESSMENTS: Most chapters contain a number of self-assessment instruments that measure concepts such as intercultural communication, apprehension, ethnocentrism, individualism–collectivism, conflict-style preferences, and intercultural competence. These are designed to help students learn about themselves as they learn about important concepts in intercultural communication.

INTERCULTURAL CONVERSATIONS: As in the earlier editions, most of the chapters in this newly revised edition of the book contain *intercultural conversations*. These hypothetical scripts illustrate how the various concepts discussed in the chapters manifest in human interactions.

ETHICS QUESTIONS: At the close of each chapter, students are asked to consider ethical issues related to the concepts discussed in the particular chapter. These questions encourage students to think about how they might respond and react ethically to intercultural situations.

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE: At the close of each chapter is a feature titled Developing Intercultural Communication Competence, where students are challenged to adapt their way of thinking and their communication. The goal of this feature is tied to the goal of this book, which is to help students become competent intercultural communicators.

Each chapter also includes a set of learning objectives, a chapter summary, discussion questions, key terms, and an extensive reference list.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

Each chapter has been updated to include new developments in scholarship. Highlights to the revision include the following.

CHAPTER 1 alerts students to the importance and necessity of intercultural communication in the 21st century. An argument presented here is that modern technology has decentralized information. This means that billions of people across the planet now have access to information not available to them only a few years ago. Such information empowers them. The most current data from the U.S. Census Bureau are reviewed, which point to the growing diversity of the U.S. population. The chapter continues with extended discussions about the nature of human communication and culture. While reading Chapter 1, students can complete and score the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension, the Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale, and the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension. The chapter continues with a delineation of five fundamental assumptions of intercultural communication. At the close of Chapter 1 is an introduction to intercultural communication competence. Here, students can complete the Intercultural Communication Competence Scale. The Student Voices Across Cultures profile in this chapter presents a young woman's experiences with cultural differences while studying abroad in Italy.

In **CHAPTER 2**, culture is defined as an accumulated pattern of values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by an identifiable group of people with a common history and verbal and nonverbal code system. The outer circle of the contextual model of intercultural communication represents the cultural context. This is the largest circle because culture permeates every aspect of the communicative exchange, even the physical geography.

All communicative exchanges between persons occur within some cultural context. The cultural context is the focus of Chapter 2. Well-recognized topics such as individualism–collectivism, high–low context, weak–strong uncertainty avoidance, value orientations, and small–large power distance are discussed. A new section on long term–short term orientation as one of the fundamental dimensions of cultural variability has been added to this edition. Self-report scales measuring each of these topics are included in the chapter, including a scale that measures vertical and horizontal individualism and collectivism. Although most textbooks present individualism and collectivism as opposite dimensions of cultural variability, they are not mutually exclusive; that is, they can coexist within a person of any culture. However, there is an argument that both individualistic and collectivistic ideals serve the self or are pancultural. The discussion of the pancultural self has been updated and extended. Two Student Voices Across Cultures profiles are included in this chapter: one from a young professional from Abu Dhabi who discusses her individualistic tendencies in a collectivistic culture and the other from a Saudi Arabian student who explains power distance in his family.

The focus of **CHAPTER 3** is the microcultural context. Within most cultures are groups of people that differ in some significant way from the general macroculture. These groups are sometimes called minorities, subcultures, or co-cultures. In this book, the term *microculture* is used to refer to those identifiable groups of people that share a set of values, beliefs, and behaviors and have a common history and verbal and nonverbal symbol system that is similar to, but systematically varies from, the larger, often dominant cultural milieu. Microcultures can be different from the larger culture in a variety of ways—most often because of race, ethnicity, language, religion, or even behavioral practices. Such microcultures develop their own language for communicating outside the dominant or majority culture's context or value system. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of five U.S. microcultures: Hispanics/Latinos, Black Americans, Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) groups. The demographics for each of these groups have been updated. Included in this chapter is a Student Voices Across Cultures profile written by a gay college professor, who discusses personal examples of being silenced as a member of a microculture.

CHAPTER 4 focuses on the environmental context. Whereas culture prescribes the overall rules for communication, the environmental context prescribes when and what specific rules apply. The environmental context includes the physical geography, architecture, landscape design, housing, perceptions of privacy, time orientation, and even climate of a particular culture. A discussion of the Japanese phenomenon of microhomes, or ultra-small homes, is included in this chapter as is a discussion of Muslim homes. These environmental factors play a key role in how people communicate. In this chapter, students are given the opportunity to assess their privacy preferences and monochronic/polychronic time orientations. A case study of time orientation and Japanese culture has been added. Chapter 4 includes updated coverage of online privacy and the nature of privacy in the United States, with a special focus on the perceptions of privacy among U.S. students. The section on online privacy includes the results of an EMC Corporation (EMC^2) survey of over 15,000 respondents in 15 countries that studied perceptions and attitudes about data privacy and the willingness to trade privacy for convenience and

benefits online. Also included is a proposed set of criteria that online services should address to provide users from diverse backgrounds and cultures reasonable online privacy protections. A discussion of natural disasters as cultural and social events is included. Although natural disasters are triggered by natural events (e.g., tsunamis, earthquakes, floods), the effects of such disasters vary considerably across cultures because they take place within particular social and cultural systems of laws and values. In the Student Voices Across Cultures profile included in this chapter, a young man from Germany discusses his country's monochronic time orientation. A chart summarizing characteristics of monochronic and polychronic time orientations has been added.

CHAPTER 5 focuses on the perceptual contexts of the interactants and includes a simplified model of human information processing. The perceptual context refers to the individual characteristics of the interactants, including their cognitions, attitudes, dispositions, and motivations. How an individual gathers, stores, and retrieves information is uniquely human but also culturally influenced. An individual's attitudes about others, including stereotypes, are culturally influenced. Also included in Chapter 5 is a discussion of U.S. racism as a parallel to ethnocentrism. The geography of thought—that is, how geographical differences among cultures have a dramatic influence on how humans in those distinct geographical areas perceive the world—is discussed. Here, the focus is on how Asians (Eastern cultures) and Westerners think differently, and why. Included in this chapter is a discussion of media's influence on stereotypes, including an application of Gerbner's cultivation theory. The chapter applies cultivation theory to three microcultural groups in the United States, examining how they are depicted on television and the resulting stereotypes associated with them. Three specific groups studied are Black Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Asian Americans. A look at how U.S. citizens are stereotyped is also included here. In one of the Student Voices Across Cultures profiles in this chapter, a young woman who has won beauty pageants discusses the long-held stereotypes applied to beauty pageant contestants. In a new profile, a well-respected attorney movingly discusses how he was raised biculturally in the United States and Guatemala and the stereotypes he experienced.

The sociorelational context is the focus of **CHAPTER 6**. Whenever two people come together and interact, they establish some sort of social relationship based on their group memberships. Within such relationships, each person assumes a role. Roles prescribe with whom, about what, and how individuals communicate. Roles vary from culture to culture. For example, in just about every culture, there are student and teacher role relationships, but how student–teacher roles are defined varies significantly from culture to culture. For example, the U.S. American definition of *student* varies significantly from the Japanese definition of *student*. What it means to be a mother or father varies considerably from one culture to another as well. One's roles prescribe the types of verbal and nonverbal symbols exchanged. Chapter 6 contains a discussion of matriarchy and patriarchy and an updated discussion of family groups and sex roles across cultures. A Student Voices Across Cultures profile has been included in which a young woman from the United States discusses how she and her friends were addressed in Italy. A new profile has been added in which a student from the United States discusses her observation of family roles in Guatemala when she was an exchange student there.

CHAPTER 7 focuses on the verbal code and human language. Throughout much of the book, cultural *differences* are highlighted. In Chapter 7, however, language is characterized as essentially *human* rather than cultural. Based on the ideas of Noam Chomsky and other contemporary linguists, Chapter 7 points out that, regardless of culture, people are born with the capacity for language. Humans are born with universal grammar and, through culture, are exposed to a subset of universal grammar that constitutes their particular culture's language (e.g., English, French, and so on). The language of a particular culture is simply a subset of universal language. To be sure, culture certainly affects how we use language. Thus, Chapter 7 outlines several styles of language and how they vary across cultures. The chapter includes a discussion of the gendering of language along with a comparison of sex differences in verbal language in Japan, China, and India. A discussion of uniquely American accents, including a section addressing whether a Midwestern accent exists, closes the chapter. In this chapter's Student Voices Across Cultures profile, a student from China explains how her native language emphasizes nonverbal tones that dramatically change the meanings of words, and in a new profile a professional educator from Norway explains how small talk differs considerably in Norway versus the United States.

CHAPTER 8 focuses on the nonverbal code. After a discussion of the relationship between verbal and nonverbal codes, eight channels of nonverbal communication are discussed: kinesics, paralanguage, oculesics, proxemics, haptics, olfactics, physical appearance/dress, and chronemics. In the section on kinesics, the use of gestures and an extended discussion of affect displays across cultures are presented. In the coverage of paralanguage, cultural uses of silence, accents, and tonal languages are discussed. A feature of this chapter is a discussion of the cross-cultural differences in eye contact (i.e., oculesics). Cultural variations of space are covered in the section on proxemics. High- and low-contact cultures are the focus of the section on haptics. An extended discussion of olfactics across cultures is presented, and students can assess their perception of smell by completing the Personal Report of Olfactic Perception and Sensitivity. A discussion of physical appearance and dress looks at cultural variations in India and Japan, among other cultures. The discussion of chronemics reviews Edward T. Hall's monochronic/polychronic distinction, in addition to the use of calendars across cultures. Finally, the chapter closes with a cross-cultural application of nonverbal expectancy violations theory. In one of this chapter's Student Voices Across Cultures essays, a U.S. student discusses her trip to Zambia, Africa, and her experience with haptics/touch. Another Student Voices Across Cultures essay, written by a student from Saudi Arabia, describes nonverbal behavior in his country. Another Student Voices Across Cultures essay, written by a U.S. student, describes the nonverbal behavior of people in England, especially in mass transit contexts. Finally, a U.S. student studying abroad in Japan describes a fascinating experience with proxemics.

CHAPTER 9 discusses the development of intercultural relationships. This chapter focuses on five factors that affect relationships: uncertainty reduction, intercultural communication apprehension, sociocommunicative style, empathy, and similarity. Each factor is discussed, with an emphasis on intercultural relationships. The discussion of anxiety/uncertainty management theory is included. The chapter also presents a discussion of relationship differences between Eastern and Western cultures. A newly revised section

on interethnic, interracial, and intercultural relationships and marriages is included, and the discussion of polygyny and interracial marriages is updated. A newly revised section on the Internet as relational maintenance has been included where Japan, India, Africa, and Mexico are highlighted. The section on arranged marriages is updated, and current research has been added to the section on divorce across cultures. Also included is a discussion of the research associated with lesbian and gay relational maintenance. In this chapter, students can complete the Sociocommunicative Orientation/Style and Factors in Choosing a Mate instruments and compare their preferences with other cultures. In a new Student Voices Across Cultures profile, a U.S. student describes how she and her South Korean roommate developed a relationship. In the two other Student Voices Across Cultures profiles, a young man from Saudi Arabia discusses marriage in his country, and a young woman explains relationship building in Colombia.

