

TECH3501-18 Lecture 007 – Intercultural Communication

1 Migration Crisis in Europe

“Upon entering the EU, many migrants have experienced vast cultural differences, physical challenges, legal challenges, economic challenges and opportunities, etc. Communication has been integral to the entire management and interpretation of the migrant crisis. Many of the migrants who have entered the EU speak different languages than those in their new host nation(s), have different cultural/social practices” (Croucher, 2017, p. 3).

Since April 2015 the European Union has struggled to cope with the crisis, increasing funding for border patrol operations in the Mediterranean, devising plans to fight migrant smuggling, launching Operation Sophia and proposing a new quota system both to relocate asylum seekers among EU states for processing of refugee claims to alleviate the burden on countries on the outer borders of the Union, and to resettle asylum-seekers who have been determined to be genuine refugees. Individual countries have at times reintroduced border controls within the Schengen Area, and rifts have emerged between countries willing to allow entry of asylum-seekers for processing of refugee claims and others countries trying to discourage their entry for processing. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_migrant_crisis

The EU Commission has proposed a new two-year programme to bring at least 50,000 asylum seekers into Europe.

"It is about managing one of the most complex, structural phenomena of our times, not a temporary emergency," said the Commission's Vice-President Federica Mogherini. The issue has soured relations in the 28-country European Union. A two-year programme which finishes on Wednesday relocated less than a fifth of a planned 160,000 asylum seekers. Several eastern states balked at the mandatory resettlement scheme, and a legal challenge brought by Poland and Hungary was rejected by the European Court of Justice earlier this month. Nevertheless, Ms Mogherini insists EU migration policy is "starting to deliver".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-41413303>

More than a million migrants and refugees crossed into Europe in 2015, sparking a crisis as countries struggled to cope with the influx, and creating division in the EU over how best to deal with resettling people. The vast majority arrived by sea but some migrants have made their way over land, principally via Turkey and Albania. Winter has not stemmed the flow of people - with 135,711 people reaching Europe by sea since the start of 2016, according to the UNHCR. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34131911>

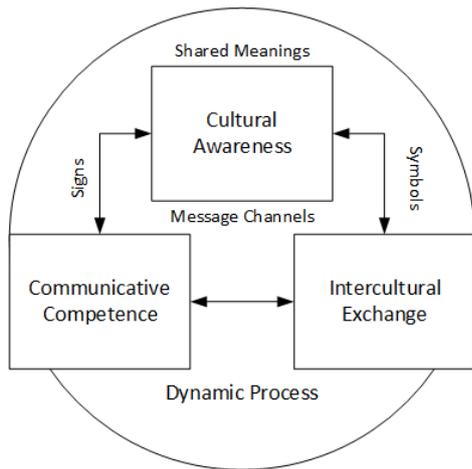
<https://www.hrw.org/tag/europes-migration-crisis>

2 What is Intercultural Communication

“Heightened cultural awareness, communicative competence, and intercultural communication” (Croucher, 2017, p. 4).

“Communication is a dynamic process through which we share meaning with others through various message channels” (Croucher, 2017, p. 4).

“Communication involves the sharing of symbols via signs. A sign is an object (e.g., letter, word, phrase, action, event, etc.) that represents something else” (Croucher, 2017, p. 5).



2.1 Communication Processes

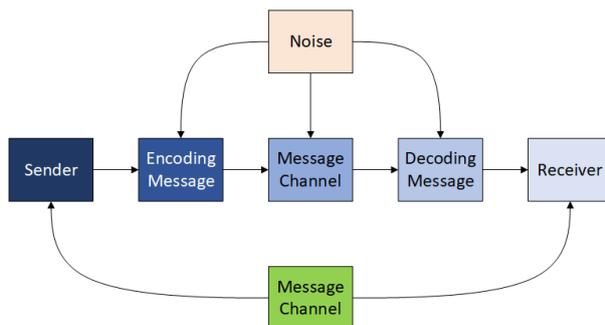
“Most researchers view communication as a process. Communication is ongoing and ever-changing” (Croucher, 2017, p. 5).

