··· James W. Neuliep

Intercultural Communication

A Contextual Approach

4 edition

SAGE

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A Contextual Approach

4
edition

James W. Neuliep
St. Norbert College

SAGE

Los Angeles • London • New Delhi • Singapore • Washington DC

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2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320
E-mail: order@sagepub.com

SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044
India

SAGE Publications Ltd.
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London, EC1Y 1SP
United Kingdom

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte. Ltd.
33 Pekin Street #02-01
Far East Square
Singapore 048763

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Neuliep, James William, 1957–
Intercultural communication : A contextual approach / James W. Neuliep. — 4th ed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-4129-6770-9 (pbk.)
1. Intercultural communication. 2. Culture. I. Title.

HM1211.N48 2009
303.48'2—dc22 2008020274

Printed on acid-free paper

08 09 10 11 12 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Preface

Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach (4th ed.) is designed for college-level students taking their first course in intercultural communication. The purpose of the book is to introduce students to the fundamental topics, theories, concepts, and themes that are at the center of the study of intercultural communication.

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 within a variety of contexts, including cultural, microcultural, environmental, sociorelational, and perceptual contexts. The model is conceptually and graphically consistent and is presented in Chapter 1.

The organizational scheme of this new edition remains essentially unchanged from the third edition, but many substantive revisions have been incorporated, including a new chapter on intercultural conflict. Well over 100 sources have been added or updated. Like earlier editions, this edition contains dozens of reliable and valid self-assessment instruments designed for students to measure theoretical concepts. Also new to this edition is the addition of discussion questions at the end of each chapter.

Chapter 1 alerts students to the importance and necessity of intercultural communication in the 21st century. The most current data from the U.S. Census Bureau are reviewed and point to the growing diversity of the U.S. population. The chapter continues with extended discussions of the nature of human communication and culture. While reading Chapter 1, students can complete and score the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24), the Generalized Ethnocentrism Scale (GENE), and the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA). The chapter closes with a delineation of five fundamental assumptions of intercultural communication.

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 large–small power distance are discussed. Self-report scales measuring each of these topics are included in the chapter. New to this edition is a completely revised discussion of 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. Moreover, individuals can be characterized by specific

combinations of individualist and collectivist tendencies. An entirely new discussion of the behavioral traits shown to be associated with individualism and collectivism is also included.

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 that possess 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 of the dominant or majority culture's context or value system. Chapter 3 includes an updated and revised discussion of four U.S. microcultures: Hispanics, African Americans, Amish, and Hmong.

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 the climate of a particular culture. 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 their monochronic/polychronic orientations. Chapter 4 includes coverage of the nature of privacy in the United States, with a special focus on the perceptions of privacy among U.S. students.

Chapter 5 focuses on the perceptual contexts of the interactants and includes a revised and 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, is culturally influenced. Also included in Chapter 5 is a discussion of American racism as a parallel to ethnocentrism.

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 to communicate. Roles vary from culture to culture. For example, in just about every culture there are student and teacher role relationships. 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. One's roles prescribe the types of verbal and nonverbal symbols that are exchanged. Chapter 6 contains a revised and updated discussion of family groups and sex groups. In addition, the contextual model of intercultural communication represents the sociorelational context as defined by the verbal and nonverbal code.

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,

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are exposed to a subset of it that constitutes their particular culture's language (e.g., English, French). The language of a particular culture is simply a subset of universal language. To be sure, however, culture certainly affects how we use language. Thus, Chapter 7 outlines several styles of language and how they vary across cultures.

Chapter 8 focuses on the nonverbal code. After a discussion of the relationship between the verbal and nonverbal code, seven channels of nonverbal communication are discussed: kinesics, paralanguage, proxemics, haptics, olfactics, physical appearance/dress, and chronemics. In the section on kinesics, the use of gestures across cultures and an extended discussion of affect displays across cultures is presented. In the coverage of paralanguage, cultural uses of silence and tonal languages are discussed. 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 (PROPS) Scale. The discussion of physical appearance and dress looks at cultural variations in Muslim cultures and Japan, among others. The discussion of chronemics reviews Hall's monochronic/polychronic distinction in addition to a treatment of the use of calendars across cultures. Finally, the chapter closes with a cross-cultural application of nonverbal expectancy violations theory.

Chapter 9 discusses the development of intercultural relationships. Five factors that affect relationships are the focus of this chapter: uncertainty reduction, intercultural communication apprehension, sociocommunicative style, empathy, and similarity. Each factor is discussed with an emphasis on intercultural relationships. The chapter also includes a discussion of relationship differences among Eastern and Western cultures, marital relationships across cultures, interracial and intercultural relationships, arranged marriages, mate selection practices across cultures, and divorce. In this chapter students can complete the Sociocommunicative Style Scale and the Factors in Choosing a Mate Instrument and compare their preferences with those of people from other cultures.

Chapter 10 is new to this edition and focuses on intercultural conflict. The chapter begins with a definition of intercultural conflict and describes three levels of conflict as described by Young Kim's model. 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 situation. The chapter also includes a discussion of facework and facework strategies. The chapter closes with a discussion of conflict communication styles and how culture affects one's preference for conflict styles.

The focus of Chapter 11 is intercultural communication in organizations. In this chapter, all of the contexts presented earlier are applied to the organizational context. Organizational examples from the cultural, microcultural, environmental, perceptual, and sociorelational contexts have been updated. Because Japan, Germany, and Mexico are three of our largest trade partners, management perspectives in these countries, plus the Middle East, are highlighted.