CHAPTER 10 focuses on intercultural conflict. The chapter begins with a definition of intercultural conflict and outlines three levels of conflict as described by Young Kim's model. The chapter includes two models of conflict, including John Oetzel and Stella Ting-Toomey's revised culture-based social ecological model of conflict and Benjamin Broome's model of building a culture of peace. Then, an example of intercultural conflict is applied to all three models. Through these three applications, students can see how the models might work in practice. The chapter also includes an extended discussion of face-negotiation theory, where students can assess their degree of self-face, other-face, and mutual-face concerns after exposure to a conflict. The chapter also includes discussions of facework and facework strategies and of the Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory. This inventory is a theoretical model and assessment tool used by professional mediators and trainers to diagnose and manage intercultural conflicts. The chapter includes a discussion of conflict communication styles and how culture affects one's preference for conflict styles. A major section at the end of the chapter on Kohls and Buller's contingency model of cross-cultural conflict has been included. Following that, four hypothetical conflict scenarios have been included that apply the model. In the Student Voices Across Cultures profile, a young man from Mexico describes how people in his culture approach interpersonal conflict. In another Student Voices Across Cultures profile, a U.S. student discusses how she manages conflict with her international exchange student friends.

CHAPTER 11 has been significantly revised. The section on management practices across cultures has been updated. Each section on the specific cultures profiled (i.e., Japan, Germany, Mexico, and China) has been revised to reflect the most current statistics available. Note that each of these four sections begins with a brief overview of their economies. These have all been updated. Also included is an interesting discussion of the phenomenon of the *salaryman* in Japan. A new Student Voices Across Cultures profile of a young professional in New York City discusses the importance of competent intercultural communication in organizations. The section on health care has been updated. Several current studies and references have been added to the section on provider–patient communication. Another Student Voices Across Cultures essay was written by a student from the Faroe Islands, where health care is handled much differently than in the United States. The discussion of intercultural communication in

educational settings, containing a section on learning styles across cultures and a graphic of a learning style model, a section on teacher immediacy across cultures, and a series of pedagogical recommendations for teachers in intercultural classrooms is included.

CHAPTER 12 presents a discussion of acculturation, culture shock, and intercultural competence. The central theme of this chapter is the practical aspect of traveling or moving to a new culture. A model of assimilation/acculturation is presented, along with factors that influence the acculturation process, such as perceived similarity and host culture attitudes. A new and fascinating profile of a young woman who immigrated to the United States with her parents from Russia as refugees is included that describes their experience with acculturative stress. A four-stage, U-curve model of culture shock is outlined. In addition, the chapter includes a discussion of the W-curve model of re-entry culture shock. The chapter includes a variety of self-report inventories to help students prepare for a journey abroad. It closes with a model of intercultural competence as four interdependent components—knowledge, affective, psychomotor, and situational features. A feature of this chapter is an extended discussion of Kim Zapf's Culture Shock Scale, including a checklist of additional culture shock symptoms. A Student Voices Across Cultures profile based on re-entry shock (the W-curve model) is included. This complements the earlier essay on culture shock. Many of my students comment that coming back to the United States after a semester abroad (i.e., re-entry shock) is more difficult than actually traveling abroad (i.e., culture shock). Of particular interest is a Student Voices Across Cultures profile from a young man who spent a yearlong tour of duty in Afghanistan. In his profile, he discusses how the model of culture shock presented in the chapter does not apply to his overseas experience in a war zone.

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A number of people have been instrumental in the revision of this book. I am so fortunate to have worked with the professionals at SAGE Publishing for nearly two decades. That only my name appears on the cover of this book is misleading. Many of my editorial and production staff at SAGE were new to this edition, and they deserve much credit for what is good in this book. They have been incredibly helpful and supportive. I wish to express my gratitude publicly. A genuine and sincere thanks goes to my new acquisitions editor, Lily Norton. Thanks, Lily! Lily has put up with a lot from me, and she deserves a special commendation for her persistence, patience, and energy. I hope we continue to work together for many years. A very special thanks to Jennifer Jovin-Bernstein, my new content development editor. Jen, too, has been so patient with me and has spent countless hours helping with the development of this new edition. Thank you so much, Jen. Much appreciated. My new editorial assistant is Sarah Wilson. Thanks, Sarah, for your hard work in reviewing the book and paying close attention to the details and photos. You're great! Midas thanks you, too! A special thanks also goes to my production manager, Andrew Olson. My copy editor was Mark Bast. Thanks, Mark, for your diligence and paying such close attention to details. Wow! Thanks also to the following reviewers of the book, whose many suggestions were incorporated into the revision. I very much appreciate their constructive comments and recommendations.

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As I continue into my fourth decade of teaching at the collegiate level, a genuine and sincere thank-you goes to my students at St. Norbert College, from whom I have learned a great deal about culture and so much more about life. A special thanks to the fascinating and moving new Student Voices Across Cultures contributors, including Ruqaya K. Ibrahim, Natalie Bradish, Lily Quinn, Margaret Puntervold, Miguel Keberlein, Anna Odessky, and Irena Shnayder. You are wonderful. One of the greatest pleasures of my life is the relationships I have initiated and maintained with my students.

—J.W.N.

A NOTE ON CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Writing a book about intercultural communication is fraught with issues related to language and cultural identity. Cultures are not static. Cultures are fluid, in flux, transforming, and evolving—some slowly, some quickly. As you read through this book, please know that a conscious attempt has been made to be inclusive and nonjudgmental when describing cultural groups and cultural traditions. Language, too, is fluid and evolving. The language spoken today is not the language of our ancestors. And so the language we use to describe cultures can sometimes unintentionally mischaracterize the culture. That's the nature of writing about intercultural communication.

A thoughtful attempt has been made to use language throughout this book that is sensitive to these issues and, in so doing, to recognize the evolving historical, social, and political dimensions across the globe and the resulting cultural transformations, particularly as they relate to race, ethnicity, and sex and gender issues. The following terms are used in the eighth edition, although regional designations and nationalities are used when they are more accurate and specific.

- *Arab American* is used to refer to Americans of Arab descent. *Arab* describes Arabic-speaking people from countries in the Middle East and North Africa with significant Arabic-speaking populations. *Muslim* refers to people around the world who practice Islam.
- *African American* or *Black American* is used, whichever is more true to the study being cited. If the person or group is not American, then *African* or *Black* (whichever is most accurate) is used.
- *American Indian* is used to refer to groups or individuals who are members or descendants of indigenous peoples of North America. When referring to groups including Hawaiians and Samoans, the broader term *Native American* is used. The name of a specific tribe of the individual or group is used whenever possible.
- *Asian American* is used for U.S. citizens of Asian descent. *Asian* is used to describe things or people of or from Asia.
- *Hispanic/Latino* is used at first reference; for subsequent references, *Hispanic* or *Latino* may be used as a collective noun depending on the study being cited.
- *White* or *Caucasian* is used to refer to citizens of the United States who are of European ancestry.

I am grateful to all the scholars from different walks of life who have reviewed the eighth edition of *Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach* and to my colleagues in history, political science, modern foreign languages, and sociology with whom I've had extensive conversations about how to use the "right" terminology. To be sure, there is no consensus among them. The "correct" terminology depends on who you ask.

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THE NECESSITY OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The history of our planet has been in great part the history of the mixing of peoples.

—Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.[1]

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe why intercultural communication is a necessity
2. Define and discuss the nature of communication
3. Define and discuss the nature of culture
4. Explain the different contexts that make up the contextual model of intercultural communication
5. Summarize the five fundamental assumptions of intercultural communication
6. Identify and discuss the five academic approaches used in determining ethical behavior
7. Describe why intercultural communication competence is a necessity

In 1804, the number of people on planet Earth was 1 billion. In 1927, 123 years later, it was 2 billion. By 1960, 33 years later, it was 3 billion. By 1974, 14 years later, it was 4 billion. Currently, there are over 7 and-a-half billion (i.e., 7,600,000,000) people on planet Earth. One human is born every 8 seconds and dies every 12 seconds, for a net gain of one person every 14 seconds. Of the 7.6 billion people on the planet, about 1.4 billion, or nearly 20%, are Chinese, and 1.3 billion, just over 17%, are East Indian. Approximately 330 million, or about 4.5%, reside in the United States; around 3.5% are Indonesian; and just under 3% are Pakistani. Over the past 200 years, the growth rate, distribution, and density of the world's population have not been spread equally. Certain regions of the world have grown disproportionately in terms of the number of people, while other regions vary considerably in terms of population density (i.e., number of people per square mile). As seen in these statistics, China and India account for nearly 40% of the world's population. African countries make up nearly 15% of the world's population, while Europe constitutes about 11%.[2]

The purpose of the previous paragraph is to point out that the world's population is growing disproportionately. Along with that, something else has grown disproportionately: technology and its decentralizing role in information dissemination. In 1948, the painter and writer Wyndham Lewis wrote about a "global village" in his book *America and Cosmic Man.* Several years later, his friend Marshall McLuhan also used the term to describe how technological advances of mass media would eventually disintegrate the natural time and space barriers inherent in human communication. McLuhan predicted that through the elimination of such barriers, people would continue to interact and live on a global scale—but one virtually transformed into a village.[3]

Twenty years into the 21st century, McLuhan's vision of a global village is no longer considered an abstract idea but a near certainty. Technological changes have made Earth a smaller planet to inhabit. The technological ability of mass media and the Internet to bring events from across the globe into our homes, businesses, and schools dramatically reduces the distance between people of different cultures and societies.

Telecommunication systems, including e-mail, texting, and social networking sites such as Facebook, connect people throughout the world via satellites and fiber optics. Skype links people from across the planet in seconds.

