VERBAL COMMUNICATION

1. What is Communication?

In order to define the meaning of the word "communication" Fred Jandt, a famous scholar of Intercultural communication, advises to look up the meaning of the term "communication" in a dictionary, e.g. "Random House Dictionary of the English Language". It appears that the word is derived from the Latin "comunicare" meaning "to share with" or "to make common", "as in giving to another a part or share your thoughts, hopes and knowledge" (Jandt, 2001, p. 27). Communication is a complex term for which there are numerous definitions, like **"Communication is a symbolic process by which people pass the information to each other (send and receive messages) and create shared meanings."**

Since many agree that communication is an element of culture, it has been often said that communication and culture are inseparable. Nearly half a century ago Alfred G. Smith (1966) wrote that "culture is a code we learn and share, and learning and sharing require communication. Communication requires coding and symbols that must be learned and shared" (cit. Jandt, 2001, p. 28).

The history of Communication dates back to the times when "Rhetoric and Poetics" was written by Aristotle. The famous philosopher described the term "communication" as a process "involving a speaker, the speech act, and audience, and a purpose" (Jandt, 2001. p. 28).

Communication is **symbolic**. We do not have direct access to one another's thoughts and feelings. Instead, we rely on symbols, which are abstract, arbitrary, and ambiguous representations of other things, e.g. we might symbolise love by giving a red rose, by saying "I love you".

The definition of communication also focuses on **meanings**, which are at the heart of communication. Meanings are the significance we bestow on phenomena, or what they signify to us.

We do not find meanings in experience itself. Instead, we use symbols to create meanings. The scientists (Pinker, 2008; Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967) distinguish two levels of meaning: the content level and the relationship level. The content level contains the literal meaning, e.g., if a person knocks on your door and asks "May I come in?", the content-level meaning is that the person is asking your permission to enter. The relationship level of meaning expresses the relationship between communicators. If the person is a friend of yours, you would probably conclude that he/she is seeking friendly interaction. But if the mentioned above is your supervisor and speaks in an angry tone, you might interpret the relationship-level meaning as a signal that your supervisor is not satisfied with something what you have done. The content-level meaning is the same in both examples; however, the relationship level differs. In many cases the relationship level of meaning is more important that the content level. The relationship level of meaning often expresses a desire to connect with another person (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001).

2. Models of communication

Over the years, scholars in communication have developed a number of models that reflect increasingly sophisticated understandings of the communication process. In this part, we will concentrate on the most popular ones analised by J. Fiske, H. A. Sadri, M. Flammia, J. T Wood and other scholars of Intercultural Communication.

2.1 Linear Models

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Harold Laswell (1948) advanced an early model that described communication as a linear, or one-way process in which one person acts on another. This is also called a transmission model because it assumes that communication is transmitted in a straightforward manner from a sender to a receiver. The model presented by Laswell consisted of five questions that described early views of how communication works:

Insert Figure 1 here:

Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (1979) refined Laswell's model by adding the concept of "noise". "Noise" is anything that interferes with the intended meaning of communication. Noise may distort understanding. Fig. 1 demonstrates an example when a Sender sends a message to a Receiver through a linear, or transmission, model:

Insert Figure 2 here:

Source: J. Fiske. (1990). Introduction to Communication Studies. London: Routledge.

2.2 Interactive Models

The major shortcoming of the linear models was that they portrayed communication as flowing in only one direction, i.e. from a sender to a receiver (Gronbeck, 1999). The linear models suggest that a person is only a sender
or a receiver and that a receiver passively absorbs sender's messages. When communication theorists realised that listeners respond to senders, they added feedback to their models. Communication scholars Osgood and Schramm developed a circular model of communication that depicts ongoing interaction between the sender and the receiver; "their model accounts for feedback and the fact that participants in a communication encounter are continually swapping roles from sender to receiver and back again" (Sadri & Flammia, 2011, p. 123). Feedback is a response to a message. It may be verbal or nonverbal, and it may be intentional or unintentional. Wilbur Schramm (1955) depicted feedback as a second kind of message. In addition, Schramm, when designing his model, pointed out that communicators create and interpret message within personal fields of experience. The more communicators' fields of experience overlap, the better they understand each other:

Insert Figure 3 here:

Source: Wood, J. T. (2011). Communication Mosaics: An Introduction to the Field of Communication. Canada: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Adding fields of experience and feedback allowed Schramm and other communication scholars to develop models that portray communication as an interactive process in which both senders and receivers participate actively.

2.3 Transactional Models

Although interactive models were an improvement over the linear ones, they still did not capture the dynamism of human communication. The interactive models portray communication as a sequential process in which one person communicates to another, who then sends feedback to the first person. Yet people may communicate simultaneously instead of taking turns. Also, the interactive models designate one person as a sender and another person as a receiver. In reality, communicators both send and receive messages. A further main shortcoming of the interactive model is that it does not portray communication as changing over time as a result of what happens between people. For example, new employees are more reserved in conversations with co-workers than they are after moths on the job, getting to know others and organisational norms. What they talk about and how they interact change over time.

Insert Figure 4 here:

Source: Wood, J. T. (2011). Communication Mosaics: An Introduction to the Field of Communication. Canada: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

The Transactional Model presented in Figure 4 includes noise that can distort communication. In addition, it emphasises that communication is a continually changing process. How people communicate varies over time and in response to their history of relating. The outer lines of J. T. Wood's Model emphasise that communication occurs within systems that affect what and how people communicate and what meanings they create. Those systems or contexts include the shared systems of the communicators (campus, town, culture) and the personal systems of each communicator (family, religious associations, friends). Also, the transactional model portrays each person's field of experience as changing over time. As we encounter new people and grow personally, we alter how we interact with others. From H. A. Sadri and M. Flammia's point of view, the success of "intercultural communication depends on understanding different contexts and creating bridges to share meaning across these cultural contexts. Our ability to expand our fields of experience over time is what makes possible our development as effective and mindful intercultural communicators" (Sadri & Flammia, 2011, p. 125).