“How we communicate is greatly influenced by our past and present situations/interactions when we realise that communication is a process” (Croucher, 2017, p. 5).

“Communication is often regarded as transactional, or a back and forth between a sender and a receiver. Essentially, feedback is critical to communication. Yet, a transactional approach to communication takes more into consideration than just feedback” (Croucher, 2017, p. 5).

“Each of the individuals is a sender of messages, while at the same time being a receiver of messages. Both communicators are **encoding** (processing messages to send out), and **decoding** (processing messages received)” (Croucher, 2017, p. 6).

“This transactional approach to communication considers the complexities of communication. All of us have had a hard time getting our message across at one time or another” (Croucher, 2017, p. 6).



3 What are Intercultural Cultures

“Intercultural communication is communication (verbal and/or non-verbal) between individuals from different cultures. Essential to intercultural communication are two concepts: communication and culture” (Croucher, 2017, p. 7).

“It is important to note that from all of the perspectives, various forms of media, from interpersonal to group interactions, and storytelling, to name but a few, are all viewed as key ways in which communication takes place on an intercultural level” (Croucher, 2017, p. 7).

4 Globalisation & Intercultural Societies

“As foreign trade increases globally, effective intercultural communication will be essential to helping corporations, nations, and individuals realise their full economic potential” (Croucher, 2017, p. 8).

“Almost every nation in the world today is grappling with multiculturalism, or the political, social/cultural acceptance, promotion, or rejection of multiple cultural groups residing in the same society. In essence, it is how much a society tolerates or promotes diversity and the co-existence of different groups within that society” (Croucher, 2017, p. 8).

“Political parties often use the fear of multiculturalism to their advantage, painting immigrants and minorities as threats to society: immigrants/minorities will take away your jobs, make society unsafe, hurt the economy, and/or change *our* culture or way of life” (Croucher, 2017, p. 8).

“As migration continues, and in many places, grows, we continually face the challenging political questions of migration. Through effective intercultural communication we can be better equipped to understand diversity and respond to our more multicultural and ever-changing world” (Croucher, 2017, p. 9).

5 Intercultural Anxieties

“A stereotype is how members of one group expect members of another group to behave/act” (Croucher, 2017, p. 9).

“Negative stereotypes do not encourage healthy communication between groups, as this form of communication promotes misunderstandings between individuals from different cultural groups. The more we can try to break free from stereotypes and try to understand the individual for who they really are, the more likely we can have a more honest and fruitful conversation” (Croucher, 2017, p. 10).

“Ethnocentrism, or the feelings of superiority and preference for one’s own cultural group hinders effective communication. Ethnocentrism creates boundaries among social groups. Thus, intergroup relations can be limited as people do not see others as worthy of their time or energy. Moreover, ethnocentrism leads to prejudice, or predetermined opinions we have about individual or groups before we know the facts. This prejudice often leads to conflict between individuals and groups, because unfortunately we do not understand, and/or do not want to understand one another” (Croucher, 2017, p. 10).

“Conflict, or the ‘expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals” (Croucher, 2017, p. 10).

6 Defining the Other

“The criteria to define Self and Other may vary according to context” (Protzel, 2017, p. 15).

“Henceforth the term ‘interculturality’ started to be used in a series of interdisciplinary practices, especially by anthropologists and communicators, focussed on promoting indigenous identities. The enhancement of dialogue and mutual understanding through bilingual intercultural education was accompanied by health assistance and by recognition of their human and territorial rights” (Protzel, 2017, p. 17).

“The results of intercultural education must not be considered as the generation of a cultural blend. More realistically it may lead to a bi-cultural pattern” (Protzel, 2017, p. 17).

“Intercultural communication becomes increasingly politicised. Its specific concerns get connected with environmental issues and violence. The intercultural level might relate more to communication between taut negotiating contenders than to peaceful encounters trying to know each other better” (Protzel, 2017, p. 18).