The essential effect of this technology is its decentralizing role in disseminating information across local, regional, national, and international borders. This means that billions of people across the planet now have access to information not available to them only a few years ago. Information empowers people. The ease and speed with which people of differing cultures can now communicate is stunning. In 1780—nearly 240 years ago—when John Adams, the second president of the United States, corresponded with his European counterparts in France, it would take as long as 6 months to send and receive letters, as they traveled by ship across the Atlantic Ocean. Imagine sending a text message to a friend that takes half a year to arrive! Today, it takes less than a second. Moreover, the sheer frequency and quantity of messages sent is baffling compared with only a few years ago. E-mail is now the most pervasive form of communication on the planet. But other technologies are also formative, including social networking (e.g., Facebook), instant/text messaging, and chat. The Radicati Group estimates that in 2020 there will be over 300 billion e-mails sent/received per day. They estimate that by 2022 there will be over 4 billion e-mail users across the globe.[4]

Of course, e-mail is only one of the technological advances facilitating communication across cultures. The Internet and cell phone communication has become a dominant and powerful source of information for billions of people across the planet. Ananya Bhattacharya writing for QuartzIndia predicts that by 2022, there will be over 830 million smartphone users in India. That's almost three times the total number of people in the United States! And while many may think that the United States is the cell phone capital of the world, it actually ranks third. The top 10 countries with the highest cell phone subscriptions include, in order, China, India, United States, Brazil, Russia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Japan, and Pakistan.[5] Technology has linked the world.

Many college students in the United States have a Facebook account or are at least familiar with the social networking site. But unlike e-mail or smartphones, social networking sites such as Facebook are intentionally designed to establish and maintain relationships. Initiating a relationship with someone from across the globe is much easier now than it was only a few years ago. According to Facebook's own records, as of March of 2019, there were over a 1.5 billion active Facebook users.[6]

Although these technological advances facilitate the initiation and maintenance of cross-cultural relationships, the late noted historian and Pulitzer Prize winner Arthur Schlesinger warned us that history tells an ugly story of what happens when people of diverse cultural, ethnic, religious, or linguistic backgrounds converge in one place. The hostility of one group of people against another, *different* group of people is among the most instinctive of human drives. Xenophobia—the fear or contempt of that which is foreign or unknown, especially of strangers or those perceived as foreigners—is believed by many to be an innate biological response to intergroup competition. Indeed, Schlesinger contended that unless a common goal binds diverse people together, tribal hostilities will drive them apart. By replacing the conflict of political ideologies that dominated in the 20th century, ethnic, religious, and racial strife will continue in the 21st century as the explosive issue.[7]

THE NEED FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

International tensions around the globe are striking examples of the need for effective and competent intercultural communication. For example, although it was several years ago, an international incident with potentially global consequences occurred between the People's Republic of China and the United States, stressing the need for competent intercultural communication. The incident began on April 1, 2001, when a U.S. Navy surveillance plane collided with a Chinese fighter jet in international airspace over the South China Sea. As a result of the collision, the U.S. plane—an EP-3 electronic warfare and surveillance aircraft—was damaged and nearly crashed. However, because of heroic efforts on the part of the crew, the plane landed safely at a Chinese air base. The 24-member crew of the U.S. plane was detained by the Chinese military. China and the United States disagreed as to the cause of the collision, each side blaming the other.

In the days and weeks following the incident, contentious negotiations took place between Chinese and U.S. officials over the release of the U.S. crew. For their release, China demanded that the United States accept responsibility and apologize for the collision. The United States refused, arguing that the collision was the fault of the Chinese pilot. In the meantime, public pressure was mounting on the president of the United States to secure the crew's release. On April 4, the U.S. secretary of state expressed "regret" over the collision and the disappearance of the Chinese pilot. Although Chinese officials acknowledged the statement as a move in the right direction, they insisted that the United States apologize for the incident. On April 8, the vice president of the United States and the secretary of state rejected China's demands for an apology but expressed "sorrow" for the disappearance of the Chinese pilot. They also drafted a letter of sympathy to the pilot's wife. The Chinese continued to demand an apology. On April 10, U.S. officials said that the president would be willing to offer the Chinese a letter expressing regret over the incident, including a statement admitting that the U.S. aircraft landed in Chinese territory without seeking permission. The Chinese continued to demand an apology.

Finally, on April 11, the United States issued a letter to the Chinese foreign minister, asking him to "convey to the Chinese people and to the family of Pilot Wang Wei that we are very sorry for their loss." The letter continued, "We are very sorry the entering of China's airspace and the landing did not have verbal clearance." To be sure, the word *apology* did not appear in the letter. But in their announcement of the letter to the Chinese people, Chinese officials chose to translate the double "very sorry" as "*shenbiao qianyi*," which, in Chinese, means a deep expression of apology or regret not used unless one is admitting wrongdoing and accepting responsibility for it. Based on that letter and the subsequent translation, China agreed to release the U.S. crew. John Pomfret of the *Washington Post* Foreign Service asserted, "In the end, it was a matter of what the United States chose to say and what China chose to hear." Apparently, such delicacies in communication are common during U.S.–China negotiations. According to Bates Gill, who was then the director of the Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution, U.S. negotiators often use words such as *acknowledge* that, when translated into Chinese, mean *admit* or *recognize* so that the Chinese can interpret such wordings as an admission of U.S. guilt.[8]

Indeed, national conflicts within our own borders, often ignited by racial, religious, and ethnic tensions, underscore the necessity for skillful intercultural communication. But perhaps more important, the need for competent intercultural communication is felt intrapersonally, within our own personal, social, and professional lives and relationships. Consider the situations discussed in An Intercultural Conversation box that Jim, an undergraduate student at a Midwestern university, has faced in the past few days.

Situation #1

Jim has just met Bridget, an exchange student from England. They are talking in Jim's dorm room.

Jim: So, Bridget, are you enjoying your first few days in the United States?

Bridget: Yes, but I am a bit paggered, you know. Got pissed last night.

Jim: Oh . . . sorry . . . are you having problems with someone? Can I help?

Bridget: Not a'tall, oh no, nothing traumatic—just farty things, you know. Nothing to have a dicky fit over.

Jim: Ah, yeah, right. (Jim's girlfriend, Betsy, enters the room.)

Betsy: Hello.

Jim: Hi, Betsy! Hey, this is Bridget. She's from England.

Betsy: Hi, Bridget.

Bridget: Hello. Nice to meet you. Jim and I were just having a bit of intercourse. Won't you join us?

Betsy: You were what?! (Leaves the room.)

Jim: (Running after her.) No! Betsy, that's not true! We were just talking! I swear!

Situation #2

Later that same day, Jim is trying to explain to Betsy that nothing was happening between him and Bridget when Jahan, an exchange student from India, enters the room unannounced.

Jahan: Hello, Jim. Who is this with you?

Jim: Oh, hi, Jahan. This is Betsy. Betsy, this is Jahan. He lives just down the hall.

Betsy: Hi, Jahan.

Jahan: Is this your girlfriend, Jim?

Jim: Ah . . . yeah, she is.

Jahan: Are you two going to marry? Have children?

Jim: Ah, well . . .

Betsy: Uh . . . we really haven't discussed that.

Jahan: Oh, I see. Is your family not wealthy enough for her, Jim? What is your father's occupation?

Jim: What?

Unfortunately, Jim has found himself in some rather awkward situations. The misinterpretations in Situation #1 and Situation #2 are due mostly to cultural and linguistic differences. In Bridget's England, for example, the word *paggered* means tired. The colloquialism *pissed* means to get drunk, *farty* refers to something insignificant, a *dicky fit* is

an emotional outburst, and *intercourse* simply means to have a conversation. Translated in terms Jim can understand, Bridget was tired because she had been drunk the night before, but she did not think it significant enough to complain. Upon meeting Betsy, she simply invited her into the conversation.

The second conversation is a bit more complicated. The late Dr. Pittu Laungani, the well-known Indian-born psychologist, wrote extensively about the culture of his native India. In his writings, Laungani asserted that Indians tend to initiate social conversations with complete strangers quite easily. According to Laungani, Indians often ask, without embarrassment, very personal and delicate questions concerning one's age, marital status, occupation, income, religious beliefs, and so on. Laungani professed that Westerners need to learn that these questions are not to be taken with any offense.[9]

Benefits of Intercultural Communication

Although the challenges of an increasingly diverse world are great, the benefits are even greater. Communicating and establishing relationships with people from different cultures can lead to a whole host of benefits, including healthier communities; increased international, national, and local commerce; reduced conflict; and personal growth through increased tolerance (see Table 1.1).

TABLE 1.1 ■ Benefits of Intercultural Communication

Healthier communities
Increased commerce
Reduced conflict
Personal growth through tolerance

Healthy Communities

Joan England argues that genuine community is a condition of togetherness in which people have lowered their defenses and learned to accept and celebrate their differences. England contends that we can no longer define equality as "sameness" but, instead, must value our differences—whether they be in race, gender, ethnicity, lifestyle, or even occupation or professional discipline.[10] Healthy communities are made up of individuals working collectively for the benefit of everyone, not just their own group. Through open and honest intercultural communication, people can work together to achieve goals that benefit everyone, regardless of group or culture, including the global community in the home, business, or neighborhood. Healthy communities support all community members and strive to understand, appreciate, and acknowledge each member.

Increased Commerce

Our ability to interact with persons from different cultures, both inside and outside our borders, has immense economic benefits. In 2019, the top 10 countries with which the United States traded—in terms of both imports and exports—were, in order, Mexico, Canada, China, Japan, Germany, South Korea, the United Kingdom, France, Taiwan, and India. In just the first three months of 2019, U.S. trade with these countries accounted for over $1 trillion (i.e., $1,000,000,000,000). There are significant cultural differences among these 10 countries. Hence, only through successful intercultural communication can such economic potentials be realized.[11]

Reduced Conflict

Conflict is inevitable; we will never be able to erase it. We can, however, through cooperative intercultural communication, reduce and manage conflict. Often, conflict stems from our inability to see another person's point of view, particularly if that person is from a different culture. We develop blatant negative generalizations and stereotypes about the person, which are often incorrect and lead to mistrust. Such feelings lead to defensive behavior, which fosters conflict. Jack Gibb is well known for his classic work on defensive and supportive communication. Gibb points out that messages that carry judgements of right or wrong, attempt to control others, are not open to different ideas, demonstrate a lack of interest, suggest that one is superior to another, and assert one's certainty, lead to defensive competitive and even destructive conflict. Gibb maintains that communicating messages that are descriptive rather than judgmental, focus on the issue not the person, demonstrate empathy and equality, and are provisional and flexible, lead to supportive behaviors and reduced conflict. If we can learn to think and act cooperatively with others who may not be similar to us by engaging in supportive rather than defensive communication, we can effectively manage and reduce conflict with others.[12]

Personal Growth Through Tolerance

As you communicate with people from different cultures, you learn more about them and their way of life—including their values, history, and habits—and the substance of their personality. As your relationship develops, you start to understand them better, perhaps even empathizing with them. One of the things you will learn (eventually) is that although your cultures are different, you have much in common. As humans, we all have the same basic desires and needs; we just have different ways of achieving them. As we learn that our way is not the only way, we develop a tolerance for difference. This can be accomplished only when we initiate relationships with people who are different from ourselves. We could learn far more about Japanese culture by initiating and maintaining a relationship with a Japanese student at our college or university than we could by traveling to Japan for a 2- or 3-week vacation. Moreover, although this may sound contradictory, the more we learn about others and other cultures, the more we begin to learn about ourselves. When we observe how others conduct their lives, we begin to understand how we conduct our own lives.