3. Language as a Tool of Communication

Considering language as a tool of communication we firstly refer to verbal communication, cf. the definitions below:

- *Verbal communication is the communication that is expressed through words.*
- *Non-verbal communication is the communication through sending wordless messages.*

A special relationship exists between culture, language, and thought – an almost inseparable bond. Claire Kramsch (1998, p. 3) highlights three ways in which language and culture are bound together:

- First, "language expresses cultural reality" in that the words a person uses for a common experience are shared by others and reflect the beliefs, attitudes, and worldview of the speaker.
- Second, "language embodies cultural reality" in that the choice of the spoken, written, or visual form generates meanings that are understood by a person's cultural group.
- Third, "language symbolizes cultural reality" in that language reflects a person's social identity. The ways we perceive, believe, evaluate, and act are a reflection of our culture.

Patrick Moran (2001) claims that language not only symbolises the products, practices, perspectives, communities, and people of a culture but that language itself is also a product of culture. For Moran "the words of the language, its expressions, structures, sounds and scripts reflect the culture, just as the cultural products and practices reflect the language. Language, therefore, is a window to the culture". Moran regards language and culture as two sides of the same coin, each side mirroring the other.

To what degree then is culture shaped by language? The idea that language affects the thought processes of its users is known as the principle of linguistic relativity or Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

In1928, the anthropologists and linguist Edward Sapir published a paper in the journal Language that changed the face of the study of language and culture. In the paper he wrote, that language is a guide to "social reality". Speakers of different languages perceive or express the world around them differently because of the ways in which language influences a person's thinking and behavior. One of his students, Benjamin Whorf, was persuaded by Sapir's writings and further developed this line of thought:

"the background linguistic system (in other words grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas...We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages." (Whorf, 1940, cit. Neuliep, 2012, p.237)

Since languages differ in grammatical structures, in linguistic categories, and in other ways, Sapir and Whorf concluded that the speakers of different languages have different ways of viewing the world. Language serves as a filter of its speakers perceptions and influences the way that a cultural group categorizes experience. As Samovar and Porter (2004) put it, the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis argues that "language is not simply a means of reporting experience but, more important, it is a way of defining experience".

After his studies, B. Whorf set forth a double principle: "the principle of linguistic determinism, namely, that way one thinks is determined by the language one speaks, and the principle of linguistic relativity, that differences among languages must therefore be reflected in the differences in the worldviews of their speakers" (Salzmann et al., 2012, p. 230). According to the linguistic determinist view, language structure controls thought and cultural norms. Each of us lives not in the midst of the whole world but only in that part of the world that our language permits us to know. Thus, our knowledge of the world to a large extent is predetermined by the language of our culture. The differences between languages represent basic differences in the worldview of diverse cultures.

Correspondingly, the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis holds that language determines thought. It suggests that we are prisoners of our language and that the way we think is determined by language. Damen (1985) describes the strong version as one in which "languages structure perception and experience, and literally create and define the realities people perceive". On the other hand, the weak version of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis suggests that a relationship exists between language and culture, however, language influences but does not determine thought. The weaker version is more readily accepted today (De Capua & Wintergerst, 2004).

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

1. Basic concepts of nonverbal communication

"If language is the key to the core of a culture, nonverbal communication is indeed the heart of each culture. Nonverbal communication is omnipresent throughout a culture –it is everywhere" (S.Ting-Toomey, 1999). According to Ray Birdwhistell (1974), more than 65 % of a conversation is communicated through nonverbal cues. Professor of Psychology Albert Mehrabian's research provided the basis for the widely quoted over-simplified statistics dealing with effectiveness of spoken communication. In 1970s A. Mehrabian developed a model, in which he demonstrated that only 7% of what we communicate consists of the literal content of the message. The use of our voice, such as tone, intonation and volume, take up 38% and as much as 55% of communication consists of body language. This 7,38,55 is still much used today. In his studies, Mehrabian came to two conclusions. Firstly, that there are basically three elements in any face-to-face communication: words, tone of voice and facial expression. Secondly, the non-verbal elements are particularly important for communicating feelings and attitude, especially when they are incongruent: if words disagree with the tone of voice and facial expression, people tend to believe the tonality and facial expression. According to A. Mehrabian, these three elements account differently for our liking for the person who puts forward a message concerning their feelings:

Total Liking = 7% Verbal Liking + 38% Vocal Liking + 55% Facial Liking. They are often abbreviated as the "3 Vs" for Verbal, Vocal & Visual

For effective and meaningful communication, these three parts of the message need to support each other –they have to be "congruent". In case of any "incongruence", the receiver of the message might be irritated by two messages coming from two different channels, giving cues in two different directions.

R. Porter and L. Samovar (1988) point out that nonverbal communication is culturally based; thus, a particular gesture or action symbolizes only the meaning a particular culture has attached to it. Members of a culture recognize those realities that have a meaning or importance for them and interpret nonverbal experiences through their own personal frame of reference. Failure to recognize observable nonverbal signs and symbols or interpret them correctly can lead to a breakdown in communication (Samovar, Porter, 1988). In order to enter into a new culture and communicate accurately, we need to identify the rules, be aware of the underlying cultural values and understand the connection between the functions and interpretations of nonverbal behavior (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

The values, norms and beliefs of a group are reflected in their patterns of verbal and nonverbal behavior. Nonverbal behavior often carries a heavy affective load, but the meaning of an emotional gesture varies from one culture to another. E.g., Japanese smile when they are angry, feel sad, or fail, while Americans smile to signal joy, happiness and contentment.