“Cultural identities might not have a lineal descent from the past, or their real origins may have faded from the collective memory, so traditions and the consciousness of belonging may have been reinvented” (Protzel, 2017, p. 18).

7 Observations of Intercultural Associations

“Although schools of communication have ICC as a subject, they are mostly not addressed as issues of cultural and linguistic assimilation of foreign visitors or migrants. An explanation would be the coexistence of a modern Self with radical Otherness inside the same territory” (Protzel, 2017, p. 19).

“Multiculturality and diversity are typical European features. Not only is Europe a multicultural continent but also the European countries are multicultural, either because they host many nations and languages, or because they received along their histories successive waves of immigration and other strong cultural influences” (Caetano, 2017, p. 21)

“Not only do Europeans behave differently, but they perceive reality differently. Knowledge in social sciences differs among societies and cultural contexts, which raises an important political and social questions: is it possible, or not, to have an intercultural understanding? A question to which different people have different answers” (Caetano, 2017, p. 22)

“The question of understanding, acceptance, and political management of cultural differences put in contrast Western reason and other universals of discourse, but it is also at the very heart of Western reason born in Europe” (Caetano, 2017, p. 22)

European Borders - Time-lapse

<https://youtu.be/26GpAc4NdQ8>

8 Critical Communication

“Intercultural communication theories arise out of the concern about the lack of effective cultural communication skills among people who do not share the same life experiences, values or language (that’s to say, a lack of public trust between cultures). The EU, as a political community, needs to create people who live together but think and behave differently – consider, e.g., the different way northern European states and southern European states react to austerity or how the Europeans react to the phenomenon of refugees” (Caetano, 2017, p. 22).

“The knowledge of reality depends on reality. On the basis of the explanatory discourses of societies, there are contextual differences immediately expressed in the construction of language as a communication tool and the existence of different behaviours and social practices” (Caetano, 2017, p. 22).

9 Cultural Differences

“On the basis of intercultural communication theories there is a need to understand cultural differences in order to explain and assess individual routes and community, which make them important political and social instruments for peace and development. There is in intercultural communication theories a relativism that justifies the existence of different human behaviours according to cultural differences to which individuals are subject. It is by understanding more deeply the characteristics of difference and unity that it is possible to improve and better establish rules for communication between individuals” (Caetano, 2017, p. 23).

“The possibility of intercultural understanding is based on scientific research that shows there is something like a rational community, which could be shared by all people. On the basis, it is understood that humanity has created a pluralistic world culture, learning from experience and especially from the mistakes of the past” (Caetano, 2017, p. 23).

“The complexity of contemporary societies is reflected in the structure and viability of communicative processes. Traditionally, communication was done directly between people. Currently, communication can be made between people with the mediation of machines, without the need for physical mobility which raises new problems of communication and changes the assumption of the communication process” (Caetano, 2017, p. 23).

10 Contextual Understanding

“Intercultural communication can be best understood in its specific contexts. Various countries may experience intercultural communication differently due to a number of factors such as history, inequalities, and or politics” (Moola & Sibango, 2017, p. 25).

“Culture distinguishes one group from another – for example ethnic groups differ in terms of language or ‘looks’. Culture has been defined by various authors in a set of beliefs, values or norms shared by a group of people. This definition implies each culture is also understood as dynamic, flexible or changeable, that is, of social and/or economic power – that is, some cultural groups have more power than others. Cultures are also conceived as a creation of the powerful elite – who categorise individuals based on skin colour or beliefs” (Moola & Sibango, 2017, p. 27).

11 Shared Understanding

“Communication on the other hand is any attempt to create a shared meaning between individuals. That is, individuals have to communicate in a language they both understand” (Moola & Sibango, 2017, p. 27).

“Intercultural communication is communication that occurs between different cultural groups with varying communication styles, values, norms or beliefs between dominant and non-dominant groups. Intercultural communication is considered to be: communication which occurs between individuals from various ethnic groups... and/or different religions, classes or even within the same race groups. Although intercultural communications can be considered both tension-filled as well as harmonious in different contexts, intercultural communication aims to build the country and educate the masses on how we all can live in unity through diversity” (Moola & Sibango, 2017, p. 27).

