

James W. Neuliep

EDITION

5

# Intercultural Communication

A Contextual Approach





# Intercultural Communication

In this fully updated Fifth Edition of *Intercultural Communication*, author James W. Neuliep provides a clear, comprehensive model for examining communication within cultural, microcultural, environmental, socio-relational, and perceptual contexts. Beginning with the broadest context—the cultural component of the model—the book progresses chapter by chapter through the model, to the most specific traits of communication—verbal and nonverbal messages. Each chapter focuses on one context and explores the combination of factors within that context, including setting, situation, and circumstances. Highlighting values, ethnicity, physical geography, and attitudes, the book examines means of interaction, including body language, eye contact, and the exchange of words, as well as the stages of relationships, cross-cultural management, intercultural conflict, and culture shock. This book serves as a core textbook for courses in intercultural communication.

## New to this Edition

- Expanded chapter on *Intercultural Conflict*: A new model in Chapter 10 includes discussions of face-negotiation theory, facework and facework strategies, conflict communication styles, and cultural preferences for conflict styles, providing students with in-depth coverage of conflict.
- New sections in multiple chapters: These new sections include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender culture in Chapter 3; a new model of stereotyping in Chapter 5; and a new discussion of intercultural relationship maintenance in Chapter 9, presenting additional information to enhance and expand the scope of learning.
- New *Student Voices Across Culture* feature: Students from across the globe profile their personal experiences with concepts that are discussed throughout the chapters, offering real-life applications.
- New end-of-chapter ethics questions: These focused questions guide students into thinking critically about ethics and how they might respond and react ethically to intercultural situations.
- *Intercultural Conversation* dialogues: These realistic dialogues throughout the book demonstrate for students how key theoretical concepts manifest themselves in human interaction.

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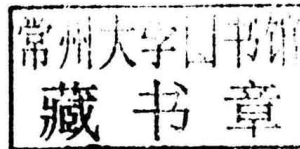
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# Intercultural Communication

## A Contextual Approach

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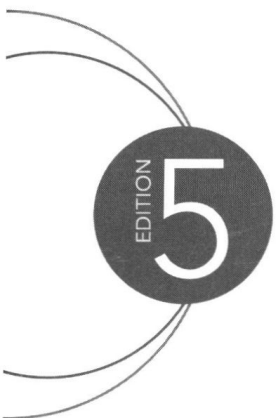
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# Intercultural Communication





# Preface to the Fifth Edition

**I***ntercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach* (5th ed.) is designed for undergraduate 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 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 a cultural, microcultural, environmental, sociorelational, and perceptual context. 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 fourth edition, but many substantive revisions have been incorporated. Each chapter has been revised and updated to include the most recent research. A new and exciting feature of this edition is Student Voices Across Cultures. Each chapter (with the exception of Chapter 11) includes an essay from a student applying a concept from that chapter to his or her life experiences. Students from China, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Germany, Colombia, and the United States have contributed to this feature. Many of the U.S. students discuss their experiences from studying abroad. These essays provide the reader with real-life applications of theoretical concepts.

A second new feature is the addition of discussion questions focusing on ethics at the close of most chapters. Here, readers are asked to consider the ethical implications of what they have read and learned about intercultural communication and cultural differences. Several chapters now include discussions of lesbian and gay culture and communication. The role of modern technology and its impact on intercultural communication has also been added to many chapters. Other revisions include an expansion of Chapter 10, on intercultural conflict, and many new photographs. Like earlier editions, this edition contains an assortment of reliable and valid self-assessment instruments designed to help students measure theoretical concepts.

Chapter 1 alerts students to the importance and necessity of intercultural communication in the 21st century. A new discussion of the role of modern technology has been included here. The argument is that modern technology has decentralized information. This means that billions of people across the planet now have access to information that was not available to them only a few years ago. Such information empowers them. In addition, 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 (GENE) Scale, and the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA). The chapter closes with a delineation of five fundamental assumptions of intercultural communication. The Student Voices Across Cultures profile in this chapter presents one young woman's experiences with cultural differences while studying abroad in Spain.

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 high–low power distance are discussed. Self-report scales measuring each of these topics are included in the chapter, and a new scale that measures vertical and horizontal individualism and collectivism has been added. 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 individualistic and collectivistic tendencies. An expanded discussion of the behavioral traits shown to be associated with individualism and collectivism is also included. Two Student Voices Across Cultures profiles are included in this chapter: one from a Chinese student who discusses collectivism in China 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 macro culture. 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 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 their behavioral practices. Such microcultures develop their own language for communicating outside 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, the Amish, and the Hmong. In this new edition, a fifth microculture—lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered groups—is also profiled. 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. 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. 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. A new discussion of natural disasters as cultural and social events has been added. Although natural disasters are triggered by natural events (e.g., tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, etc.), 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 at the end of this chapter, a young man from Germany discusses his country's monochronic time orientation.