2. The connection between verbal and nonverbal communication

In the USA there is a saying "Actions speak louder than words". The term nonverbal communication, or what Hall (1959) calls "the silent language" refers to all types of nonverbal interaction including paralanguage–the use of the body language –the use of the voice to make sounds that are not words. This includes features such as pitch, stress, volume, and rate of delivery. Paralanguage even takes into consideration the contextual elements found in human interaction (Damen, 1987). These elements include body movement, the use of time and space, and whatever other nonlinguistic elements help to get message across. These behaviours are learned and vary cross-culturally.

Paralinguistic cues are also used to manage conversation. These cues include silence, pauses, the backchannel behavior such as "uh huh" and "yeah", spoken by the listeners to indicate that they are paying attention to what is being said. But there are many subtleties in the use of these cues. For example, a drop in pitch "Excuse me" in English can indicate anger, frustration, anxiety, or impatience, whereas speaking the same words with a drawn out or slight rising tone shows friendliness or a relaxed attitude.

3. Understanding the Functions of nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication does not occur in a vacuum. It does not exist independently of meaning. When we use a smile, a shrug or a "hmmm?" response, we do so in order to convey meaning and emotions and often to achieve a particular purpose. For instance, if a teacher would like to get her students involved in a classroom activity she/he would add a smile of encouragement as she gives her verbal instructions. Her/his goal is to signal students that she/he is encouraging them to take risks and not be overly concerned about the failure. Such a signal can help to achieve more positive results in terms of student involvement rather than giving an instruction to the students without any smile. However, cross-culturally a teacher's smile can present a problem, e.g., in Japan a smile can signal anger, sadness or failure.

Nonverbal communication can vary not only in use but also in function. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004), Ekman and Friesen (1969), Patterson (1990) identify the most important functions of nonverbal behaviour:
- Expression of emotions,
- Reinforcement of verbal messages,
- Substitution for verbal communication,
- Contradiction of verbal messages,
- Conveyance of messages in ritualized forms

Ting-Toomey (1999) identifies five functions of nonverbal communication:

- **The 1st function of nonverbal communication is to reflect our identity.**
Ting-Toomey likens nonverbal cues to "name badges" that we use to alert others about our group memberships. Unspoken signals such as our choice of clothes or jewelry, our vocalics–voice qualifiers such as accent, pitch, volume, articulation, etc – and our vocalizations – sounds and noise such as laughing and crying, moaning and groaning, yawning, and hesitation or silence – send the world a message about who we are. The person receiving these messages forms attitudes and impressions based on them.

- **The 2nd function of nonverbal communication is the expression of emotions and attitudes.**
Emotions and attitudes can be communicated to the listener through kinesics, which are facial expressions and gestures, and vocalics, or voice qualifiers. These cues and their meanings vary from culture to culture. The messages sent and received depend on what cues the speaker and listener have been exposed to and how their culture has conditioned facial expressions that indicate the emotions of anger, distrust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. In Japan speakers are less likely to express emotions through facial expressions. It is easy to see how miscommunication can happen if speakers are not familiar with the way that facial expressions are interpreted in another culture.

- **The 3rd function of nonverbal communication is conversation management.**

A study of conversational management during business negotiations revealed that Brazilians tend to interrupt twice as much as Americans or Japanese. The French also interrupt, but only when the conversation has reached a certain level of informality. In Asia it is a signal of respect to avoid sustained direct eye contact with the elderly or with any high-status individual. The opposite, however, is true in the US where failure to make eye contact when speaking to another person is considered impolite.

- **The 4th and the 5th functions of nonverbal behavior are forming impressions and creating interpersonal attraction, otherwise known as trying to make a good impression.**
We are culturally conditioned to examine the posture and facial expressions of others to learn more about them. Many people form the first impressions when meeting individuals before anyone has even had a chance to say anything. Facial expressions and posture are frequently cited in books about international communication as areas requiring special attention when communicating to those from other cultures. We also "read" the nonverbal communications of others to decide whether we like them and would like to spend more time with them.

Due to the fact that so much of our interaction is nonverbal and this symbol system includes many kinds of communication, Julia T. Wood distinguishes ten forms of nonverbal behavior that help us create and interpret the shared meanings: Kinesics (face and body motion); Haptics (touch); Physical appearance; Olfactics (smell); Artifacts (personal objects); Proxemics (personal space); Environmental factors; Chronemics (perception and use of time); Paralanguage (vocal qualities); Silence.

Kinesics refers to body position and body motions including those of the face. Our bodies communicate a great deal about what we see ourselves.

A speaker who stands erect and appears confident announces self-assurance, whereas someone who slouches and shuffles seems to be not very confident of himself/herself.

Our moods are communicated with our body posture and motion. For example, someone who walks quickly with a resolute facial expression appears more determined than someone who saunters along with an unfocused gaze.

We sit rigidly when we are nervous and adopt a relaxed posture when we feel at ease. Audiences show interest by alert body posture. Body postures and gestures may signal whether we are open to interaction. To signal that we would like to interact, we look at others and sometimes smile. We use our gestures to express how we feel about others and situations.

Our faces are intricate messengers. Our eyes can shoot daggers of anger, issue challenges, express skepticism, or radiate love. Houman A. Sadri and Madelyn Flammia point out eye contact as a separate form of communication and call it Oculesics. According to them, "eye contact is a significant component of communication and may reveal a great deal of information to a mindful communicator" (p. 164). A. Sadri and M. Flammia distinguish various functions of gazing: regulatory, monitoring, cognitive and expressive.

The regulatory function is when eye contact is used to initiate communication, to signal turn-taking in conversations, and to end a communication encounter.

The monitoring function of eye contact has to do with attentiveness and interest during a communication encounter. When engaged in a conversation, individuals may look at each other as a signal of attention and to monitor their partner's response to what they are saying. They also use their gaze as a way to encourage the speaker to continue, the nonverbal equivalent to saying, "That's interesting. Tell me more."

The cognitive function is the relationship of eye movement to the processing of information. During conversations, individuals may avert their eyes when processing complex information or when reflecting upon what has been said.

