The Communication Process

“Cultural communications are deeper and more complex than spoken or written messages. The essence of effective cross-cultural communication has more to do with releasing the right responses than with sending the “right” messages.”

Hall and Hall
Questions on context

- Similarity/difference of the norms and values?
- Level of language competence?
- How formal is the interaction?
- Communication behaviour?
- The politics of language
Noise

Perceptual filters

coding

channel

decoding

transmitter

message

receiver

feedback

Val Finnigan, University Teacher Fellow,
Cultural Noise

- Cultural Noise – cultural variables that undermine the communication of intended meaning
  - see Hofstede, Lewis, Trompenaars

- Attribution – the process in which people look for an explanation of another person’s behavior
High Low context *Noise*

**Low-context societies:**
- speaker says precisely what he or she means
- people often meet only to accomplish objectives
- message is explicit

**High-context societies:**
- Messages highly coded, indirect and implicit
- voice intonation, timing, and facial expressions important in conveying information

Val Finnigan, University Teacher Fellow,
High and Low context Orientations

Context around culture is critical to meaning:

- The degree to which information is explicit, vested in words, precise and unambiguous........ *low context*
  
  = *the listener know little and needs to be told all*

- The degree to which information is implicit, vested in shared experience and assumptions and conveyed through verbal and non verbal codes.... *high context*
  
  = *listener is already contextualised and needs to read cues carefully*

Explicit and Implicit Communication

High-context/implicit communication cultures

Japanese

Arabs

Latin Americans

Italians

English

French

North Americans

Scandinavians

Germans

Swiss Germans

Low-context/explicit communication cultures

Adapted from Hodgetts, Luthans and Doh 2005
Verbal Communication Styles

International Management: Culture Strategy and Behaviour (2005)
Hodgetts, Luthans and Doh

- Elaborating style:
  - high-context cultures

- Exacting style:
  - Focus on precision
  - the right amount of words

- Succinct Style
  high-context cultures
  few words and allow understatement, pauses, and silence to convey meaning.

Val Finnigan, University Teacher Fellow,
Cultural Noise: Trust

- Effective communication depends on:
  - informal understandings among individuals based upon trust
  - an implicit understanding
  - realistic commitments with good intentions to honour them
  - predictability: resolve conflicts and keep communication open
  - mutual bonding through socialising and friendly contact
Cultural Noise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Attribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American: “How long will it take you to finish this report?”</td>
<td>American: I asked him to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek: “I don’t know. How long should it take?”</td>
<td>Greek: His behavior makes no sense. He is the boss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American: “You are in the best position to analyze time requirements.”</td>
<td>American: He refuses to take responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek: “10 days.”</td>
<td>Greek: I asked him for an order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek:</td>
<td>Greek: What nonsense: I’d better give him an answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In fact, the report needed 30 days of regular work. So the Greek worked</td>
<td>American: He lacks the ability to estimate time; this time estimate is totally inadequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>day and night, but at the end of the 15th day, he still needed to do one</td>
<td>American: I offer a contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more day’s work.</td>
<td>Greek: These are my orders: 15 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American: “Where is the report?”</td>
<td>American: I am making sure he fulfills his contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek: “It will be ready tomorrow.”</td>
<td>Greek: He is asking for the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American: “But we agreed it would be ready today.”</td>
<td>(Both attribute that it is not ready.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek:</td>
<td>American: I must teach him to fulfill a contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greek hands in his resignation.</td>
<td>Greek: The stupid, incompetent boss! Not only did he give me the wrong orders, but he doesn’t even appreciate that I did a 30-day job in 16 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The American is surprised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greek: I can’t work for such a man.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural Noise

- Language – an inability to speak the local language, and a poor or too literal translation are often causes for mistrust
  - Pepsi’s slogan “Come Alive with Pepsi” translated into German as “Come out of the grave.”
  - Rendezvous lounges on 747’s were not used on airlines because in Portuguese ‘rendezvous’ refers to prostitution
  - Explore the internet for other examples
Cultural Noise ...... Time

- The appropriateness of when....
- Mono-chronic Cultures – Time is experienced in a linear manner; generally mono-chronic people concentrate on one thing at a time and adhere to time commitments
- Poly-chronic Cultures – Many things occur simultaneously and emphasise involvement with people
Non Verbal Noise

- Body jewellery, tattoos
- Eating, chewing, spitting, sneezing
- Oculesics
  - Eye contact and gaze
- Kinesics
  - Body movement and facial expression
- Proxemetics
Proxemics: your space or mine?
Val Finnigan, University Teacher Fellow,

Personal Space in the U.S.

- Intimate distance: 40cms
- Personal distance: 40 to 110cms
- Social distance: 110 to 220cms
- Public distance: 220 to 300cms

Adapted from Hodgetts, Luthans and Doh 2005
Val Finnigan, University Teacher Fellow,
Val Finnigan, University Teacher Fellow,
Non verbal communication

- Chronemics
  - How time is used:
    - Monochronic.... linear chain of doing things
      - UK, USA Canada and Australia
    - Polychronic....many things at same time. Higher values on personal involvement than getting it done on time.
      - Latin America, Middle East
Time and timings

- Relationship building
- A “window of opportunity”
- When to eat and drink
- Punctuality
- Private and public time
Non verbal communication

- Chromatics:
  - The use and meaning of colour
  - Significance and symbolism
  - Clothing, flowers, décor

- Implications for product design, advertising, gifts, dress