Diversity in the United States

One need not travel to faraway countries to understand the need for and experience the benefits of intercultural communication. Largely because of immigration trends, cultural and ethnic diversity in the United States is a fact of life. Immigrants, in record numbers, are crossing U.S. borders. Jynnah Radford and Abby Budman of the Pew Research Center report that there were nearly 44 million immigrants living in the United States in 2016, making up 13.5% of the nation's population. This number represents a more than fourfold increase since 1960. At that time, just under 10 million immigrants lived in the United States, accounting for about 5% of the population. Radford and Budman note that while the growth rate has begun to decline in recent years, the number of immigrants living in the United States is projected to double by 2065. Radford and Budman

also note that there has been a significant shift in the countries of origin among the immigrant population. According to their report, in 1960, 84% of immigrants coming to the United States were born in Europe or Canada while only 6% were from Mexico and 3.8% from South and East Asia. By 2016, European and Canadian immigrants made up only a small share of the foreign-born population, while Mexicans (26.5%) South and East Asians (26.9%) and other Latin Americans (24.5%) immigrants each make up about a quarter of the U.S. immigration population followed by about 8% who were born in another region.[13]

In addition to the rapid growth of diverse populations in the United States, another trend is emerging: An increasing number of groups are revitalizing their ethnic traditions and promoting their cultural and ethnic uniqueness through language. Language is a vital part of maintaining one's cultural heritage, and many people are protective of their native language. A sensitive issue among many U.S. citizens is the status of the English language. Over the years, many federal lawmakers have proposed legislation making English the official language of the United States. According to Radford and Budman, the number of immigrants who are proficient in English has significantly declined since 1980. They report that immigrants who speak only English at home fell from 30% in 1980 to 16% in 2016. The number of immigrants who speak English "very well" increased from 27% to 35% over the same time period, however. Among immigrants, of the various languages spoken at home, 43% speak Spanish, 16% speak English only, 6% speak Chinese, 5% speak Hindi and related languages, 4% speak Filipino, 3% speak French, 3% speak Vietnamese, and 2% speak Arabic.[14]

In July 2002, in Brown County, Wisconsin—a county with a sizable Hmong and Hispanic community—the county board of commissioners made English the official language of its government and called for more spending to promote English fluency. The all-White Brown County board voted 17 to 8 to approve the measure. "It's saying this is our official language. This is what we believe in, and we should encourage English," said then–Board Supervisor John Vander Leest. On the other hand, in August 2004 the Texas border town of El Cenizo—whose population is heavily Hispanic—adopted Spanish as its official language. Mayor Rafael Rodriguez said that he and most of the town's residents speak only Spanish. According to Rodriguez, "In past administrations, the meetings were done in English and they did not explain anything." The vote means that town business will be conducted in Spanish, which then will be translated into English for official documents to meet the requirements of Texas law. Rodriguez said the city council's intent was not to usurp English or create divisions but to make local government more accessible to the town's residents. "What we are looking for is that the people of the community who attend the meetings and who only speak Spanish be able to voice their opinions," Rodriguez said.[15]

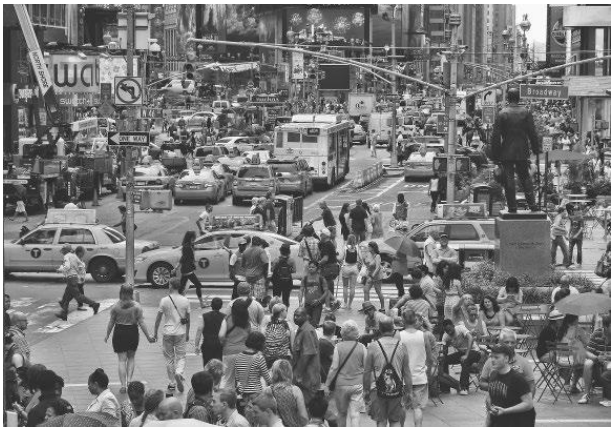

PHOTO 1.1 The local government of New York City provides documents in six languages to ensure that its diverse residents receive essential information.

Although the United States prides itself on being a nation of immigrants, there is a growing sense of uncertainty, fear, and distrust among different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic groups. These feelings create anxiety that can foster separatism rather than unity. Many people are frustrated, confused, and uncertain about these linguistic and definitional issues. Only through intercultural communication can such uncertainty be reduced. Only when diverse people come together and interact can they unify rather than separate. Unity is impossible without communication. Intercultural communication is a necessity.

HUMAN COMMUNICATION

Communication is everywhere. Every day, everywhere, people are communicating. Even when alone, people are bombarded with communication. Communication professor Charles Larson estimated that in 2013 most U.S. citizens were exposed to more than 5,000 persuasive messages every day.[16] Most people would be miserable if they were not allowed to communicate with others. Indeed, solitary confinement is perhaps the worst form of punishment inflicted on humans. Human communication—that is, the ability to symbolize and use language—separates humans from animals. Communication with others is the essence of what it means to be human. Through communication, people conduct their lives. People define themselves via their communication with others. Communication is the vehicle by which people initiate, maintain, and terminate their relationships with others. Communication is the means by which people influence and persuade others. Through communication, local, regional, national, and international conflicts are managed and resolved.

Ironically, however, communication—and particularly one's *style* of communication—can be the source of many interpersonal problems. Marriage counselors and divorce lawyers indicate that a breakdown in communication is one of the most frequently cited reasons for relational dissolution in the United States.[17] A specific kind of communication—that is, public speaking—is one of the most frequently cited fears, even more feared than death.

This book is about the ubiquitous subject labeled *communication*. Specifically, this is a book about *intercultural* communication—that is, communication between people of different cultures and ethnicities. Intercultural communication occurs whenever two or more people from different cultures come together and exchange verbal and nonverbal messages. Throughout the course of this book, you will be introduced to a whole host of concepts and theories that explain the process of people of differing cultural backgrounds coming together and exchanging verbal and nonverbal messages.

The Nature of Human Communication

Because of its ubiquitous nature, communication is difficult to define. If you were to go to your university library and select 10 different introductory communication texts, each would probably offer a different definition of communication. Although there is no universally agreed-on definition of communication, most communication scholars agree on certain dimensions of communication that describe its nature.

Communication is a process. A **process** is anything that is ongoing, ever changing, and continuous. A process is not static or at rest; it is always moving. Communication is always developing; it is never still or motionless. That communication is a process means that communication is dynamic. The terms *process* and *dynamic* are closely related. Part of what makes communication a process is its dynamic nature. Something that is **dynamic** is considered active or forceful. Because communication is a dynamic process, it is impossible to capture its essence in a written definition or graphic model. Communication is *interactive* and *transactive* because it occurs between people. Communication requires the active participation of two people sending and receiving messages at the same time—that is, as we are sending messages we are simultaneously receiving messages (transactive). That communication is *symbolic* is another fundamental assumption guiding most communication scholars. A **symbol** is an arbitrarily selected and learned stimulus that represents something else. Symbols can be verbal or nonverbal. They are the vehicle by which the thoughts and ideas of one person can be communicated to another person. Messages are constructed with verbal and nonverbal symbols. Through symbols, meanings are transferred between people. Symbols (i.e., words) have no natural relationship with what they represent (they are arbitrarily selected and learned). For example, the verbal symbols "C-A-T" have no natural connection with cute, fuzzy animals that purr and like to be scratched. These particular symbols have no meaning in any languages besides English (see Figure 1.1).

process Anything ongoing, ever changing, and continuous.

dynamic Something considered active and forceful.

symbol An arbitrarily selected and learned stimulus representing something else.

FIGURE 1.1 ■ Different Languages Use Different Codes

Nonverbal symbols are arbitrary as well. Showing someone your upright middle finger may not communicate much in some cultures. Verbal and nonverbal symbols are meaningful only to people who have learned to associate them with what they represent. People can allow just about any symbols they want to represent just about anything they want. For example, you and your friends probably communicate with one another using private symbols that no one else understands. You have your own secret code. You have words, phrases, gestures, and handshakes that only you and your friends know, understand, and use. This allows you to communicate with one another in your own "foreign" language.

Most communication is intentional, meaning that it is performed consciously. Intentional communication exists whenever two or more people consciously engage in interaction with some purpose. Unintentional communication may exist, however. For example, you pass a friend in the hallway of your dorm, say hello, and your friend does not respond. Perhaps your friend simply didn't see you and was thinking about the exam he or she just failed and was not intentionally ignoring you. In this book, the type of communication that will be discussed is intentional communication. This book takes the position that intentional communication, either verbal or nonverbal, is more informative than unintentional communication. Communication is dependent on the context in which it occurs. **Context** refers to the cultural, physical, relational, and perceptual environment in which communication occurs. In many ways, the context defines the meaning of any message. With whom and where you interact significantly alters the messages sent. That

context The cultural, physical, social, and psychological environment.

communication is *ubiquitous* simply means it is everywhere, done by everyone, all the time. Wherever one goes, some communication is happening.

Finally, *culture* shapes communication, and communication is culture bound. People from different cultures communicate differently. The verbal and nonverbal symbols we use to communicate with our friends and families are strongly influenced by our culture. Perhaps the most obvious verbal communication difference between two cultures is language. Even cultures speaking the same language, however, have different meanings for different symbols. For example, although English is the dominant language spoken in the United States and England, many words and phrases have different meanings between these two cultures. In England, to "bomb" an examination is to have performed very well.

communication The simultaneous encoding, decoding, and interpretation of verbal and nonverbal messages between people.

Communication, then, is the ubiquitous, dynamic, interactive process of encoding and decoding verbal and nonverbal messages within a defined cultural, physiological, relational, and perceptual context. Although many of our messages are sent intentionally, some others—perhaps our nonverbal messages—can unintentionally influence other people.[18]

Human Communication Apprehension

Although communication is difficult to define, we know that people begin to communicate at birth and continue communicating throughout their lives. We also know that many people experience fear and anxiety when communicating with others, particularly in situations such as public speaking, class presentations, a first date, or a job interview. The fear or anxiety people experience when communicating with others is called **communication apprehension**. In the past 50 years, a substantial body of research has accumulated regarding the nature and prevalence of communication apprehension. The late Jim McCroskey, considered the father of this concept, believed that nearly everyone experiences some kind of communication apprehension sometimes, but roughly one in five adults in the United States suffer from communication apprehension every time they communicate with others. McCroskey said that experiencing communication apprehension is normal; that is, all of us experience it occasionally. McCroskey argued that there are four types of communication apprehension: traitlike, context based, audience based, and situational. Traitlike communication apprehension is an enduring general personality predisposition where an individual experiences communication apprehension most of the time across most communication situations. Of all adults in the United States, 20% experience traitlike communication apprehension.

communication apprehension The fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or group of persons.