The expressive function is the relationship of the eyes and eye movement to the expression of emotions. Generally, the role of eye movements in expressing emotions is examined as part of the facial expression. Poets call the eyes the "windows to the soul", as they communicate complex messages about how we feel and how we look at others: if we judge their emotions, judge what they say or consider them to be confident.

Universally, a direct eye contact is not regarded as positive. For example, among traditional Hasidic Jews, boys are taught not to look into women's eyes.

Haptics is the term for nonverbal communication involving physical touch. Many communication scholars believe that touching and being touched are essential to healthy life (Ackerman, 1990; Whitman et al., 1999). In disturbed families, parents sometimes push children away and handle them harshly, nonverbally signaling rejection. Conversely, researchers have learned that babies who are massaged thrive more than babies who are touched less (Mwakalye & De Angelis, 1995). R. Lekavičienė points out that the interpretation of the meaning touching is directly associated with the parts of the body that are being touched. Research suggests that the concept of touching depends upon culture and sex. It is proved that French people have a habit of touching each other approximately 110 times per hour (Lekavičienė, 2010, p. 236) while Lithuanians try to avoid touching each other. Compared to men, women are more likely to engage in touch to show liking and intimacy (Andersen, 1999) whereas men are more likely than women to use touch to assert power and control (Jhally and Katz, 2001).

Physical Appearance

Western culture places an extremely high value on physical appearance and on specific aspects of appearance. J. T. Wood emphasizes our first notice of obvious physical qualities such as sex, skin colour and size. According to the scientist, based on physical qualities, we may draw conclusions about others' personalities. Although these associations may have no factual basis, they can affect personal and social relationships as well as decisions about hiring, placement, and promotion.

Cultures prescribe ideals for physical form, and these vary across cultures. Western cultural ideals today emphasize thinness in women and muscularity and height in men (Davison and Birch, 2001; Lamb and Brown, 2006; Levin and Kilbourne, 2008). The cultural ideal of slimness in women leads many women to become preoccupied with dieting and other means or weight control.

The general cultural standard for attractiveness is modified by ethnicity and socioeconomic class. For example, traditional African societies perceive full-figured bodies as symbols of health, prosperity and wealth, and all of which are desirable (Bocella, 2001). Physical appearance includes physiological characteristics, such as eye colour and height, as well as ways in which people manage, or even alter, their physical appearance.

Clothing and Physical Adornments

The old saying "You can't judge a book by its cover" has been around for a very long time, and yet, we do just that all the time, both within our own culture and across cultures, we tend to react to others, at least initially, based on their physical appearance. Would you find it odd if one of your group-mates consistently showed up on university campus dressed in a suit and tie? If your parents started dressing the same way your favourite rock star does? If the minister of the country dyed his/her hair green? Maybe you have experienced some of these occurrences and maybe you have even taken them in your stride. This point is, though that generally we have ideas about the appropriate way for individuals to dress and look based on their age, gender, social role, and status in society.
Clothing

The clothing that we put on is a statement about who we are or in some cases who we would like to be, whether it is a dress designed by a top Paris designer or the turban worn by a Sikh. Although the business suit and tie can be seen in cities all around the world, there are still many cultures that retain their traditional ethnic dress. As with any aspect of culture, it is important to realize that what we see on the surface, whether it will be an African dashiki is a reflection of a much deeper aspect of the wearer's culture. The Arab culture's emphasis on modesty for women is so great that young girls are not allowed to take swimming classes because they would have to expose their bodies to do so.

The yarmulke is worn by Jews as a sign of respect for God and an acknowledgment of God's presence above. It is also viewed as a device to mark the division between Earth and Heaven. Many members of the Jewish religion continue to wear the yarmulke; however, in spite of their faith, many do not. In some cultures formality and conservatism values to the extent that all businessmen are expected to wear the same "uniform" of a dark suit with dark shoes and socks and a plain shirt. Nurses and doctors usually wear white and often drape stethoscopes around their necks; many executives carry briefcases, whereas students more often tote backpacks. White-collar professionals tend to wear tailored outfits and dress shoes, whereas blue-collar workers often dress in jeans or uniforms and boots. The military requires uniforms that define individuals as members of the group. In addition, stripes, medals, and insignia signify rank and accomplishments. Similarly in collective cultures, like Japan, the emphasis is social harmony leads to very conservative dress; this

conservatism in dress is seen as a way to prevent nonconformist behavior. Most school children in Japan wear uniforms and corporate executives in Japanese companies wear the same "company uniform" of a dark business suit: Of course, within cultures there may be variations in dress among different subcultures, socioeconomic groups, and age groups. However, the important point to remember is that seemingly superficial differences in attire may in fact be related to cultural values that are central to a particular group; these values may include conformity, modesty, social status, conservatism, or the right to free expression.

The importance placed on the "right" brand of athletic shoes in many grade schools across the United States is a good example of the power of clothing to ensure "in-group" status and also of the price of nonconformity. Although the American culture is fiercely proud of the individual's freedoms, they tend to be surprisingly conformist in the matter of what is considered the "in" thing to wear.

We need to be mindful of the reasons for the different clothing worn by individuals from other cultures. If we are, we will learn about much more than fashion. We will learn about deep levels of the cultures. As we learn about the clothing worn by other cultures, we need to be careful to avoid stereotyping members of other cultures based on their dress.

Physical adornments or Artifacts
In addition to our clothing, there are many other physical adornments that we use as a means of non-verbal communication. These physical ornaments include tattoos, piercings, hairstyles, makeup. In some cases, the illustrated physical ornaments may represent solidarity and conformity within one's culture. In other cases, these same adornments may be worn as a symbol of rebellion against the dominant culture and may represent membership in a co-cultural group.

In general, the impetus towards conformity in one's physical appearance is much more likely to be found among members of collectivistic cultures. By contrast, individualistic cultures are much more likely to tolerate and even encourage nonconformist expressions of the self through clothing and other physical adornments. However, even within individualistic cultures, many instances of conformity in dress can be found within the business world and as an expression of socioeconomic status.