“The term ‘Rainbow Nation’ [in South Africa] for instance was coined to show individuals can be ‘united in their diversity’” (Moola & Sibango, 2017, p. 27).

“Another dominant view is that different racial groups should adopt critical diversity. That is, individuals should acknowledge inequalities among and within racial groups and bridge them. Indeed, some political figures and scholars believe there can be no social cohesion without social equality” (Moola & Sibango, 2017, p. 27).

12 Multiple Cultures

“Western societies have become culturally diverse. By culturally diverse, I mean the coexistence of multiple national cultures (nationalities) or identities. Within this context of cross-national migration, intercultural communication is most often understood as communication processes between people from different national cultures” (Ngwayuh, 2017, p. 29).

“Unlike most Western countries, within most countries in West Africa, there exist several distinct cultural and ethnic tribes, groups, or identities with a wide variety of unique cultural practices, traditions, rituals, symbols, art, music, dance, and language (verbal and nonverbal communication), to name just a few. The ethnic diversity within these countries and the distinctiveness of their respective cultural identities and practice, and the intercultural experiences among them, warrant more attention and research in the field of intercultural communication. These different ethnic groups coexist together in a shared context and possess a common national identity but yet very distinct and strong ethnic or tribal identities and cultures. Intercultural communication within this geographically and sociological context should not only be limited to the processes of interaction between people from different countries (national cultures) as it is often understood, especially in most Western countries. But it should also encompass the intercultural experiences of people from different ethnic, tribal, or cultural groups within an ethnically and culturally diverse country” (Ngwayuh, 2017, p. 30).

“Intercultural communication was formerly needed for purposes such as trade but it is a matter of survival for human beings today” (Zarrinabadi, 2017, p. 36).

“Although considered necessary by researchers, authorities, and decision-makers, intercultural communication as an academic field has not gained much importance to be taught as a university major. It is still considered as an area of research within other fields such as communication, linguistics, and media and journalism” (Zarrinabadi, 2017, p. 37).

13 Cultural Familiarity

“Intercultural communication for an Iranian mainly refers to communicating with a compatriot from a different ethnic, religious, or linguistic background. Iranians believe the outcome of such interactions should enhance national cohesion and friendship among different ethnicities, religious groups, and cultural systems. This perception is, of course, influenced by Islamic virtues, which state that all human beings are equal and Muslims and non-Muslims should live together peacefully and enjoy social justice and equity. More than 10 principles in the constitution state that people are free to have their own language, religion, and rituals and require the media and educational system to foster national integration by making members of society familiar with other cultural groups” (Zarrinabadi, 2017, p. 38).

“The following can be expressed as the aims of this view of intercultural communication in Iran:

1. To broaden the knowledge of history, culture, institutions, and life style of foreign countries.
2. To develop critical awareness of the norms, values, and beliefs of own and other cultures.
3. To provide the conventions which govern the communicative behaviour of foreigners in specific environments.
4. To understand the relationship between context, culture, and the language.
5. To become aware of sensitivities and other variables that hinder successful intercultural communication” (Zarrinabadi, 2017).

14 Cultural Hybridisation

“With increasing contact with other cultures, Especially English-speaking Western cultures, Korean cultures are rapidly changing in every aspect of their lifestyle and belief systems, and the Christian and modern democratic and rational Western ideology emphasising individualism and rationalism is in stark contrast to the traditional Korean value system. However widespread and strong Western influence may be, the deep-seated cultural characteristics are not so easily erased or changed because the basic elements crucial to the culture are fused into their thought and language patterns” (Lee, 2017, p. 48).

“If we apply Schwartz’s (1992) value clusters to the present Korean society with a mixture of the traditional values and the newly introduced American values, we may characterise it as strong in power, achievement, hedonism, universalism, tradition, conformity, and security while still weak in such categories as stimulation, self-direction, and benevolence” (Lee, 2017, p. 49).

“In conclusion, in contrast to American or other Western cultures characterised as individualistic, rational, rule-oriented with low-context style of communication preferring clear and explicit verbal expressions, Koreans may be characterised as collectivist, hierarchical, compassionate, hedonistic, and creative with positive and negative features for each of them with high-context style of communication in which lots of important messages are not verbally expressed but assumed to be understood by the group members” (Lee, 2017, p. 51).

15 Cultural Paradigms

“Perhaps the most crucial shortcoming of these associations in failing to realise communication’s recognition as a bona fide academic discipline is that their interests are not in the whole discipline itself, but in narrow fields within the discipline. Interpersonal and small group communication research has by and large been conducted by social psychologists, while sociologists have done much of the work in mass communication, and business administration experts have studied organisational communication. The Japanese population of communication scholars has been made to integrate these interests into one single, comprehensive community of communication specialists” (Taki, 2017, p. 55).

“Australian multiculturalism has... been relatively pragmatic in its nature, promoting social integration and national cohesion rather than celebrating cultural diversity as an end in itself” (Flew, 2017, p. 59).

“Australian multiculturalism has been criticised for being more concerned with facilitating ethnic community leader’s engagement rather than promoting social justice and addressing race-based inequalities, and for being insufficiently concerned with diversifying ‘core’ cultural and political institutions” (Flew, 2017, p. 60).

“The economic shift towards Asia creates an imperative that all Australians become more ‘Asia-literate’, which requires a better understanding of Asian culture and customs as well as language” (Flew, 2017, p. 61).

16 Process-Based Intercultural Networks

“Moreau et al. (2014) defined communication as dynamic, irreversible, proactive, interactive, and contextual, shaped by cultural, social, and personal factors, culture is understood as dynamic, interconnected, learned, transmitted, symbolic, shared, and necessary for interpretation of other’s behaviour. Intercultural communication addresses meaning systems, which are made-up of a common human core, or cultural universals, that every human being shares generally, such as language, authority structures, and institutions; cultural specifics, or particular ways of seeing the world and specific instances of cultural universals developed by a given culture; personal specifics, and encounter specifics, all of which are involved in the coding, interpretive, and response system happening between two persons” (Fritz, 2017, p. 64).

17 Adaptable Cultural Associations

“Christian scholars note that intercultural encounters have historically involved exchanges of ideas, technology, and practices; there is no intercultural contact that does not, by definition, involve some form of influence” (Fritz, 2017, p. 64).

“Communication between Muslims and non-Muslims emphasises the rights and the coexistence of non-Muslims in society and the maintenance of harmonious relationships. In addition, the teachings of Islam encourage pluralism and recognise diversity; in fact, any communication and relationship efforts are encouraged as long as they are not against the basic principles of Islam” (Bakar & Nordin, 2017, p. 69)

“From a Buddhist perspective, ICC can be defined as a process of encoding and decoding messages in an intercultural context characterised by understanding interdependent organisation, nonviolence, and mindfulness among other things” (Dorjee, 2017, p. 71).

“According to Buddhism, ICC has to be ethical and nonviolent communication. Intercultural communicators should verbally and nonverbally communicate to each other non-violently. Nonviolent communication involves concern for others such as respect and acceptance” (Dorjee, 2017, p. 72).

18 Summary

“The world is more interconnected and interdependent, and this is the new reality. Global peace, harmony, prosperity, and survival are inextricably bound with resolving issues through nonviolence and dialogue” (Dorjee, 2017, p. 73).

“Gudykunst (2005) theorises that effective ICC is possible if intercultural communicators mindfully manage their anxiety and uncertainty in interactions. Mindfulness enables intercultural interactants to be ethnorelative and situationally adapt to the pragmatic needs while respecting each other’s communication styles. Mindfulness leads to shared intercultural understanding” (Dorjee, 2017, p. 73).

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