Context-based communication apprehension is restricted to a certain generalized context, such as public speaking, group meetings, or job interviews. Persons with context-based communication apprehension experience anxiety only in certain contexts. Audience-based communication apprehension is triggered not by the specific context but by the particular person or audience with whom one is communicating. Hence, persons with audience-based communication apprehension may experience anxiety when communicating with strangers or their superiors, for example. College students with audience-based communication apprehension may experience anxiety when communicating with professors but not when communicating with other students. Finally, situational-based communication apprehension, experienced by virtually everyone, occurs with the combination of a specific context and a specific audience. For example, students may

feel anxious interacting with professors only when they are alone with the professor in the professor's office. At other times, perhaps in the hallways or in the classroom, interacting with the professor may not be a problem.[19] To repeat, virtually everyone experiences communication apprehension at some time; if you experience such anxiety, it does not mean you are abnormal or sick.

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) Self-report instrument designed to measure communication apprehension.

What follows is the **Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)**, a scale designed to measure your degree of communication apprehension. Take a few moments and complete the scale in Self-Assessment 1.1.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.1

PERSONAL REPORT OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

Directions: This instrument is composed of 24 statements concerning your feelings about communicating with other people. Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are undecided, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Many of the statements are similar to other statements. Do not be concerned about this. Work quickly; just record your first impressions.

I dislike participating in group discussions.

Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.

I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.

I like to get involved in group discussions.

Engaging in group discussions with new people makes me tense and nervous.

I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.

Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in group discussions.

Usually, I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.

I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.

I am afraid to express myself at meetings.

Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.

I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.

While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.

I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.

Ordinarily, I am very tense and nervous in conversations.

Ordinarily, I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.

When conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.

I am afraid to speak up in conversations.

I have no fear of giving a speech.

(Continued)

(Continued)

Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.

I feel relaxed while giving a speech.

My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.

I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.

While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

Scoring: The PRCA-24 allows you to compute a total score and four subscores. The total score represents your degree of traitlike communication apprehension. Total scores may range from 24 to 120. McCroskey argued that any score above 72 indicates general communication apprehension.

Scores above 80 indicate a very high level of communication apprehension. Scores below 59 indicate a very low level of communication apprehension.

Step 1. Add what you marked for Items 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, and 24.

Step 2. Add what you marked for Items 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 21, and 23.

Step 3. Subtract the score from Step 1 from 84 (i.e., 84 minus the score of Step 1). Then add the score of Step 2 to that total. The sum is your PRCA score.

The subscores indicate your degree of communication apprehension across four common contexts: group discussions, meetings, interpersonal conversations, and public speaking. For these scales, a score above 18 is high, and a score above 23 is very high.

Group Subscore: 18 + scores for Items 2, 4, and 6, minus scores for Items 1, 3, and 5.

Meeting Subscore: 18 + scores for Items 8, 9, and 10, minus scores for Items 7, 10, and 11.

Interpersonal Subscore: 18 + scores for Items 14, 16, and 17, minus scores for Items 13, 15, and 18.

Public Speaking Subscore: 18 + scores for Items 19, 21, and 23, minus scores for Items 20, 22, and 24.

McCroskey, J. C. (1982). *Introduction to Rhetorical Communication* (4th Ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice- Hall.

THE NATURE OF CULTURE

Like communication, culture is ubiquitous and has a profound effect on humans. Culture is simultaneously invisible yet pervasive. As we go about our daily lives, we are not overtly conscious of our culture's influence on us. How often have you sat in your dorm room or classroom, for example, and consciously thought about what it means to be a U.S. citizen? As you stand in the lunch line, do you say to yourself, "I am acting like a U.S. citizen"? As you sit in your classroom, do you say to yourself, "The professor is really acting like a U.S. citizen"? Yet most of your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are culturally driven. One need only step into a culture different from one's own to feel the immense impact of culture.

Culture has a direct influence on the physical, relational, and perceptual contexts. For example, the next time you enter your communication classroom, consider how the room is arranged *physically,* including where you sit and where the professor teaches, the location of the chalkboard, windows, and so on. Does the professor lecture from behind a lectern? Do the students sit facing the professor? Is the chalkboard used? Next, think about your *relationship* with the professor and the other students in your class. Is the relationship formal or informal? Do you interact with the professor and students about topics other than class material? Would you consider the relationship personal or impersonal? Finally, think about your *perceptual disposition*—that is, your attitudes, motivations, and emotions about the class. Are you happy to be in the class? Do you enjoy attending? Are you nervous when the instructor asks you a question? To a great extent, the answers to these questions are contingent on your culture. The physical arrangement of classrooms, the social relationship between students and teachers, and the perceptual profiles of the students and teachers vary significantly from culture to culture.

Like communication, culture is difficult to define. To be sure, more than 60 years ago, two well-known anthropologists, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, found and examined 300 definitions of culture, no two of which were the same.[20] Perhaps too often, people think of culture only in terms of the fine arts, geography, or history. Small towns or rural communities are often accused of having no culture. Yet culture exists everywhere. There is as much culture in Willard, New Mexico (population 240), as there is in New York, New York (population 8,500,000). The two cultures are just different. Simply put, culture is people.

Although there may not be a universally accepted definition of culture, there are a number of properties of culture that most people would agree describe its essence. In this book, **culture** is defined as *an accumulated pattern of values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by an identifiable group of people with a common history and verbal and nonverbal symbol systems.*

culture An accumulated pattern of values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by an identifiable group of people with a common history and verbal and nonverbal symbol systems.

Accumulated Pattern of Values, Beliefs, and Behaviors

Cultures can be defined by their value and belief systems and by the actions of their members. People who exist in the same culture generally share similar values and beliefs (see Table 1.2). In the United States, for example, individuality is highly valued. An individual's self-interest takes precedence over group interests. U.S. citizens believe that people are unique. Moreover, U.S. citizens value personal independence. Conversely, in Japan, a collectivistic and relatively homogeneous culture—a sense of groupness and group harmony—is valued. Most Japanese see themselves as members of a group first and as individuals second. Where U.S. citizens value independence, Japanese value interdependence. The values of a particular culture lead to a set of expectations and rules prescribing how people should behave in that culture. Although many U.S. citizens prefer to think of themselves as unique individuals, most of them behave in similar ways. Observe the students around you in your classes. Although you may prefer to think that you are very different from your peers, you are really quite similar to them. Most of your peers follow a similar behavioral pattern to your own. For example, on a day-to-day basis, most of your peers attend classes, take examinations, go to lunch, study, party, and write papers.

U.S. citizens share a similar behavioral profile. Most work an average of 40 hours a week, receive some form of payment for their work, and pay some of their earnings in

TABLE 1.2 ■ Values Across Cultures

Saudi Arabia	Maori (New Zealand)
Islam	Land
Hospitality	Kinship
Cleanliness	Education
India	**Yemen**
Family lineage	Islam
Supernatural guidance	Self-respect and honor
Karma	Family

taxes. Most spend their money on homes and cars, and almost every home in the United States has a television. Although U.S. citizens view themselves as unique individuals, most of them have similar behavioral patterns.

An Identifiable Group of People With a Common History

Because the members of a particular culture share similar values, beliefs, and behaviors, they are identifiable as a distinct group. In addition to their shared values, beliefs, and behaviors, the members of a particular culture share a common history. Any culture's past inextricably binds it to the present and guides its future. At the core of any culture are traditions that are passed on to future generations. In many cultures, history is a major component of the formal and informal education systems. To learn a culture's history is to learn that culture's values. One way children in the United States develop their sense of independence, for example, is by learning about the Declaration of Independence, one of this country's most sacred documents. Elementary school children in Iran learn about the historical significance of the political and religious revolution that took place in their culture in the 1970s and 1980s. Russian children learn about the arts in Russian history—for example, famous Russian composers, including Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, and Stravinsky. The art of the past helps Russians remember their culture and history as they face disruptive social and political crises. Such historical lessons are the glue that binds people together.

Verbal and Nonverbal Symbol Systems

One of the most important elements of any culture is its communication system. The verbal and nonverbal symbols with which the members of a culture communicate are culture bound. Seeing the difference between the verbal codes of any two cultures is easy. For instance, the dominant verbal code in the United States is English, whereas the dominant verbal code in Mexico is Spanish. But although two cultures may share the same verbal code, they may have dramatically different verbal styles. Most White U.S. citizens, for example, use a direct, instrumental, personal style when speaking English. Many Native Americans/ American Indians who also speak English use an indirect, impersonal style and may prefer the use of silence over words.[21]

Nonverbal code systems vary significantly across cultures as well. Nonverbal communication includes the use of body language, gestures, facial expressions, voice, smell, personal and geographical space, time, and artifacts. Body language can communicate a great deal about one's culture. When an adult interacts with a young child in the United States, for example, it is not uncommon for the adult to pat the child's head. This nonverbal gesture is often seen as a form of endearment and is culturally acceptable. In Thailand, however, where the head is considered the seat of the soul, such a gesture

is unacceptable. Belching during or after a meal is viewed by most U.S. citizens as rude and impolite, perhaps even disgusting. But in China, slurping and making belching noises during a meal simply mean one is enjoying the food.[22]

People also communicate nonverbally through smell. U.S. citizens, in particular, seem obsessed with the smell of the human body and home environment. Think of all the products you used this morning before you left for class that were designed to mask the natural scent of your body, including soap, toothpaste, mouthwash, deodorant, and cologne and/or perfume. Persons from other cultures often complain that U.S. citizens tend to smell antiseptic.

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PHOTO 1.2 Nonverbal communication, including body language, can communicate a great deal about one's culture.

Microcultural Groups

Within most cultures, groups of people—or **microcultures**—coexist within the mainstream society. Microcultures exist within the broader rules and guidelines of the dominant cultural milieu but are distinct in some way, perhaps racially or linguistically, or via their sexual orientation, age, or even occupation. In some ways, everyone is a member of some microcultural group. Microcultures often have histories that differ from the dominant cultural group. In many cases, microcultural groups are considered subordinate or treated subordinately in some way, perhaps politically or economically.

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PHOTOS 1.3A, B Children learn the values, norms, and behaviors of their culture at an early age.

microculture An identifiable group of people who share a set of values, beliefs, and behaviors and who possess a common history and a verbal and nonverbal symbol system that is similar to but systematically varies from the larger, often dominant cultural milieu.