S. Gosling (2008) refers to physical adornments as "identity" claims, which give signals about how we want others to perceive us and also remind ourselves of who we are.

Proxemics and Personal Space
Proxemics refers to space and how we use it. The classic research on proxemics was done by Edward Hall in 1968. At the time, E. Hall reported that every culture has norms for using space and for how close people should be to one another.

According to E. Griffin's interpretation, Hall believe all cultures are rooted in a common biology, therefore, he used studies of animal behavior to discover how humans would act. For instance, animals are territorial. Hall indicates that people use furniture, walls, and fences to accomplish the same purpose.

People also have boundaries that mark their personal space. It's as if we walk around in an invisible bubble. Those with whom we are intimate may enter into the sphere without harm to either party. We all have a zone of personal space, but the area of personal space differs greatly from culture to culture. Hall regards Latins and Southern Europeans as living in a contact culture.

The United States is a "noncontact" culture. According to E. T. Hall, American ego extends approximately a foot and a half out from their body. They feel an aversion to casual touch and resent spatial intrusion. Asians and Northern Europeans share our distaste for indiscriminate contact. Hall's advice for the international traveler is a corollary of an old adage: When in Rome, stand as the Romans stand. Hall has made a first attempt to determine the limits of American proxemic zones. He categorizes distance as intimate, personal, social, or public. Since we aren't born with a built-in yardstick, he also details how we use our sense receptors to gauge the space between us. Not surprisingly, the boundaries fall at points of sensory shift. He acknowledges that he did his research on a small group of friends who were upper-middle-class Eastern professionals, so you'll want to take care not to consider his results the final word. Unfortunately, continued reiteration of his classification system makes it seem that these distances are set in stone. They're not.

Insert Figure 5 here:

Environmental Factors

Environmental factors are elements of setting that affect how we feel, think, and act. We feel more relaxed in rooms with comfortable chairs than in rooms with stiff, formal furniture. A recent study found that colour affects cognitive functions. Red stimulates accuracy, recall and attention to details whereas blue stimulates creativity (Belluck, 2009). Restaurants use environmental features to control how long people spend eating. For example, low lights, comfortable chairs or booths, soft music often are part of the environment. On the other hand, fast food eateries have hard plastic booths and bright lights, which encourage diners to eat and move on.

Chronemics

Chronemics refers to how we perceive and use time to define identities and interaction. We use time to negotiate and convey status (Levine and Norenzayan, 1999). In Western societies, there seems to be an unwritten but widely understood cultural rule stipulating that people with high status can keep people with less status waiting. On the contrary, people with low status are expected to be punctual. Subordinates are expected to report punctually to the meetings, but bosses are allowed to be tardy.

Chronemics expresses cultural attitudes toward time. In some cultures, people saunter whereas in others they dash from place to place. In some cultures business is conducted quickly by staying on task whereas in other cultures it is conducted more slowly by intermingling and social interaction. According to a study of a pace of life, the countries with the fastest pace of life are Switzerland (No 1), Ireland, Germany, and Japan. The countries with the slowest pace of life are Mexico, Indonesia, Brazil, and El Salvador. The United States appeared to be right in the middle (Levine and Norenzayan, 1999).

Western societies value time and its cousin, speed (Bertman, 1998; Calero, 2005; Schwartz, 1989). Everyday expressions like these: "You' re wasting my time"; "This new software programme will save time"; "That mistake cost me three hours"; "I've invested a lot of time in this class"; "I can't afford to go out tonight", "I can make up for lost time by using a shortcut", "I'm running out of time" indicate the value place on time.

According to J. T. Wood, however, many countries have more relaxed attitudes toward time and punctuality. In many South American countries, it is normal to come to meeting or classes after the announced time of starting, and it is not assumed that people will leave when the scheduled time for ending arrives. In the Philippines, punctuality has never been particularly values, but that maybe is changing. The Philippine Department of Education just launched a 10-year campaign to instill in students the value of being on time (Overland, 2009).

Chronemics also involves expectations of time, which are influenced by social norms. For example, you expect a class to last 50 or 75 minutes. Several minutes before the end of a class period, students often close their notebooks and start gathering their belongings, signaling the teacher that time is up.

Paralanguage

Paralanguage is communication that is vocal but not actual words. Paralanguage includes sounds, such as murmurs and gasps, and vocal qualities, such as volume, rhythm, pitch, and inflection. Vocal cues signal other to interpret what we say as a joke, a threat, a statement of fact, a question, and so forth. Effective public speakers modulate inflection, volume and rhythm to enhance their presentations.

We use vocal cues to communicate feelings to friends. Whispering, for example, signals confidentiality or intimacy, whereas shouting conveys anger and excitement. Negative intonation or vocal tones often reveal dissatisfaction or disapproval. A derisive or sarcastic tone can communicate scorn clearly, whereas a warm voice conveys liking, and playful lilt suggests friendliness.

Silence

Although silence is quiet, it can communicate powerful messages, e.g.: Silence can convey contentment when intimates are so comfortable they don't need to talk. Silence can also communicate awkwardness, as you know if you' ve ever had trouble making conversation on a first date.

Like other forms of communication, silence –and what it means –is linked to culture. European Americans tend to be talkative; they are inclined to fill in silence with words. Among Native Americans, however, historically silence conveys respect, active listening, and thought about what others are saying (Braithwaite, 1990; Carbaugh, 1998).

Task. Read the incidents given below. Think about the different cultural backgrounds of the participants. What do you think happened? Why? How could the misunderstanding have been prevented?

1.   Wearing White Arina is excited about attending the wedding of her Indian friend, Kamila Rajpoor. In keeping with her own Afgan tradition, Arina wears a white dress, a symbol of friendship for the bride and an omen of luck, harmony, happiness for the wedding couple.