Chapter 12 presents a discussion of acculturation, culture shock, and intercultural competence. The central theme of Chapter 12 is the practical aspects 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 four-stage "U" model of culture shock is outlined. In addition, the chapter includes a discussion of the "W" curve model of culture shock. The chapter also includes a variety of

self-report inventories to help students prepare for their journeys abroad. The chapter closes with a model of intercultural competence as four interdependent components—knowledge, affective, psychomotor, and situational features. A self-assessment instrument is included so that students can assess the knowledge component of the competence model.

As mentioned above, most chapters contain a number of self-assessment instruments. These are designed so that students can learn about themselves as they learn about important concepts in intercultural communication. The instruments included in the chapters have documented validity and reliability. As in the earlier editions of this book, most of the chapters in this newly revised edition contain *intercultural conversations.* These hypothetical scripts illustrate how the various concepts discussed in the chapters manifest themselves in human interaction. Each chapter also includes a set of learning objectives, a chapter summary, a glossary of terms, discussion questions, and an extensive reference list.

The *Fourth Edition* is accompanied by the following supplements, tailored to match the content of the book: **Instructors' Resources** are available on CD-ROM and include PowerPoint slides, a test bank, suggested activities, and other useful teaching aids. A **Student Study Site** is available at **www.sagepub.com/neuliep4estudy** that includes e-Flashcards, study quizzes, Internet resources, and other study material for students.

A number of people have been instrumental in the revision of this book. As in the earlier editions, this book has been strongly influenced by the writing and research of the late William B. Gudykunst. Bill's influence can be seen throughout the book. Gudykunst's substantial contributions to the field remain a strong influence on the way we write and teach about intercultural communication. The editorial and production staff at SAGE deserve much of the credit for what is good in this book. They have been incredibly patient with me, and I wish to express my gratitude publicly. My editor, Todd Armstrong, has been extremely supportive of this project. Very special thanks to my assistant editor, Deya Saoud. Deya continues to be tolerant and merciful of my numerous missed deadlines. To be sure, Todd and Deya are simply incredible. I am lucky to have them on my side. My fellow colleague-authors should be so lucky. Thanks also to Sarah Quesenberry, the project editor, and Teresa Wilson, the copy editor, who each spent countless hours on the production of the book. Thanks to Joan E. Aitken, University of Missouri–Kansas City, and Steven T. McDermott, California Polytechnic State University, the reviewers of the third edition, and Donna Acerra, Northampton Community College; Katie N. Dunleavy, West Virginia University; Edith LeFebvre, California State University, Sacramento; Rachel Reynolds, Drexel University; and Paul Witt, Texas Christian University, reviewers of this edition, whose many suggestions were incorporated into the revision. I appreciate very much your constructive comments and recommendations. A sincere thank you goes to my students, from whom I have learned a great deal about culture. Although they were not aware of their contributions, Josephine and Becket played a significant role in my mental well-being while revising this new edition. They each deserve an out-of-the-ordinary thank you. Finally, this fourth edition is devoted to my partner, my lover, and my best friend, Stephanie, who shares with me the best of times and continues to support me when I am at my worst. I want her to know how important she is to me, how much I love her, how much she holds me up when I am about to fall, and how her unyielding support sustains me. This book is now for her.

—J. W. N.
De Pere, WI

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CHAPTER 1

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]

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to

1. List and discuss the benefits of intercultural communication.
2. Recognize the increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S. population.
3. Identify and discuss the eight dimensions of communication.
4. Assess your degree of communication apprehension.
5. Define and discuss the nature of culture.
6. Identify and discuss the five contexts of intercultural communication.
7. Discuss the relationship between intercultural communication, uncertainty, and anxiety.
8. Assess your degree of intercultural communication apprehension.
9. Identify and discuss the five fundamental assumptions of intercultural communication.
10. Assess your degree of ethnocentrism.

In 1948 the painter and writer Wyndham Lewis wrote about a Global Village in his book titled *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 that will have been virtually transformed into a village. At the dawn of the 21st century, Marshall McLuhan's vision of a *global village* is no longer considered an abstract idea but a near certainty. Technological and sociopolitical changes have made the world a smaller planet to inhabit. The technological feasibility of the mass media to bring events from across the globe into our homes, businesses, and schools dramatically reduces the distance between peoples of different cultures and societies. Telecommunication systems link the world via satellites and fiber optics. Supersonic jets carry people from one country to another faster than the speed of sound. Politically, the end of the cold war between the United States and the former Soviet Union has brought decades of partisan tensions to an end. Some countries that were once bitter enemies are now joining forces. Mass migrations force interaction between people of different races, nationalities, and ethnicities. The late noted historian and Pulitzer Prize winner Arthur Schlesinger warns 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. Schlesinger contends 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 and racial strife will usher in the new millennium as the explosive issue.[2] Only through intercultural communication can such conflict be managed and reduced. Only by competently and peacefully interacting with others who are different from ourselves can our global village survive.

THE NEED FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

International tensions around the globe, the most noticeable to U.S. Americans being those in the Middle East, are striking examples of the need for effective and competent intercultural communication. Such conflicts are often fueled by political, ethnic, and religious differences. Indeed, national conflicts within our own borders, often ignited by racial and ethnic tensions, underscore the necessity for skillful intercultural communication. Perhaps more importantly, the need for competent intercultural communication is felt intrapersonally, within our own personal, social, and professional relationships. Consider the following situations 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 U.S.?**

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 in the room unannounced.

Jim: (to Betsy) So, I swear we weren't doing anything except talking.

(Jahan enters)

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?

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