In the United States, Native American/American Indian tribes might be considered microcultures. The Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, also can be considered a microcultural group. Although the Amish are subject to most of the same laws as any other group of citizens, they have unique values and communication systems that differentiate them from mainstream American life. For example, Amish children are exempt from compulsory attendance in public schools after the eighth grade. Although almost all Amish speak English, when they interact among themselves, they speak German. During church services, a form of High German is used. Hence, most Amish of Lancaster County speak three languages.

THE STUDY OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Ideally, we now have an understanding of the word *communication* and the idea of culture. So what happens when people from different cultures come together and communicate with one another? We call that process "intercultural communication." Compared with many other academic disciplines, the study of intercultural communication is young. The histories of other academic fields such as math, biology, philosophy, and psychology date back hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of years. But the academic discipline of intercultural communication can be traced back only a few decades—specifically, to the year 1959 and the publication of Edward T. Hall's book *The Silent Language.* Hall is generally recognized as the founder of the academic discipline we call intercultural communication. Although the term *intercultural* had been used prior to Hall's work, it is thought that Hall was the first to use the term *intercultural communication*.[23]

Hall held three university degrees (i.e., BA, MA, and PhD) in anthropology. Anthropology is the study of the origin, behavior, and physical, social, and cultural development of humans. Hall earned his doctorate in anthropology in 1942 when the United States was involved in the Second World War. During this period, traditional approaches in anthropology focused on studying a single culture at a time. So a particular anthropologist might focus his or her studies on, say, the Navajo or Hopi Indians of the American Southwest, as did Hall. Hall often referred to this as a macrolevel approach to culture. Among the many significant influences on Hall's approach to his studies was anthropologist Franz Boas. The term *cultural relativism* is often attributed to him.

Boas believed, as did Hall, that humans are inherently ethnocentric (i.e., believing that one's native culture is the standard by which other cultures are observed and judged) and that our observations of other cultures are necessarily biased in favor of our native cultural background. For example, a child raised in Germany, Iran, or China is taught that his or her cultural traditions, values, and customs are the preferred and accepted standards by which one should conduct one's life. Consequently, an individual from a particular culture cannot draw conclusions about some other culture's traditions, values, and customs without some inherent bias. Moreover, Boas believed that any particular culture is an adaptation to and a distinctive product of a unique set of historical, social, and environmental conditions. As these conditions vary, cultures vary accordingly—and, in this sense, there is no correct culture.

Following World War II, the U.S. Congress established the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). FSI is the federal government's primary training institution for officers and support personnel of the U.S. foreign affairs community, preparing American diplomats and other professionals to advance U.S. foreign affairs interests overseas and in Washington. In the early 1950s, Hall taught at FSI and soon discovered that the traditional ways of teaching about macrolevel culture, from an anthropological perspective, were not effective in training FSI personnel how to interact with persons from different cultures. So Hall and others began to rethink how to teach about culture and soon developed a new curriculum that eventually became known as intercultural communication.

In this new curriculum, scholars focused on intercultural communication—that is, how people from different cultures interact *with one another*—rather than on how members of a particular culture interact within their culture. This new curriculum also emphasized the nonverbal elements of intercultural communication. Hall was especially interested in the study of how cultures manage the nonverbal channels of time (chronemics), space (proxemics), and body language (kinesics). One of Hall's most fascinating insights was how *invisible* culture is to its own members—that is, how most people are so unaware of their own cultural ways of living. This new approach also embraced Boas's idea of cultural relativism in that cultures should be judged only from within their specific cultural context, and cultural traditions, beliefs, and behaviors are to be evaluated on that culture's unique set of historical, social, and environmental conditions.

In 1959, Hall published *The Silent Language,* which sold more than 500,000 copies in its first 10 years and is considered the seminal work in the field. In the book, Hall asserted that *culture is communication.* By the late 1960s, we saw the first intercultural communication courses being offered at universities. In 1970, the International Communication Association established a Division of Intercultural Communication. L. S. Harms's 1970 book, *Intercultural Communication,* is thought to be the first textbook on the subject. By 1975, the Speech Communication Association established the Division of Intercultural Communication, and in 1977, the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* began publication.

A Contextual Model of Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication occurs whenever a minimum of two persons from different cultures or microcultures come together and exchange verbal and nonverbal symbols. A central theme throughout this book is that intercultural communication is contextual. A contextual model of intercultural communication is presented in Figure 1.2. According to the model, intercultural communication occurs within and between a variety of interconnected contexts, including cultural, microcultural, environmental, perceptual, and sociorelational contexts.

intercultural communication Two persons from different cultures or microcultures exchanging verbal and nonverbal messages.

The term *context* refers to the setting, situation, circumstances, background, and overall framework within which communication occurs. For example, when you interact with your friends, you interact in some *physical context,* such as your dorm room. You also interact within a *social context*—that is, friend to friend. You also interact within a *psychological context*—your thoughts and emotions about your friend. The contextual model of intercultural communication attempts to identify the various contexts that define what happens when a person from Culture A communicates with a person from Culture B. As we walk through the contextual model of intercultural communication, please note that

FIGURE 1.2 ■ A Contextual Model of Intercultural Communication

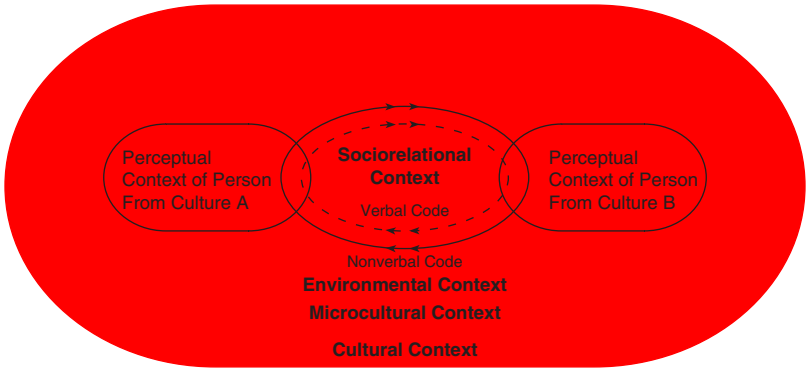


FIGURE 1.3 ■ The Cultural and Microcultural Contexts

the model is both conceptually and graphically consistent.

The largest, outer circle of the model represents the *cultural context*. All communicative exchanges between persons occur within some culture. The cultural context represents an accumulated pattern of values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by an identifiable group of people with a common history and verbal and nonverbal symbol systems. So whenever you and someone from a different culture come together and interact, you are within a cultural context. In this textbook, the cultural context is the focus of Chapter 2.

The next largest circle in the model is the *microcultural context* (Figure 1.3). As mentioned earlier, within most cultures separate groups of people coexist. These groups, called microcultures, are in some way different from the larger cultural milieu. Sometimes the difference is via ethnicity, race, or language. Conceptually, microcultures exist within a larger culture; notice that in the model, the microculture is within the cultural context. Often, microcultures are treated differently by the members of the larger culture. Some people refer to microcultural groups as *minority groups* or *subcultures,* but those terms will not be used here. Microcultures are the focus of Chapter 3.

The next largest circle in the model is the *environmental context* (Figure 1.4). This circle represents the physical, geographical location of the interaction. While culture prescribes the overall rules for communication, the physical location indicates when and where the specific rules apply. For example, in the United States, there are rules about yelling. Depending on the physical location, yelling can be prohibited or encouraged. In a church, yelling is generally prohibited, whereas at a football game, yelling is the preferred method of communicating. The environmental context includes the physical geography, architecture, landscape design, and even climate of a particular culture.

All these environmental factors play a key role in how people communicate. In the model, the environmental context is within the microcultural and cultural contexts. Conceptually, this is because one's culture and membership in microcultural groups significantly influence how one perceives the environment. For example, temperatures below 32 degrees (i.e., freezing) are not thought of as extreme to a person raised in International Falls, Minnesota. But to a person raised in Tucson, Arizona, such temperatures may seem unbearable. In this book, the environmental context is discussed in Chapter 4.

FIGURE 1.4 ■ The Cultural, Microcultural, and Environmental Contexts

In Figure 1.5, the two circles within the environmental context represent the *perceptual context(s)*. The perceptual context refers to the individual characteristics of each interactant, including cognitions, attitudes, dispositions, and motivations. Specifically, the perceptual context refers to how an individual gathers, stores, and retrieves information. Humans gather information via their senses—that is, through sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. We then store the information in our memories and retrieve it for later use. Although the ability to gather, store, and retrieve information is fundamentally human, it is also affected by culture. Many of the attitudes, beliefs, and values you hold were taught to you by your culture. For example, what smells good to you is cultural. The music you listen to is also largely a cultural by-product. Moreover, how an individual develops attitudes about others, including stereotypes, varies from culture to culture. The perceptual context is the emphasis of Chapter 5.

The circles connecting the perceptual contexts in the model form the *sociorelational context* (Figure 1.6). This refers to the relationship between the interactants. Whenever two people come together and interact, they establish a relationship. Within this

FIGURE 1.5 ■ The Environmental and Perceptual Contexts

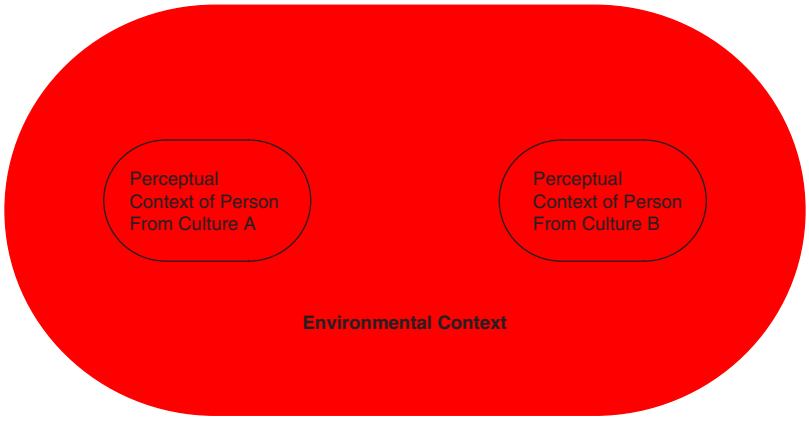
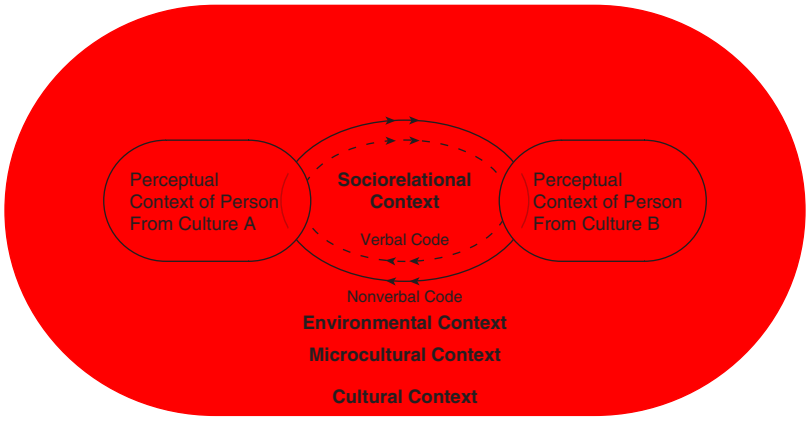


FIGURE 1.6 ■ A Contextual Model of Intercultural Communication



relationship, each person assumes a role. Right now, you are assuming the role of student; the person teaching your communication class is assuming the role of teacher. So, in a very real sense, you are having a relationship with your teacher—that is, a student–teacher relationship. Roles prescribe how people should behave. Most of the people with whom you interact are related to you via your role as student. The reason you interact with so many professors is because you are a student. What you interact about—that is, the topic of your interaction—is also defined by your role as student; you and your professors interact about courses. How you interact with your professor—that is, the style of talk (e.g., polite language)—is also prescribed by your role as student. The language and style of your talk with your professor is probably very different from the language and style of talk you use when you go back to your dorm room and interact with your friends. Probably the 10 people with whom you most recently interacted were directly related to you via your role as student. When you go back to your hometown during semester break and step into the role of son/daughter or brother/sister, you are assuming a different role, and your interaction changes accordingly. Your interaction varies as a function of what role you are assuming.