Ordinarily, Mrs. Rajpoor warmly welcomes Arina; but on her daughter's wedding day, Mrs. Rajpoor turns ashen when she sees Arina at her door. Mrs. Rajpoor greets her coldly, hands trembling. She orders Arina to follow her and leads her to the bedroom. On the way, others react strangely when they notice Arina.
When Arina and the mother reach the bedroom, Arina asks if she can see Kamila. "No!" retorts the bride's mother. "No way are you going to bring her bad luck and death!"

2.   Mrs. Gussman is one of the best English teachers in the school. She spends every weekend reading her immigrant students'compositions and making careful comments in red ink. To soften her criticisms, she says something positive before writing suggestions for improvement, using the students'names to make the comments more personable. "Jae Lee, these are fine ideas, but ...."

These red-inked notes send shock waves through the families of her Korean students, but Mrs. Gussman is unaware of this until the principal calls her into the office.

3.   Katsushi, a high school freshman in Canada, recently arrived from Japan. One day in class, his teacher, Mrs. Campbell, called on him to answer a homework question. Katsushi did not answer her, a behavior that she had noticed before. Mrs. Campbell moved on to ask another student, who answered. Mrs. Campbell spoke with Katsushi after class and asked why he wasn't even trying to answer her questions. He stared at the floor and did not respond. Mrs. Campbell asked him to put his head up and look at her while they were speaking. Katsushi felt confused and frightened.

4.   Frank is from the United States and Umit is from Turkey. On the first day of their sociology class at an American university, the professor had students work in pairs on an interview. As Frank asked Umit the questions on the activity handout, Umit patted Frank's hand and then his back to show he understood the questions. Frank was annoyed that Umit was touching him and finally asked him to stop. Umit didn't understand why Frank was annoyed.

5.   Rafael, a student from El Salvador, agreed to meet Leo, a student from Switzerland, in the university cafeteria at 10:00 a.m. to work on their project for a political science class. Both students needed the extra credit they would get for this project. Leo arrived before 10:00 and got himself a cup of coffee and spread out his materials on the table. He continued to look around for Rafael, who still had not appeared. At 10:15 there was still no Rafael insight. Leo became discouraged and at 10:30 packed up his belongings. Suddenly, Rafael arrived with no apology and an eagerness to get started. Leo said, "Hey, Rafael, you're 30 minutes late. I'm not sure if this is going to work out!"

CULTURE AS BELIEFS, NORMS AND SOCIAL PRACTICES

The definition of culture by M. Lustig and J. Koester is useful for our purpose of helping us to understand the crucial link between culture and communication:
"Culture is a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms and social practices, which affect the behaviours of a relatively large group of people" (Lustig & Koester, Intercultural Competence, 2010)

Culture is learned

Humans are not born with the genetic imprint of a particular culture. Instead people learn about their culture through interactions with parents, other family members, friends and even strangers who are part of the culture.

How do people become part of a culture?
Culture is not something that we simply absorb – it is learned. In anthropology this process is referred to as acculturation or enculturation. Sociologists have tended to use the term "socialization" to describe the process by which we become social and cultural things. The sociologist Anthony Giddens (2006) describes socialization as the process whereby, through contact, with other human beings, "the helpless infant gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable human being skilled in the ways of culture in which he or she was born". Primarily socialization involves such elements as the acquisition of language and a gendered identity. Secondary socialization refers to all the subsequent influences that an individual experiences in a lifetime.

Anthropology and some forms of sociology see meaningful action, the understandings that persons attribute to their behavior and to their thoughts and feelings, as cultural. This approach to culture refers to the shared understandings of individuals and groupings in society (or the way of life sense of culture). Some sociologists, e.g., Berger and Luckmann, stress that human knowledge of the world through our social locations and our interactions with other people. If it is the case that our understanding is structured by our social locations, then our views of the world may be partial. This view suggests that there is a real world but we can only view it from certain angles.

The sociology of knowledge, as this approach to understanding is known, suggests that the sense that we make of the world can be made intelligible through the examination of our social location. E.g. it is sometimes proposed that one's view of the world is linked to class position, so that working class people will have different view of the world from upper-class people. Sociologists suggest that world-views are cultural and that culture has to be studied in relation to society. In seeking to interpret a way of life of a different society why should we believe one interpretation rather than any other? We should be very careful. Interpretation of meaning is therefore a core issue in cultural studies, and it relates how we understand the relationship between the past and the present.

One hears much talk in England of the traditional nature of culture; England is seen by some to have a culture that stretches back over a thousand years. Within this context, culture in English studies has often been conceived in terms of influence and tradition. For e.g. T.S. Eliot: "no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists."

Culture is a set of shared interpretations
According to M. Lustig and J. Koester, shared interpretations establish the very important link between communication and culture. Cultures exist in the mind of people, not just in external or tangible objects and behaviours. Symbols are the background of communication, as they are the means through which all communications take place. The meanings of symbols exist in the minds of the individual communicators; when those symbolic ideas are shared with others, they form the basis for culture. Not all of an individual's symbolic ideas are necessarily shared with other people, and some symbols will be shared only with a few. A culture can form only if symbolic ideas are shared with a relatively large group of people.

Culture involves Beliefs, Norms and Social Practices
According to M. Lustig and J. Koester, shared beliefs, values, norms, and social practices that are stable over time and that lead to roughly similar behaviours across similar situations are known as cultural patterns. These cultural patterns affect our perceptions. Despite their importance in the development and maintenance of cultures, they cannot be seen, heard, or experienced directly. Cultural patterns are primarily inside people, in their minds. They provide a way of thinking about the world, or orienting oneself to it. Therefore, **cultural patterns are shared mental programs that govern specific behavior choices**.

Beliefs are ideas that refer to the basic understanding of a group of people about what the world is like or what is true and what is false. Beliefs, therefore, are a set of learned interpretations that form the basis for cultural members to decide what is and what is not logical and correct. From the most typical examples of beliefs A. C. Wintergerst and J. McVeigh mark the religious belief in the power of prayer or in alternative medicine rather than surgery as a means of curing a disease.