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, are culturally influenced. Also included in Chapter 5 is a discussion of American racism as a parallel to ethnocentrism. A new feature of this chapter is a discussion of 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. Here, the focus is on how Asians (Eastern cultures) and Westerners think differently and why. Another new feature of this chapter is a fascinating discussion of the Stereotype Content Model, which explains how and why people stereotype and the essential content of those stereotypes. This model is applicable across cultures. In one of the Student Voices Across Cultures profiles included in this chapter, a young woman who has won beauty pageants discusses the long-held stereotypes applied to beauty queens. In another profile, a student from the United States discusses being stereotyped while studying abroad in Ecuador.

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, 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 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 codes. In the Student Voices Across Cultures profile included in this chapter, a young woman from Saudi Arabia discusses sex roles in her family and culture.

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 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. An expanded discussion of uniquely American

accents, including a section addressing whether or not such a thing as 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.

Chapter 8 focuses on the nonverbal code. After a discussion of the relationship between the verbal and nonverbal codes, 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 are presented. In the coverage of paralanguage, cultural uses of silence and tonal languages are discussed. A new discussion of accents is also included. 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 Olfactory Perception and Sensitivity (PROPS) scale. A discussion of physical appearance and dress looks at cultural variations in Muslim and Japanese cultures, among others. The discussion of chronemics reviews Hall's monochronic/polychronic distinction, in addition to a discussion of the use of calendars across cultures. Finally, the chapter closes with a cross-cultural application of nonverbal expectancy violations theory. In this chapter's Student Voices Across Cultures essay, a U.S. student discusses her trip to Zambia, Africa, and her experience with haptics/touch.

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 chapter also presents an expanded 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. A new discussion of the Internet as relational maintenance looks at the role of social media outlets. 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 the two Student Voices Across Cultures profiles, a young man from Saudi Arabia discusses marriage in Saudi, and a young woman explains relationship building in Colombia.

Chapter 10, which focuses on intercultural conflict, has been significantly expanded. 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. A new feature of this chapter is a discussion 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. Also added to this chapter is Ting-Toomey and Oetzel's culture-based situational model of conflict, which highlights four main factors that come into play during an intercultural conflict episode: individual factors, conflict process factors, situational features, and conflict outcomes. The chapter closes with a discussion of conflict communication styles

and how culture affects one's preference for conflict styles. In the Student Voices Across Cultures profile, a young man from Mexico describes how people in his culture approach interpersonal conflict.

Chapter 11's focus is intercultural communication in organizations. In this chapter, all the contexts presented earlier are applied to the organizational context. Organizational examples from the cultural, microcultural, environmental, perceptual, and sociorelational contexts have been updated. An interesting case study of Wal-Mart's failure in some countries has been added here. Because they are three of our largest trade partners, management perspectives in Japan, Germany, and Mexico are highlighted, along with business practices in the Middle East. A new feature of this chapter is a discussion of Chinese management practices. Economic and trade data from each of these countries has been updated.

Chapter 12 presents a discussion of acculturation, culture shock, and intercultural competence. The central theme of this chapter 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-curve" model of culture shock is outlined. In addition, the chapter includes a discussion of the "W-curve" model of reentry 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. The chapter now includes a discussion of Arasaratnam's integrated model and measure of intercultural communication competence. Like others, Arasaratnam maintains that being a competent intercultural communicator involves knowing about other cultures, an approach tendency, and the application of appropriate and effective communication behaviors. A new scale that measures intercultural competence is now included. The Student Voices Across Cultures profile features a young woman's experiences with culture shock during her semester in Spain.

As mentioned above, most chapters contain a number of self-assessment instruments. These are designed to help students learn about themselves as they learn about important concepts in intercultural communication. The instruments included in the chapters are documented as being valid and reliable. 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 themselves in human interactions. Each chapter also includes a set of learning objectives, a chapter summary, key terms, discussion questions, and an extensive reference list.

A number of people have been instrumental in the revision of this book. As in the earlier editions, the late William B. Gudykunst has strongly influenced the writing and research of this book. I am blessed, truly blessed, with the people at Sage Publications. My former editors, Todd Armstrong and Deya Saoud, and my new 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 new editor, Matt Byrnie, is a welcome addition to this project. Very special thanks to my assistant editor, Nathan Davidson. Nathan has been charitable and forgiving of my numerous missed deadlines. I appreciate his attention to detail. He kept me on task. Thanks also to Eric Garner, the senior project editor. Also, thanks to Elizabeth Borders, who came on late but is a welcome addition. A very, very personal and warm thanks goes to Megan (Ms. Meg) Granger, copy editor extraordinaire, who spent so many hours editing the manuscript.



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—J.W.N.

—DePere, WI

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