Roles vary from culture to culture. Although in just about every culture there are student and teacher role relationships, how those roles are defined varies significantly. What it means to be a student in the United States is very different from what it means in Japan. In Japan, for example, many students go to school 6 days a week. Japanese teachers are highly respected and play an influential role in the Japanese student's life. What it means to be a mother or father also varies considerably from one culture to another. In the Masai culture of Kenya, a woman is defined by her fertility. To be defined as a mother in Masai culture, a woman must endure circumcision (i.e., clitoridectomy), an arranged marriage, and wife beating.[24] Conceptually, people (i.e., perceptual contexts) are connected to one another via their relationships. The model shows this connection via the sociorelational context (see Figure 1.6). The sociorelational context links the two perceptual contexts. One's roles prescribe the types of verbal and nonverbal symbols that are exchanged. In this book, the sociorelational context and role relationships are the focus of Chapter 6.

All our relationships are defined by the verbal and nonverbal messages we send to our relational partners. What differentiates one relationship from another is the verbal and nonverbal things we do with each other. For example, what differentiates your relationship with your teacher from your relationship with your best friend is the verbal and nonverbal things you do with each other. Notice that in the contextual model, the sociorelational context is graphically represented by two circles labeled *nonverbal* and *verbal code* (see Figure 1.6). Again, the verbal and nonverbal messages define the relationship, and the relationship connects the perceptual contexts.

The nonverbal circle is the larger of the two and is represented by a continuous line. The verbal circle is smaller and is represented as a series of dashes in the shape of a circle. The nonverbal message circle is larger than the verbal message circle because the majority of our communicative behavior is nonverbal. Whether we are using words or not, we are communicating nonverbally through eye contact, body stance, and space. In addition, our nonverbal behavior is ongoing; we cannot *not* behave. The verbal message circle is formed by a series of dashes to represent the *digital* quality of verbal communication.[25] By digital, we mean that, unlike our nonverbal communication, our verbal communication is made up of words that have recognizable and discrete beginning and ending points. A word is like a digit. We can start and stop talking with words. However, our nonverbal behavior goes on continuously. Chapter 7 concentrates on verbal communication codes, and Chapter 8 addresses nonverbal codes.

The general theme of this book, as represented in the model, is that intercultural communication is defined by the interdependence of these various contexts. The perceptual contexts combine to create the sociorelational context, which is defined by the verbal and nonverbal messages sent. The sociorelational context is influenced by the environmental context and defined by the microcultural and cultural contexts. These contexts combine in a complex formula to create the phenomenon of intercultural communication.

Intercultural Communication and Uncertainty

When we interact with someone from a different culture, we are faced with a lot of *uncertainty*. We may not know anything about the person's culture, values, habits, behavior, dress, and so on. We may not know what to say or do in such circumstances. This uncertainty about the other person may make us feel nervous and anxious. The late Charles Berger, well known communication theorist contends that the task of interacting with someone from a different culture who may look, act, and communicate differently presents the intercultural communicator with some complex predictive and explanatory problems. To some extent, to effectively interact with someone from a different culture, we must be able to predict how our interaction partner is likely to behave and, based on those predictions, select our appropriate verbal and nonverbal messages.[26]

Berger theorizes that whenever we come together and interact with a stranger, our primary concern is to reduce uncertainty, especially when the other person is someone with whom we will interact again. Often, when we are faced with high levels of uncertainty, we experience anxiety. In high-uncertainty situations, our primary goal is to reduce uncertainty and increase the predictability of the other. This can be accomplished via specific verbal and nonverbal communication strategies such as question asking and appropriate nonverbal expressiveness. Initial interaction with someone, or interacting with someone from a different culture, may produce heightened anxiety [27]

Intercultural communication experts William Gudykunst and Young Kim have argued that when we interact with people from different cultures, we tend to view them as strangers. Strangers are unknown people who are members of different groups. Anyone entering a relatively unknown or unfamiliar environment falls under the rubric of "stranger." Interaction with people from different cultures tends to involve the highest degree of "strangerness" and the lowest degree of familiarity. Thus, there is greater uncertainty in initial interaction with strangers than with people with whom we are familiar. According to Gudykunst and Kim, actual or anticipated interaction with members of different groups (e.g., cultures or ethnic groups different from our own) leads to anxiety.[28] If we are too anxious about interacting with strangers, we tend to avoid them. Communication researchers Jim Neuliep and Jim McCroskey state that this type of communication anxiety can be labeled **intercultural communication apprehension**—that is, the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with people from different groups, especially different cultural or ethnic groups.[29]

intercultural communication apprehension The fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with persons from a different culture.

Intercultural Communication Apprehension

Successfully interacting with someone from a different culture requires a degree of communication competence. According to Brian Spitzberg, most models of communication competence include cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. The cognitive component refers to how much one knows about communication. The affective component includes one's motivation to approach or avoid communication. The behavioral component refers to the skills one has to interact competently. An interculturally competent communicator is *motivated* to communicate, *knowledgeable* about how to communicate, and *skilled* in communicating. In addition, an interculturally competent communicator is *sensitive* to the expectations of the context in which communication occurs. Competent communicators interact effectively by adapting messages appropriately to the context. Competent communicators understand the rules, norms, and expectations of the relationship and do not significantly violate them. Communicators are effective to the degree that their goals are accomplished successfully.[30]

According to Neuliep and McCroskey, a person's affective orientation toward intercultural communication involves the individual's degree of motivation to approach or avoid a given intercultural context or person. Communication studies indicate that at least 20% of the U.S. adult population experience high levels of fear or anxiety even when communicating with members of their own culture. Other studies indicate that 99% of U.S. citizens experience communication apprehension at some time in their lives, perhaps during a job interview, a first date, and so on. One outcome of communication apprehension is to avoid communication. When people feel anxious about communicating with others, they tend to avoid such situations.

Given that intercultural communication may be more anxiety producing than other forms of communication, the number of people suffering from intercultural communication apprehension is likely considerable. Identifying such individuals may be the first step toward more effective and successful intercultural communication. Self-Assessment 1.2 is an instrument called the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA). This scale was developed by communication researchers Neuliep and McCroskey. PRICA is similar to the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) you completed earlier in this chapter. The difference between these two scales

is that PRICA assesses your degree of apprehension about communicating with someone from a culture different from yours. After completing each scale, you can compare your scores from both instruments.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.2

PERSONAL REPORT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

Directions: This instrument is composed of 14 statements concerning your feelings about communicating with people from other cultures. Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are undecided, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Work quickly, and record your first impressions.

Generally, I am comfortable interacting with a group of people from different cultures.

I am tense and nervous while interacting in group discussions with people from different cultures.

I like to get involved in group discussions with others who are from different cultures.

Engaging in a group discussion with people from different cultures makes me tense and nervous.

I am calm and relaxed when interacting with a group of people who are from different cultures.

While participating in a conversation with a person from a different culture, I feel very nervous.

I have no fear of speaking up in a conversation with a person from a different culture.

Ordinarily, I am very tense and nervous in conversations with a person from a different culture.

Ordinarily, I am very calm and relaxed in conversations with a person from a different culture.

While conversing with a person from a different culture, I feel very relaxed.

I'm afraid to speak up in conversations with a person from a different culture.

I face the prospect of interacting with people from different cultures with confidence.

My thoughts become confused and jumbled when interacting with people from different cultures.

Communicating with people from different cultures makes me feel uncomfortable.

Scoring: To score the instrument, reverse your original response for Items 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, and 14. For example, for each of these items 1 = 5, 2 = 4, 3 = 3, 4 = 2, and 5 = 1. If your original score for Item 2 was 1, change it to a 5. If your original score for Item 4 was a 2, change it to a 4, and so on. After reversing the score for these seven items, sum all 14 items. Scores cannot be higher than 70 or lower than 14. Higher scores (e.g., 50–70) indicate high intercultural communication apprehension. Lower scores (e.g., 14–28) indicate low intercultural communication apprehension.

Neuliep, J. W., & McCroskey, J. C. (1997). The Development of Intercultural and Interethnic Communication Apprehension Scales. *Communication Research Reports, 14,* 145–156.

The PRICA instrument is composed of 14 statements concerning your feelings about communication with people from other cultures. Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly agree, agree, (3) are undecided, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with each statement. There are no right or wrong answers, and many of the statements are designed to be similar to other statements. Do not be concerned about this. Work quickly and record your first impressions. Responding to these statements as honestly as possible is very important; otherwise, your score will not be valid.

To the degree that you answered the items honestly, your score is a fairly reliable and valid assessment of your motivation to approach or avoid intercultural communication. Spitzberg argues that as your motivation increases, so does your confidence. As confidence increases, intercultural communication competence also is likely to increase. People who are nervous and tense about interacting with people from different cultures are less likely to approach intercultural communication situations and probably are not confident about encountering new people from different cultures.[31]

FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

A central premise of this book is that intercultural communication is a complex combination of the cultural, microcultural, environmental, perceptual, and sociorelational contexts between two people who are encoding and decoding verbal and nonverbal messages. Because of the complexity of this process, a fundamental assumption about intercultural communication is that during intercultural communication the message sent is usually not the message received.

Assumption #1. *During intercultural communication, the message sent is usually not the message received.* Whenever people from different cultures come together and exchange messages, they bring with them a whole host of thoughts, values, emotions, and behaviors that were planted and cultivated by culture. As we have said, intercultural communication is a symbolic activity in which the thoughts and ideas of one person are encoded into a verbal or nonverbal message format and then transmitted through some channel to another person who must decode it, interpret it, and respond to it. This process of encoding, decoding, and interpreting is filled with cultural noise. Noted intercultural communication scholar Gudykunst has asserted that during intercultural communication culture acts as a filter through which all messages, both verbal and nonverbal, must pass. To this extent, all intercultural exchanges are necessarily, to a greater or lesser extent, charged with ethnocentrism. Hence, during intercultural communication, the message sent is not the message received.[32]

ethnocentrism The tendency to place one's own group (cultural, ethnic, or religious) in a position of centrality and highest worth, while creating negative attitudes and behaviors toward other groups.

Ethnocentrism refers to the idea that one's own culture is the center of everything and all other groups (or cultures) are scaled and rated with reference to it. Sociologist W. G. Sumner argued that ethnocentrism nourishes a group's pride and vanity while looking on outsiders, or out-groups, with contempt.[33] Although culture may mediate the extent to which we experience ethnocentrism, it is thought to be universal. One of the effects of ethnocentrism is that it clouds our perception of others. We have a tendency to judge

others, and their communication, based on the standards set by our own culture. Neuliep and McCroskey have argued that the concept of ethnocentrism is essentially descriptive and not necessarily pejorative. Ethnocentrism may serve a valuable function when one's in-group is under attack or threatened. Moreover, ethnocentrism forms the basis for patriotism, group loyalty, and the willingness to sacrifice for one's own group. To be sure, however, ethnocentrism can be problematic. In not looking past their own culture, people see little importance in understanding other cultures. At high levels, ethnocentrism is an obstacle to effective intercultural communication.[34]

Neuliep and McCroskey have developed the **GENE (Generalized Ethnocentrism) Scale**, which is designed to measure ethnocentrism. This scale and the directions for completing it are presented in Self-Assessment 1.3.

GENE (Generalized Ethnocentrism) Scale Self-report instrument designed to measure generalized ethnocentrism.

Assumption #2. Intercultural communication is primarily a nonverbal act between people. Some foreign language teachers might have us believe that competency in a foreign language is tantamount to effective and successful intercultural communication in the culture that speaks that language. To be sure, proficiency in a foreign language expedites the intercultural communication experience, but intercultural communication is primarily and fundamentally a nonverbal process. The expression of intimacy, power, and status among communicators is typically accomplished nonverbally through paralinguistic cues, proxemics, haptics, oculesics, and olfactics. In Korea, for example, one's hierarchical position is displayed via vocal tone and pitch. When a subordinate is offered an important piece of paper, such as a graded exam from a respected professor, he or she grasps it with both hands (not just one) and accompanies this action with a slight nod of the head and indirect eye contact—all nonverbal signs of deference.

The well-known anthropologist Hall has argued that people from different cultures live in different sensory worlds. Hall claims that people from different cultures engage in a selective screening of sensory information that ultimately leads to different perceptions of experience.[35] Regarding olfactics (smell), most cultures establish norms for acceptable and unacceptable scents associated with the human body. When people fail to fit into the realm of olfactic cultural acceptability, their odor alerts others that something is wrong with their physical, emotional, or mental health. In the United States, we are obsessed with masking certain smells, especially those of the human body. In Western and Westernized cultures, body odor is regarded as unpleasant and distasteful, and great effort is expended in its removal. As we will see in Chapter 8, our nonverbal messages complement, augment, accent, substitute for, and repeat our verbal messages.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.3

GENE (GENERALIZED ETHNOCENTRISM) SCALE

Directions: The GENE Scale is composed of 22 statements concerning your feelings about your culture and other cultures. In the space provided to the left of each item, indicate the degree to

(Continued)

(Continued)

which the statement applies to you by marking whether you (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) are neutral, (2) disagree, or (1) strongly disagree with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Some of the statements are similar. Remember, everyone experiences some degree of ethnocentrism. Fortunately, as we will see in Chapter 5, ethnocentrism can be managed and reduced. Be honest! Work quickly and record your first response.

Most other cultures are backward compared to my culture.

My culture should be the role model for other cultures.

People from other cultures act strange when they come into my culture.

Lifestyles in other cultures are just as valid as those in my culture.

Other cultures should try to be more like my culture.

I'm not interested in the values and customs of other cultures.

People in my culture could learn a lot from people of other cultures.

Most people from other cultures just don't know what's good for them.

I respect the values and customs of other cultures.

Other cultures are smart to look up to our culture.

Most people would be happier if they lived like people in my culture.

I have many friends from other cultures.

People in my culture have just about the best lifestyles of anywhere.

Lifestyles in other cultures are not as valid as those in my culture.

I'm very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.

I apply my values when judging people who are different.

I see people who are similar to me as virtuous.

I do not cooperate with people who are different.

Most people in my culture just don't know what is good for them.

I do not trust people who are different.

I dislike interacting with people from different cultures.

I have little respect for the values and customs of other cultures.

Scoring: To determine your ethnocentrism score, complete the following steps: Step 1: Add your responses to Items 4, 7, and 9.

Step 2: Add your responses to Items 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, and 22 (note that not all items are used in scoring).

Step 3: Subtract the sum from Step 1 from 18 (i.e., 18 minus Step 1 sum).

Step 4: Add the results of Step 2 and Step 3. This sum is your generalized ethnocentrism score. Higher scores indicate higher ethnocentrism. Scores above 55 are considered high ethnocentrism.

Originally called Ethnocentrism Scale, from Neuliep, J. W., & McCroskey, J. C. (1997). The Development of a U.S. and Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale. Communication Research Reports, 14, 385–398. Co-created by Neuliep and McCroskey. Permission granted by Neuliep and on McCroskey's website (http://www.jamescmccroskey.com/measures/).

Assumption #3. *Intercultural communication necessarily involves a clash of communicator style.* In the United States, talk is a highly valued commodity. People are routinely evaluated by their speech. Yet silence—that is, knowing when not to speak—is a fundamental prerequisite for linguistic and cultural competence.[36] The use and interpretation of silence varies dramatically across cultures. In many collectivistic cultures, such as Japan and Korea, silence can carry more meaning than words, especially in the maintenance of intimate relationships. In fact, the Japanese and some Native American/American Indian tribes in the United States believe that the expression of relational intimacy is best accomplished nonverbally. They believe that having to put one's thoughts and emotions into words somehow cheapens and discounts them.

In the United States, we value, and employ, a direct and personal style of verbal communication. Personal pronouns are an essential ingredient in the composition of just about any utterance. Our mottos include "Get to the point," "Don't beat around the bush," "Tell it like it is," and "Speak your mind." Many cultures, however, prefer an indirect and impersonal communication style. In these cultures, there is no need to articulate every message. True understanding is implicit, coming not from words but from actions in the environment, where speakers provide only hints or insinuations. The Chinese say, "One should use the eyes and ears, not the mouth," and "Disaster emanates from careless talk." The Chinese consider the wisest and most trustworthy person to be the one who listens, watches, and restricts his or her verbal communication.[37]

Assumption #4. *Initial intercultural communication is a group phenomenon experienced by individuals.* Whenever we interact with a person from a different culture, especially early in our relationship with him or her, we carry with us assumptions and impressions of that other person. The specific verbal and nonverbal messages we exchange are usually tailored for the person based on those assumptions and impressions. Often, these are based on characteristics of the other person by virtue of his or her membership in groups related to culture, race, sex, age, or occupation, for example. In other words, we have a tendency to see others not as individuals with unique thoughts, ideas, and goals, but rather as "an Asian American" or "a woman" or "an old person" or "a cab driver." In other words, we do not see the person—we see the groups to which the person belongs. The problem with this is that group data may not be a reliable source on which to construct our messages. Because someone belongs to a specific racial, ethnic, sex, or age group does not necessarily mean that he or she takes on the thoughts, behaviors, and attitudes associated with that group. Thus, the potential for miscommunication is great. So during initial intercultural communication, we have to be mindful that while the person with whom we are interacting is from a different cultural group, he or she is also an individual. Once we further develop a relationship with that person, we will start to see the relationship as interpersonal rather than intercultural. We will discuss this more in Chapter 9.[38]

Assumption #5. *Intercultural communication is a cycle of stress, adaptation, and growth.* As mentioned earlier in this chapter, when we come together with a person from a different culture we may feel uncertain, apprehensive, and anxious. Such feelings are stressful. Hence, sometimes intercultural communication is stressful. The good news is that we can learn and adapt to such stress and eventually grow. During intercultural communication, we have to be mindful that the communication strategies we use with persons with whom

we are familiar may not be effective with persons from other cultures. Thus, we have to learn to adapt and adjust our communication style. We have to recognize that we will make mistakes, learn from them, adapt, and move on. From these experiences, we grow as humans. A good beginning point is to recognize that people from different cultures are different—not better or worse, but simply different. Once we are able to do this, we can adjust and adapt our verbal and nonverbal messages accordingly and become competent interactants.[39]

THE ETHICS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

A recurring theme throughout this book is ethics. Ethics involve judgments about what is right and wrong in the course of human conduct. Ethics set a standard by which judgments of right and wrong are decided. Although some scholars distinguish between ethics and morals, we will treat the two terms interchangeably. Ethics become salient (i.e., particularly relevant) whenever human behavior and decision-making are conscious, voluntary, and impact others. Ethics should not be confused with, nor are they necessarily linked to, religion. While most religions profess and advocate strict ethical standards, ethics apply to nonreligious people as well as religious people. One need not be religious to act ethically. Moreover, ethics are not synonymous with whatever is legal. While legal codes integrate ethical standards into laws that guide and control the behavior of citizens, they may not necessarily be ethical. For example, slavery was legal in the United States for more than a hundred years.[40]

If we define culture as an accumulated pattern of values, beliefs, and behaviors held by an identifiable group of people, and if we assume that cultures are different from one another, then intercultural communication takes on a necessary ethical dynamic because communication is a conscious, voluntary act that influences others. Consider the following situation.

Tommy is from the Chicago suburbs. He is studying abroad in Seoul, South Korea. His host-national friend, Kwan, is a native South Korean student and is serving as his mentor. They are joined by another fellow student, Dinesh, their friend from India.

Tommy: Hey, guys, I'm starved. Where should we eat dinner?

Kwan: I know a great place not far from here where they serve *bosintang.* You guys should try it.

Tommy: *Bosintang?* What's that?

Kwan: It's dog meat soup. A lot of people eat it in the summer.

Tommy: Seriously?