Situation

"The nurse cannot understand why the newly admitted patient, Mr. Asfar, is so agitated about his assigned room. He keeps insisting that the bed should be against the opposite wall, but that is impossible: the oxygen and all the telemetry for measuring respiration and heartbeat have been permanently installed on this side of the room. There is no way to move the bed because the wires are not long enough to reach to the other side.

Mr. Asfar insists that is room is unsatisfactory in its present layout. In exasperation the nurses switch him to another room that meets with his approval."

Explanation

Mr. Asfar was a Muslim, and he needed to be able to face the east, toward Mecca, to say his prayers five times daily. The staff at this hospital was annoyed by having to change Mr. Asfar's room. However, most hospitals are sensitive to this highly emotional response and cooperative with patients who have such beliefs.

The direction a hospital bed faces can affect the emotional state of a patient: those who believe in the principles of feng shui prefer to have their beds face south, however, Muslims must face the east.

Dresser Norine,Prayer Position. Multicultural Manners: Essential Rules of Etiquette for the 21st Century. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., p. p. 110-111.

Beliefs, according to M. Lusting and J. Koester, can range from ideas that are central to a person's sense of self to those that are more peripheral.
Central beliefs include the culture's fundamental teachings about what reality is and expectations about how the world works. Parents, teachers and other important elders transmit the culture's assumptions about the nature of the physical and interpersonal world.

Peripheral beliefs refer to matters of personal taste. They contribute to each person's unique configuration of ideas and expectations within the larger cultural matrix.

Values describe our feeling about the worth, usefulness, or importance of something. Our standards about what is right or wrong are steered by moral guidelines and bring emotional vigour to beliefs. Peterson (2004) defines cultural values as "principles or qualities that a group of people will tend to see as food or right or worthwhile". In short, they are the standards by which people measure what is good or bad, right or wrong, fair or unfair, just or unjust, beautiful or ugly, clean or dirty, valuable or worthless, appropriate or inappropriate, kind or cruel, important or unimportant.
As the Lithuanian scientist of education Jovaiša (2007) holds, a value is an object that is significantly satisfying individual or societal needs; it is a driving behavioural motive related to objects; values are in compliance with material, cultural or spiritual needs.
Dolan (2011) considers values to be: "strategic lessons learned and maintained. These lessons teach us that one way of acting is better than its opposite if we are to achieve our desired outcome(s)—that is, our values and value systems guide our behavior toward that which we think will turn out well for us. Thus, to the extent that they constitute deliberate or preferentially strategic choices, in the medium to long term, for certain ways of behaving and against others, toward the survival or good life of a particular system, values form the nucleus, the DNA, of human liberty." (p. 87)
Cultures differ not only in their beliefs but also in what they values. As values are the desired characteristics or goals of a culture, a culture's values do not necessarily describe its actual behaviours and characteristics. However, values are often offered as the explanation for the way in which people communicate. As Sh. Schwartz suggests, values serve as guiding principles in people's lives, e.g., the way people retain constitutionally guaranteed rights; follow the code of work ethics, appreciate the importance of group membership.

From culture to culture, values differ in their valence and intensity.
Valence refers to whether the value is seen as positive or negative.
Intensity indicates the strength or importance of the value, or the degree to which the culture identifies the value as significant. For example, many US Americans value youth rather than old age. In Korea, Japan, Mexico, however, respect for elders is a positively valenced value, and it is very intensely held.

Situation

"Cindy has always struggled with her weight. She experiments with the latest diets and enrolls in different weight-loss centres–but to no avail. She bounces up and down between different-sized clothing and has become extremely sensitive about her body. One day while crossing the university campus, she runs into a former classmate from Iran who greets her enthusiastically.

"Cindy, you look good. You gained weight!"

Cindy is crushed."

Explanation

Contrary to how it seemed, the young man was praising her appearance. Americans who go to the extreme in promoting thinness forget that this is not a worldwide value. Standards of beauty vary with culture. In the Middle East, a beautiful woman is amply proportioned. Large bodies signify that women can produce children; hence, they are considered good candidates for courtship and marriage."

Dresser Norine, Compliments about Appearance. Multicultural Manners: Essential Rules of Etiqu
ette for the 21st Century. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., p. 193.

Norms

Norms are principles of appropriate behaviour that are binding to the members of a culture. They guide and regulate proper and acceptable behavior in terms of what members should and should not do. Norms include mores or morality binding behaviuor that distinguishes right from wrong, as well as taboos or banned actions.

Norms refer to the rules for appropriate behaviour, which provide the expectations people have of one or another and of themselves. When a person
's behaviours violate the culture's norms, social sanctions are usually imposed. Like values, norms can vary within a culture in terms of their importance and intensity. Unlike values, however, norms may change over a period of time, whereas beliefs and values tend to be much more enduring.

Norms exist for a wide variety of behaviours. For example, the greeting behaviour of people within a culture are governed by norms. Similarly, good manners in a variety of situations are based on norms. Norms also exist to guide people's interactions and to indicate how to engage in conversation, what to talk about, and how to disengage from conversations. Because people are expected to behave according to their culture's norms, they therefore come to see their own norms as constituting the "right" ways of communicating. Norms, then, are linked to the beliefs and values of a culture. Because they are evident through behaviours, norms can be readily inferred, e.g. showing respect by bowing to elders; refraining from plagiarism when writing a college or university assignment or not eating pork in a culture where it is prohibited.

Situation

"On his first day of class Ahmad, an Azerbaijani student who has recently enrolled in an American university, arrives early. As other students enter the class, they take their seats but ignore their classmates, even those sitting in adjacent seats. Ahmad is dismayed by their behavior."

Explanation

Azerbaijanis say hello and good-bye to all the people in a room, including students in classrooms. Ahmad was grateful that he waited to observe their behavior beforehand. He thus avoided making a fool of himself by greeting all students as they entered and left.

Saying hello and good-bye in Azerbaijan is required. Even policemen will first say *hello* to errant drivers before writing up their traffic violations.

In unfamiliar situations, observe behavior before taking action. When in doubt, ask
questions regarding protocol.

Dresser Norine,"Hello!" Multicultural Manners: Essential Rules of Etiquette for the 21st Century.
New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., p. p. 184-185.

Social practices are predictable behavior patterns that members of a culture typically follow. Thus, social practices are the outward manifestations of beliefs, values, and norms.

Situation
"President Bill Clinton travels to South Korea to visit with President Kim Young Sam. While speaking publicly, the American president repeatedly refers to the Korean president's wife as Mrs. Kim. The South Korean officials are embarrassed."

Explanation
In error, President Clinton's advisers assumed that Koreans had the same naming traditions as the Japanese. President Clinton had not been informed that in Korea, wives retain their maiden names. President Kim Young Sam's wife was named Sohn Myong Suk. Therefore, her correct name was Mrs. Sohn. In Korea, the family name comes before the given name. President Clinton arrived in Korea directly after leaving Japan and had not shifted cultural gears. His failure to follow Korean protocol gave the impression that Korea was not as important as Japan.

In addition to Koreans, Cambodians, Chinese, Hmong, Mien, and Vietnamese husbands and wives do not share the same surnames.

Also, the number of names a person has varies with the culture. Koreans and Chinese use three names, Vietnamese can use up four.

Placing the family name (or surname) first is found among a number of Asian cultures, e.g. Vietnamese, Mien, Hmong, Cambodian, and Chinese. Often this reversal from the American system of placing the family name last causes confusion.

According to Mexican naming customs, when a woman marries, she keeps her maiden name and adds her husband's name after the word de (of):
After marrying Tino Martinez, María Gonsalez becomes María Gonsalez de Martinez. When children are born, the name order is as follows: given name, father' s family name, mother's family name. Tino and María's child Anita is named Anita Martinez Gonsalez.

In Mayanmar (Burma, South Asia) a person does not have a family name. Names are based on the day a person was born, e.g., Thein means
"Friday-born".

Dresser Norine, 2005. Naming Traditions. Multicultural Manners: Essential Rules of Etiquette for the 21st Century. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., p. p. 189-190.

In Lithuania, there are differences between male family names and those of married and unmarried women:
a. the family names of married women are formed by dropping the ending of the male family name and adding the suffix -IENE. The suffix–IENE, therefore, denotes a married woman–Matulis + Matulienė;
b. the family names of unmarried women are formed by adding the suffixes - AITE, -YTE, -UTE, -TE -Matulytė.
c. Recently just the ending –E has been added to denote a married woman
–MATULIS + MATULĖ.

The following examples expand our understanding of social practices worldwide. In the US, lunch is usually over 1:30 p.m., gifts brought by diners are usually opened in the presence of the guests, television watching dramatically increases during the annual Super Bowl, and children sleep alone or with other
children. In Italy, lunch hasn't even begun by 1:30 p.m., and the soccer is more popular than American football. In Malaysia, gifts are never opened in front of the giver; doing so is considered bad manners. In many Middle Eastern, Latin American, and Asian families, children routinely share beds with adult relatives.

One type of social practice is informal and includes everyday tasks such as eating, sleeping, dressing, working, playing, and talking to others. Such behaviours are so predictable and common place within a culture that the subtle details about how they are accomplished may pass nearly unnoticed. For instance, cultures have social practices eating with "good manners". Slurping one's food in Saudi Arabia and in many Asian cultures is the usual practice, and it is regarded favourably as an expression of satisfaction and appreciation for the quality of cooking. But good manners in one culture may be bad manners in another; Europeans consider such sounds to be inappropriate.

Another type of social practice is more formal and prescriptive. These include the rituals, ceremonies, and structured routines that are typically performed publicly and collectively: saluting the flag, praying in church, honouring the dead at funerals, getting married, and many other social practices. Of course, all the members of a culture do not necessarily follow that culture's "typical" social practices; each person differs, in unique and significant ways, from the general cultural tendency to think and behave in particular ways. As William B. Gudykunst and Carmin M. Lee suggest, "Individuals in a culture generally are socialized in ways consistent with the cultural-level tendencies, but some individuals in every culture learn different tendencies."

Taken together, the shared beliefs, values, norms, and social practices provide a "way of life" for the members of a culture.

Culture affects behavior

If culture were located just in the minds of people we could only speculate about what culture is, since it is impossible for one person to see into the mind of another. However, as it has already been mentioned, these shared interpretations about beliefs, values, and norms affect the behaviours of large groups of people. In other words, the social practices that characterize a culture give people guidelines about what things mean, what is important, and what should and should not be done. Thus, culture establishes predictability in human interactions.

Attitudes are mental stances that we take in regard to a fact or a state of something. Attitudes are also feelings or emotions that we show toward something. Attitudes shape our cultural behaviuor, e.g., people's instant dislike of others who "look like foreigners" or a positive identification with the target language that can increase motivation and enhance language proficiency.

Within a given geographical area, people who interact with one another will, over time, form social bonds that help to stabilize their interactions and patterns of behavior. These social practices become the bases for making predictions and forming expectations about others. However, no one is entirely "typical" of the culture to which she or he belongs. Each person differs, in unique ways, from the general cultural tendency to think and to behave in a particular way. Nor is "culture" the complete explanation for why people behave as they do: differences in age, gender, social status, and many other factors also affect the likelihood that people will enact specific behaviours. Thus, "culture" is an important, but not the only, explanation for people's conduct.

Cultures can be understood as fixed, inherited features of different national, ethnic and religious groups.

Cultures can be understood as dynamic and changing, continually being redefined by individuals and groups as they interact with others of different backgrounds or respond to changing circumstances.

(Byram et al. 2009, Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters)