

Map of the Book

Unit	Texts	Reading Skills
<p>Unit 1 The Nature of Language P.1</p>	<p>Text A The Complexity of Language by David Crystal P.2</p> <p>Text B Taking Stock of Language by Vyvyan Evans P.17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan for main ideas • Identify topic sentences • Identify supporting details
<p>Unit 2 Functions of Language P.25</p>	<p>Text A What Is Language for? by Jean Aitchison P.26</p> <p>Text B The Form and Function of Language by Thomas E. Payne P.41</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between general and specific statements • Scan for a global understanding of the text • Read charts, graphs and tables to organize and interpret information
<p>Unit 3 Verbal and Non-verbal Communication P.49</p>	<p>Text A The Pragmatics of Cross-cultural Communication by Deborah Tannen P.50</p> <p>Text B Body Language and Other Cultures by Kevin Hogan P.68</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use context to understand a new word • Identify cohesive devices • Predict the content of an upcoming sentence/ paragraph
<p>Unit 4 Language Learning P.75</p>	<p>Text A How Do We Acquire Language? by Donna Jo Napoli P.76</p> <p>Text B Second Language Acquisition by Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman and Nina Hyams P.96</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize the main idea of each paragraph • Identify topic sentences and key words • Identify supporting details

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Communicative Competence	Critical Thinking	Intercultural Competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrate your points with appropriate examples • Use topic sentences and supporting sentences to organize your presentation/essay • Be aware of different styles in communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make inferences and interpretations based on linguistic facts • Evaluate the credibility of statements • Note and reflect on significant similarities and differences between two languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and articulate similarities and differences between different languages and cultures • Be aware of the links between cultural differences and language differences • Devalue discriminations against a language or culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrate your points with appropriate examples • Use figures of speech to help illustrate your points • Differentiate informative and affective uses of language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the logical strengths of the author's evidence and arguments • Organize and present your reasoning using diagrams • Identify and critique assumptions behind statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate linguistic and cultural diversity • Interpret language differences culturally • Have curiosity in and be ready to explore other languages and cultures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a coherent and cohesive oral/written discourse • Use topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences in your presentation/essay • Communicate constructively in team work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of personal experience as evidence in argumentation • Organize your arguments using an outline • Note and reflect on the differences between academic writing and everyday writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify similarities and differences in non-verbal communication across cultures • Be aware of multiple levels of differences on which cross-cultural communication can falter • Interpret communication behaviors from cultural and historical perspectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrate your points with appropriate examples • Use topic sentences and supporting sentences to organize your presentation/essay • Use euphemisms for possibly impolite expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different examples to support different aspects of an idea • Use observation and literature to collect first-hand and second-hand evidence • Critique a "popular" folk theory with exemplification and reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of the differences and similarities between English and Chinese euphemisms • Compare the Chinese language and the English language in terms of L1 and L2 learning • Understand the effects of cultural differences on communication and language learning

Reading Critically 1

Unit	Texts	Reading Skills
<p>Unit 5 Language and Thinking P.103</p>	<p>Text A Powerful Mental Blocks by Richard D. Lewis P.104</p> <p>Text B Does Language Equal Thought? by Donna Jo Napoli P.120</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the structure of the text • Use sub-titles to facilitate reading • Analyze multiple meanings and usages of a word in context
<p>Unit 6 Cultural Values P.131</p>	<p>Text A Jeaning of America by John Fiske P.132</p> <p>Text B Individualism by Gary Althen P.147</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify topic sentences • Identify supporting details • Interpret the author's intention
<p>Unit 7 Cultural Stereotypes P.155</p>	<p>Text A Japanese Emotionality by David Matsumoto P.156</p> <p>Text B The Language of Discretion by Amy Tan P.175</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify cohesive devices • Read tables and diagrams • Scan a book for required information
<p>Unit 8 Ethnocentrism P.185</p>	<p>Text A The Seven Biases of Eurocentrism by Ali A. Mazrui P.186</p> <p>Text B Body Ritual Among the Nacirema by Horace Miner P.202</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand words and expressions in context • Identify the structure of the text • Relate new information to old information

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Communicative Competence	Critical Thinking	Intercultural Competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrate your points with appropriate examples • Adopt and argue for a perspective in a pro-con debate • Interpret diagrams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question the author's interpretation of a fact and reinterpret the fact • Critique opinions with pro and con examples • Examine an issue from different/contradicting perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the different ways of thinking as reflected in different languages • Be aware of possible different connotations of seemingly equivalent concepts in different languages • Understand the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis about language-thought relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a coherent and cohesive discourse • Be aware of meanings expressed by non-verbal communication • Organize a group discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the meanings of the key concepts in an article • Analyze and improve a research design • Anticipate and address counter arguments that readers may have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the meaning of popular culture across cultures • Be able to interpret American cultural products such as jeans • Be able to evaluate critically American and Chinese core values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a written/oral report professionally • Use cohesive devices and hedges appropriately • Be aware of the features of academic writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand designs of comparative studies • Reflect on the use of personal thoughts, behaviors and experiences in academic contexts • Debunk stereotypes with exemplification and reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the concept of cultural stereotype and differentiate it from prejudice and cultural generalization • Avoid stereotyping and being stereotyped in both intercultural and intracultural contexts • Be aware of cross-cultural differences in emotional expressions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid ethnocentric expressions in your language • Write a profile of a historical figure and present it in class • Use figures of speech to add flavor to your language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish Eurocentric biases in world history • Analyze a historical event using both an inclusive and an interactive approach • Compare the images of historical figures in literature and in the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop insights into Muslim history and Asian and African cultures • Interpret cultural rituals from a new perspective • Investigate American Exceptionalism and Sinocentrism

Reading Critically 1

Unit	Texts	Reading Skills
<p>Unit 9 Globalization P.209</p>	<p>Text A My Mother's English by Amy Tan P.210</p> <p>Text B World-wise Kids by Nina Killham P.225</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envision the audience in the author's mind • Check and monitor your comprehension • Analyze the author's writing techniques
<p>Unit 10 Cultural Diversity P.231</p>	<p>Text A The Use of Time by Richard D. Lewis P.232</p> <p>Text B How Time Flies by Laura Spinney P.250</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan for required information • Understand words and expressions in context • Summarize the main ideas of the text
<p>Unit 11 Language and Gender P.257</p>	<p>Text A Do Men and Women Talk Differently? by Donna Jo Napoli P.258</p> <p>Text B Marked Women, Unmarked Men by Deborah Tannen P.274</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the structure of the text • Relate new information to old information • Interpret what the author means in context
<p>Unit 12 Language and Politics P.283</p>	<p>Text A Political Correctness by David Crystal P.284</p> <p>Text B Foul Play: Sports Metaphors as Public Doublepeak by Francine Hardaway P.295</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check and monitor your comprehension • Be able to define the key concepts in the text • Analyze the theme, style and cohesive devices of the text to improve comprehension

Map of the Book

Communicative Competence	Critical Thinking	Intercultural Competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to use some idiomatic expressions • Use figures of speech to help clarify your points • Work in team and communicate constructively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of anecdotes as evidence • Evaluate the impact of globalization on language • Generate evidence by conducting an interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret the implications of different types of Englishes • Understand the past and present of Asian/Chinese Americans • Understand Global Nomads as a cultural phenomenon in the age of globalization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw diagrams to illustrate your points • Learn to paraphrase • Use figures of speech to help clarify your points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use figures and graphs to visualize concepts and relationships • Refine generalizations about cultures and be aware of the danger of overgeneralizations • Evaluate the pros and cons of cultural diversity and other cultural phenomena 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate cultural diversity • Understand different views of time across cultures • Interpret the impact of worldview on other aspects of culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use gender-neutral language to avoid gender inequality • Distinguish standard vs. non-standard forms • Be aware of different types of tag questions and use them appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge popular claims on gender differences in language use • Control variables in sociolinguistic studies • Compare the ways in which men and women use language and are depicted in language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the meaning of feminism in the Western context • Interpret gender differences from a cultural perspective • Understand gender issues across cultures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to use both formal and informal styles in your communication • Be able to use rhetorical strategies • Illustrate your points in a logical, structured manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore implications and consequences of politically correct words • Assess general claims related to language and politics • Formulate your own balanced view regarding issues of politics and language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be ready to explore and experience other cultures • Develop analytical empathy for victims of derogatory terms • Understand the importance of sports in American culture

3 Unit

Verbal and Non-verbal Communication



As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, it is unavoidable that different cultures will meet, conflict, and blend with each other. People from different cultures find it hard to communicate not only due to language barriers but also because of differences in their non-verbal behaviors. This unit will guide you to explore some interesting problems in cross-cultural communication arising from discrepant verbal and non-verbal behaviors across cultures.

Text A explores the paralinguistic disparities in cross-cultural communication, ranging from pacing and intonation to indirectness and listenership. Text B focuses on the similarities and differences in body language between different cultures and the common misunderstandings they bring about, with special reference to the influence of culture and history. It also points to some ways in which these misunderstandings can be overcome.

Text A

The Pragmatics of Cross-cultural Communication

Deborah Tannen

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1 In this paper, I will illustrate the range of aspects of communication that can vary from culture to culture by discussing and exemplifying eight levels of differences in signalling how speakers mean what they say. These aspects of ways of speaking are not extra-linguistic nor even paralinguistic but are the essence of language. Just as physicists understand the nature of physical elements by observing their behavior in various environments and in interaction with other elements, so we come to understand the nature of language by observing it in communication and in contact with other systems of communication. In analyzing the pragmatics of cross-cultural communication, we are analyzing language itself.

II. LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION DIFFERENCES

- 2 What is it that can be culturally relative in communication? The answer is, just about everything—all the aspects of what to say and how to say it.

2.1 When to talk

- 3 To start on the most general level, the question of when to talk is culturally relative. I had an opportunity to see the extent to which this is true when I recently co-edited a collection of papers on the topic of silence (Tannen and Saville-Troike). Moreover, cultures differ with respect to what is perceived as silence and when it is deemed appropriate.
- 4 People experience silence when they think there could or should be talk. If two people are sitting together, one may think there's a silence when the other does not. Scollon points out that Athabaskan Indians consider it inappropriate to talk to strangers, and that this has an odd effect when an Athabaskan meets a non-Athabaskan, white or black. One wants to get to know the other by talking, and the other feels it is inappropriate to talk until they know each other.

- 5 The result of this kind of difference is cross-cultural stereotyping. Non-Athabaskans conclude that Indians are sullen, uncooperative, even stupid, because they don't talk in situations where the non-Athabaskans expect them to talk (hence they have nothing to say or refuse to say what's on their minds). And on the other side, as Basso demonstrates for the Western Apache, Athabaskan Indians have negative stereotypes of non-Athabaskans as ridiculously garrulous and also hypocritical because they act as if they're your friends when they're not.
- 6 Such mutual negative stereotypes are found in country after country. Those who expect more talk stereotype the more silent group as uncooperative and stupid. Those who use less talk think of the more talkative group as pushy, hypocritical, and untrustworthy. This was found, for example, among Finns as compared to Swedes, and even among inhabitants of different parts of Finland (Lehtonen and Sajavaara). The same pattern is seen in the United States in the mutual negative stereotypes of New Yorkers and non-New Yorkers.

2.2 What to say

- 7 Once a speaker decides to talk, what is it appropriate to say? Can one ask questions, and what can one ask them about? Eades reports that Australian Aborigines never ask the question "Why?" Suzanne Scollon finds that Alaskan Athabaskans rarely ask questions. For these and other speakers, questions are regarded as too powerful to use, because they demand a response.
- 8 Many of us take it for granted that questions are basic to the educational setting. How would one learn anything if one didn't ask? Goody found, however, that in a learning situation in Gonja, no questions were ever asked. As she puts it, Gonjans are so aware of the indirect function of questions to imply unstated meaning that "the pure information question hasn't got a chance."
- 9 A universal way of communicating is telling stories. But when are they told? How many can be told? What can they be about? What can the point be, and how is the point communicated?
- 10 In my research I found that New Yorkers of Jewish background were more likely than their California friends to tell stories, and their stories were more likely to be about their personal experience. The non-Jewish Californians in the conversation I studied tended to talk about events that happened to them, without focusing on how they felt about those events. Members of each group often responded to the stories told by members of the other group with subtle signs of impatience or incomprehension like "Yeah, and?" or "What does it mean?"

- 11 Stories are just one of a range of conversational acts which seem obviously appropriate when they pop out of our mouths, but may not seem appropriate to those whose ears they pop into—especially if the speaker and hearer have different cultural backgrounds. For example, when and how and about what can jokes be told? When is it appropriate to use irony and sarcasm, and how are they signalled? When can advice or information be solicited or offered—and how? How and when are compliments given and taken?
- 12 A personal experience in Greece made me aware of the cultural convention involved in exchanging compliments, which I, in my naive pre-linguist state, had assumed to be evidence of personality. I was invited to join a dinner party at the home of a man who was an excellent cook. He had prepared an elaborate dinner, including many small individually-prepared delicacies. During dinner, I complimented the food: “These are delicious.” My host agreed: “Yes they are delicious.” I praised: “It must have taken hours to prepare.” “Oh, yes,” he agreed. “These take many hours to prepare.” Taking for granted that a host should not compliment his or her own cooking and should minimize his or her effort, I decided that this host was egotistical.
- 13 When leaving the dinner party, I said, “Thank you for the wonderful meal.” And the host retorted, “What, those little nothings?” with a dismissing wave of his hand in the direction of the table and a self-deprecating grimace on his face. I was surprised again, and even felt hurt, as if he were implying I had been making too big a deal about the effort involved in preparing the meal. I expected him to accept the compliment this time, saying something like, “The pleasure was mine; come again.”
- 14 So I saw that we differed not about whether compliments should be accepted or deflected, but rather which compliments should be accepted and which deflected—and how. What I had interpreted as a personality characteristic was a cultural convention. This interpretation was repeatedly confirmed when I heard other Greek speakers accepting and turning aside compliments in similar ways.
- 15 In cross-cultural communication it is difficult to assess personality characteristics, because such judgements are always measured against cultural standards. If we don’t know the standard, we can’t gauge the divergence from it, as Sapir observed in discussing the intriguing question of the relationship between culture and personality.

2.3 Pacing and pausing

- 16 The next level of cross-cultural difference is that of the conversational control

mechanisms of pacing and pausing. How fast does one speak, and how long does one wait following another speaker's utterance, before concluding the other has no more to say? Differences in expectations about these matters can bring a conversation to an end.

- 17 If two people who are talking have even slightly different expectations about how long to wait between turns, then the person who expects a slightly shorter pause will take a turn first—filling and thus curtailing the pause that the other is waiting for. I had a British friend who I thought never had anything to say (which was becoming rather annoying) until I learned that she was waiting for a pause to take her turn—a pause of a length that never occurred around me, because before it did, I perceived an uncomfortable silence which I kindly headed off by talking.
- 18 Even being married is no proof against mutual misinterpretation. I am frequently thanked by readers and audience members who tell me that these kinds of slightly different habits explain misunderstandings that have plagued them their entire married lives. Slightly slower partners accuse faster ones of not giving them a chance to talk and not being interested in what they have to say. Slightly faster partners accuse slower ones of not talking to them and not saying what's on their minds.
- 19 One might think that knowing each other a long time would lead to mutual understanding of style. But reactions to and interpretations of subtle signals like pacing and pausing are automatic and seemingly self-evident. Rather than affecting interpretations of style, they affect interpretations of personality and intentions. Furthermore, negative conclusions, such as the impression that the other has nothing to say, are continually reinforced by observation and experience. One has no reason to revise such evaluations.
- 20 This level of processing is automatic. One doesn't stop and ask oneself, "Now how many milliseconds shall I wait?" One simply perceives whether or not someone wants to talk and acts accordingly.

2.4 Listenership

- 21 Another level of processing in conversation that is automatic and taken for granted is showing listenership. One way is through gaze. Erickson and Shultz found that white participants in counseling interviews maintained eye gaze when listening and frequently broke their gaze when speaking. Blacks in the study did the opposite. They maintained steady eye contact when speaking and frequently broke their gaze when listening.

- 22 This meant that when a white speaker talked to a black listener, s/he got the feeling that the listener wasn't paying attention because the expected sign of attention—steady gaze—wasn't there. And when the white speaker sent a small signal asking for confirmation of comprehension, the black listener often missed it because s/he was looking away. So the speaker said the same thing again, in simpler terms—talking down. When the white was the listener, the black speaker's steady gaze seemed overbearing.
- 23 I found that New Yorkers in my study had an enthusiastic way of showing listenership—for example, shouting “Wow!” or “No kidding!” This was understood as a sign of attention and encouragement by speakers who shared that style. But such loud responses frightened and confused the Californians—sometimes to the point of stopping them dead in their vocal tracks.
- 24 If one's speaking habits create a strange reaction in a listener, one rarely realizes that the strange behavior is a reaction to one's own way of talking. One thinks, instead, that the other has strange speaking habits—or is a strange person. The New Yorkers never suspected why the Californians stopped. All they could see was that they kept hesitating and not getting on with their talk. And the Californians never suspected that the New Yorkers were simply being appreciative listeners.

2.5 Intonation

- 25 Another level of difference is intonation. Here I will borrow an example from the work of Gumperz. In London's Heathrow Airport, airport staff who ate in the employees' cafeteria complained about rudeness by cafeteria employees from India and Pakistan who had been hired for jobs traditionally held by British women. And the Asian women complained of discrimination. Gumperz taped talk on the job to see what was going on, and had Asian and British employees listen to the tape together.
- 26 When a customer coming through the cafeteria line requested meat, the server had to find out if he wanted gravy on it. The British women asked, “Gravy?” The Asian women also said “Gravy.” But instead of rising, their intonation fell at the end. During the workshop session, the Asian women said they couldn't see why they were getting negative reactions, since they were saying the same thing as the British women. But the British women pointed out that although they were saying the same word, they weren't saying the same thing. “Gravy?” with question intonation means “Would you like gravy?” The same word spoken with falling intonation seems to mean, “This is gravy. Take it or leave it.”

- 27 Tiny differences in intonation and prosody can throw an interaction completely off without the speakers knowing what caused the problem. Intonation is made up of degrees and shifts in pitch, loudness, and rhythm which make up every utterance. There are cultural differences in how these little signals are used, both to do conversational business as usual, and also to express special meanings or emotions. When intonational business-as-usual is mistaken for emotional expression, the result is miscommunication. As E. M. Forster put it in *A Passage to India*, a novel which brilliantly portrays the tragic consequences of cross-cultural communication, “A pause in the wrong place, an intonation misunderstood, and a whole conversation went awry.”
- 28 Gumperz has shown, for example, that whereas speakers of British English use loudness only when they are angry, speakers of Indian English use it to get the floor. So when an Indian speaker is trying to get the floor, the British speaker thinks s/he is getting angry—and gets angry in response. The result, both agree, is a heated interchange, but each thinks the other introduced the emotional tone into the conversation.

2.6 Formulaicity

- 29 The next level of cross-cultural difference is the question of what is conventional and what is novel in a language. When I first visited Greece, I had the impression that one after another individual Greek that I met was a poetic soul—until I heard the same poetic usage so often that I realized they were all uttering conventional truisms that sounded novel and poetic to me because I wasn’t familiar with the convention. Our native talk is full of figures of speech which we don’t recognize as such until we hear them fractured or altered by non-native speakers (or true poets).

2.7 Indirectness

- 30 Communication in any culture is a matter of indirectness. Only a part of meaning resides in the words spoken; the largest part is communicated by hints, assumptions, and audience filling-in from context and prior experience. Yet how to be indirect is culturally relative.
- 31 Americans as a group tend to ignore or even rail against indirectness. We believe that words should say what they mean and people should be accountable only for what they say in words. We tend to forget the importance of the interpersonal level of interaction and think that in some (if not most or even all) instances, only the “content” counts.
- 32 This is the value associated with “getting down to brass tacks” and “sticking

to facts”—values taken for granted in American business and education, and perhaps more generally by American men. But it gets American businessmen in trouble when they try to skip the small talk and get right down to business with Japanese, Arab, or Mediterranean counterparts, for whom elaborate “small talk” is big and essential, furnishing the foundation for any business dealings.

- 33 Non-Americans, and American women, more often realize that much of what is meant cannot be said outright. This introduces the enormous problem, even within a culture, of figuring out what is meant that is not said. Cross-culturally it becomes a maddening guessing game that most entrants lose.
- 34 In an article on Greek *vs.* American and male *vs.* female uses of indirectness, I demonstrate the operation and benefits of indirectness with the following example. A Greek woman told me that when she asked her father (as a girl) or her husband (as an adult) whether or not she could go somewhere, he would never say no. If he said, “If you want, you can go,” she knew he didn’t want her to. If he really thought it was a good idea he would be enthusiastic: “Yes, of course. Go.” She knew from the way he said yes whether he meant yes or no.
- 35 This strikes many Americans as hypocritical. Why didn’t he say what he meant? Well, he did say what he meant in a way she had no trouble understanding. But if a Greek American cousin came to visit the family and asked her uncle if she could do something and he answered in a way his daughter always understood, the cousin would be likely to take his equivocal response literally. Although they spoke the same language—Greek—they would be victims of cross-cultural miscommunication.
- 36 Now that commerce with Japan is widespread, there are frequent reports of frustration by Americans because polite Japanese never say no. One must understand from how they say yes whether or not they mean it. Since Americans don’t know the system, they don’t know what signals to look for—even if they realize (which most don’t) that yes often means no.

2.8 Cohesion and coherence

- 37 I have defined cohesion as “surface level ties showing relationships among elements” in discourse, and coherence as “organizing structure making the words and sentences into a unified discourse that has cultural significance.”
- 38 Another example from the work of Gumperz illustrates cohesion. Indian speakers often emphasize the sentence immediately preceding their main point, and then utter the main point in a lower voice—as if for dramatic effect. But

British English speakers expect the main point to be emphasized, so by the time the Indian is saying the main point, the British listener has switched off.

- 39 Kaplan illustrated differences in establishing coherence (though he didn't use that term) in ESL essays. Some very interesting current work on cross-cultural discourse structure is being done by Koch on Arabic vs. English. Argumentation in Arabic, she shows, is by accretion and repetition—highlighting by saying over and over the important point, rather than building up to it, as Americans expect. To Americans such repetition seems pointless and not like argumentation at all.
- 40 Habits of cohesion and coherence are very resistant to change. One who learns the explicit vocabulary and grammar of a new language is likely to stuff it into the implicit paralinguistic and discourse casings of the native communicative system.

III. SUMMARY—THE PRAGMATICS OF COMMUNICATION

- 41 I have described eight levels of differences on which cross-cultural communication can falter: when to talk; what to say; pacing and pausing; listenership; intonation and prosody; formulaicity; indirectness; and cohesion and coherence. This list also describes the ways that meaning is communicated in talk. Communication is, by its very nature, culturally relative. Ways of communicating meaning in talk are learned in the speech community, that is by talking to people with whom one identifies socially. As social networks are always local, not global, people in different communities have different ways of using linguistic means to communicative ends, and their ways of talking, like other cultural patterns, define them as a community. This illustrates Hall's assertion that culture is communication. To the extent that no two people have exactly the same communicative background, to that extent, all communication is cross-cultural, and understanding cross-cultural communication is a means to understanding language. At the same time, it is also a means to understanding and, one hopes, improving problems and tasks facing the world and the people in it, including the task of teaching and learning new languages.

(3,155 words)



Preparatory Work

- (1) The author of this article, Deborah Tannen, is a famous American linguist and author. Find out more information about her by visiting her website <https://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/tannend/>.

Academic interests: _____

Main publications: _____

- (2) Tannen mentions a number of scholars in this text. Please find out more information about the following four linguists/writers on the Internet and briefly summarize their major contributions.

Edward Sapir: _____

John Joseph Gumperz: _____

E. M. Forster: _____

Robert Kaplan: _____

- (3) As a subfield of linguistics originating in the 1960s, pragmatics (语用学) has grown rapidly in the last few decades. Please search the Internet and the library to find out what pragmatics is about and list three definitions for it below.

(4) Cohesion and coherence are two desirable linguistic qualities of oral or written texts. Following Tannen's brief definitions in Section 2.8, please illustrate the two terms in more details with your own examples below:

Cohesion: _____

Coherence: _____

(5) To analyze the cross-cultural differences in human communication, Tannen lists a few means of non-verbal communication, such as silence and pausing. Please think of some examples from your own experience to illustrate how silence and pauses can be used in our daily communication.



Critical Reading

I. Understanding the text

1. Comprehension check

Answering the following questions will help you understand the main idea and the organization of the text better. Try to answer them by yourself, and then discuss them with your partner.

- (1) What is the main purpose of this article?
- (2) According to Tannen, in what way does the study of cross-cultural communication contribute to linguistic explorations?
- (3) Which levels of communication difference are labeled automatic processing in the text? Why?
- (4) In Part II, Tannen specifically deals with cross-cultural differences in communication. In what order does she illustrate the eight levels of communication difference and why?
- (5) Tannen refers to a number of personal stories in Part II. For example, she mentions her own experience in Greece twice. What conclusion does she want us to draw from her personal experience?
- (6) The eight sections of Part II are not organized in the same way. Section 2.3, for example, puts forward a question at the beginning and then tries to answer it, while Section 2.5 simply starts with an example. Read the eight sections again and describe how they are structured.
- (7) Why does the author conclude that “all communication is cross-cultural” and that “communication, by its very nature, is culturally relative”? Do you agree with her on this point? Why or why not?

2. Summary writing

Write a short summary of the text in about 150 words. Try to cover all the key questions and concepts, paying attention to their length in the original text.

II. Evaluation and exploration

I. Evaluating the text

- (1) In this article Tannen uses quite a few anecdotes or personal experiences to support her argument. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of personal experiences as evidence in argumentation.
- (2) Besides personal experiences, Tannen uses many other pieces of evidence as well. Find them out and discuss if they are appropriately used.
- (3) In the text, Tannen demonstrates eight levels or categories of differences in cross-cultural communication. Is this an exhaustive list? Besides these eight levels, what other levels can you think of? Can you illustrate them with your own examples?

2. Exploring beyond the text

(I) Questions for exploration

The following questions will take you beyond the text. Form groups of four or five and discuss these questions.

- (1) In Part II, the author asks a number of questions. Locate all of them and consider if they are equally important in structuring the text. Then describe the different ways in which the following questions structure the text.
 - a. What is it that can be culturally relative in communication? (Para. 2)
 - b. Once a speaker decides to talk, what is it appropriate to say? Can one ask questions, and what can one ask them about? (Para. 7)
 - c. Many of us take it for granted that questions are basic to the educational setting. How would one learn anything if one didn't ask? (Para. 8)
- (2) The author claims that communication in any culture is a matter of indirectness and that how to be indirect is culturally relative. Can you give some evidence to support/challenge this opinion?
- (3) Some differences in non-verbal communication are more interpersonal than cross-cultural. Can you find some examples for this? (e.g., management of silence, gaze)



Language Enhancement

I. Words and phrases

I. Adverbs and prepositions

Complete the following sentences by filling in each blank with an appropriate adverb or preposition from the alternatives given in brackets.

- (1) Tiny differences in intonation and prosody can throw an interaction completely _____ (off/on) without the speakers knowing what caused the problem.
- (2) The searchlights throw _____ (off/out) powerful beams.
- (3) The rising sun threw shadows _____ (across/off/on) the lawn.
- (4) He threw _____ (away/off) a chance to make a fortune.
- (5) She threw _____ (over/up) his past to him whenever they argued.
- (6) If two people who are talking have even slightly different expectations about how long to wait _____ (for/between) turns, then the person who expects a slightly shorter pause will take a turn first—filling and thus curtailing the pause that the other is waiting _____ (/ /for).
- (7) Such mutual negative stereotypes are found in country _____ (throughout/ from/after) country.
- (8) Stories are just one of a range of conversational acts which seem obviously appropriate when they pop _____ (from/off/out of) our mouths, but may not seem appropriate to those whose ears they pop _____ (into/out)—especially if the speaker and hearer have different cultural backgrounds.
- (9) She should pop _____ (off/up/out of) back to Scotland.
- (10) He seems to pop _____ (into/off/up) in the most unlikely places.
- (11) Miss Bao flushed crimson and her big eyes seemed about to pop _____ (out of/up/off) their sockets.

2. Verbs

Complete the following sentences by filling in each blank with an appropriate verb from the box below. Change its form if necessary. Some of the verbs may be used more than once.

vary	differ	illustrate	exemplify	expound
interpret	demonstrate	elucidate	signal	mean
say	discuss			

- (1) I will _____ the range of aspects of communication that can _____ from culture to culture by _____ and _____ eight levels of differences in _____ how speakers _____ what they _____.
- (2) As opinions _____ on that point, no decision can be reached.
- (3) The two theories of non-verbal communication _____ from each other in many ways.
- (4) The textbook is adequately _____ with photographs and diagrams.
- (5) A good preacher usually _____ each point that he seeks to impress on his congregation.
- (6) Sir A. Eddington in two masterly chapters _____ the law of gravitation.
- (7) Paul was a person who _____ all his sentiments.
- (8) The author's linguistic erudition allows him to consult the original sources and to _____ and _____ them authentically.

3. Words in context

In the following sentences, the highlighted words may be new to you. Try to guess their meanings before checking a dictionary and then explain how you made your guesses.

- (1) When it comes to insulting and vulgar gestures, there are tremendous differences among cultures. What is acceptable and interpreted positively in one culture can easily be interpreted as a **grievous** insult in other cultures.
- (2) Strangers may appear not to be **hostile**, but they are still not to be trusted in the same full sense that neighbors and **kinfolk** can be trusted.

- (3) Words are the **wrapping** for your communications, and if you want your audience to **unwrap** what you say, you need to warm up your language.
- (4) When Churchill used words like “beaches” and “fields,” he knew that they would **invoke** a variety of sensory responses in his audience: the sight of the sand and the blue sky; the sound of the waves **lapping** on the seashore and the smell of the sea.
- (5) If you say the word “acquaintance” to young children, they’ll give you a blank look. But follow it with the word “friend” and their eyes will light up as the word **conjures** up an image of someone they love.

II. Sentences and discourse

I. Paraphrasing

Paraphrase the following sentences, paying special attention to the highlighted parts. You may need to refer back to the context in which they are used.

- (1) Scollon points out that Athabaskan Indians consider it inappropriate to talk to strangers, and that this has an odd effect when an Athabaskan meets a non-Athabaskan, white or black. **One wants to get to know the other by talking, and the other feels it is inappropriate to talk until they know each other.** (Text A, Para. 4)
- (2) As she puts it, Gonjans are so aware of the indirect function of questions to imply unstated meaning that **“the pure information question hasn’t got a chance.”** (Text A, Para. 8)
- (3) This is the value associated with **“getting down to brass tacks” and “sticking to facts”**—values taken for granted in American business and education, and perhaps more generally by American men. (Text A, Para. 32)
- (4) To the extent that no two people have exactly the same communicative background, to that extent, all communication is cross-cultural, and **understanding cross-cultural communication is a means to understanding language. At the same time, it is also a means to understanding and, one hopes, improving problems and tasks facing the world and the people in it, including the task of teaching and learning new languages.** (Text A, Para. 41)

2. Translation

Translate the following sentences. Use the expressions in brackets to help you if you like.

- (1) Just as physicists understand the nature of physical elements by observing their behavior in various environments and in interaction with other elements, so we come to understand the nature of language by observing it in communication and in contact with other systems of communication. (Text A, Para. 1)
- (2) One who learns the explicit vocabulary and grammar of a new language is likely to stuff it into the implicit paralinguistic and discourse casings of the native communicative system. (Text A, Para. 40)
- (3) As social networks are always local, not global, people in different communities have different ways of using linguistic means to communicative ends, and their ways of talking, like other cultural patterns, define them as a community. (Text A, Para. 41)
- (4) 你很可能发现很多人对语言的形式和功能还抱有老一套的看法。(stereotype)
- (5) 请让我详细地说明我的提议。(elaborate)
- (6) 失控的通货膨胀加深了工薪阶层的痛苦。(plague)
- (7) 这样的笑话容易加重种族偏见。(reinforce)

3. Paragraph completion

Complete the following paragraph with the best choices from the box below, and then explain why you made these choices.

The globe is a linguistically rich and complex home for more than six billion inhabitants. (1) _____ There were around 6,000 languages in 2000. (2) _____ The discrepancy may appear extreme, but debate continues on the integrity of languages and the demarcation between language, pidgin, creole and dialect, among other factors that make counting uncertain. With 6,000 languages across the globe, we should be happy, but, as a linguist, I am not. (3) _____—but the world is not like that.

- A. Many of these languages remain unrecorded, as the speakers remain secure but isolated.
- B. It may not be as linguistically rich as it was in the past.

- C. In an ideal world, 6,000 languages spread evenly across six billion potential speakers could lead to one million speakers of each, ensuring the continuity of all languages.
- D. Estimates suggest that, in the New World, there were 100 million inhabitants before European contact, but only one million 200 years later.
- E. Others place the figure as low as 3,000, or as high as 10,000.

4. Rhetorical devices

To add flavor to her language, the author employs several rhetorical devices in illustrating cross-cultural differences. Study the following sentences carefully and identify those devices. Then write down three sentences of your own, each making use of one of the rhetorical devices identified.

- (1) Many of us take it for granted that questions are basic to the educational setting. How would one learn anything if one didn't ask? (Text A, Para. 8)
- (2) ...we differed not about whether compliments should be accepted or deflected, but rather which compliments should be accepted and which deflected. (Text A, Para. 14)
- (3) Slightly slower partners accuse faster ones of not giving them a chance to talk and not being interested in what they have to say. Slightly faster partners accuse slower ones of not talking to them and not saying what's on their minds. (Text A, Para. 18)
- (4) As E. M. Forster put it in *A Passage to India*, a novel which brilliantly portrays the tragic consequences of cross-cultural communication, "A pause in the wrong place, an intonation misunderstood, and a whole conversation went awry." (Text A, Para. 27)

Your own sentences:

(1) _____

Rhetorical device used: _____

(2) _____

Rhetorical device used: _____

(3) _____

Rhetorical device used: _____

Text B

Body Language and Other Cultures

Kevin Hogan

- 1 Body language is fascinating enough in respect to American culture, but it becomes truly amazing when examined with respect to other cultures around the world. Some non-verbal behaviors are practically universal and have the same meaning no matter where you go. Others have dramatically different meanings in different countries or regions.
- 2 Knowing the difference between what is acceptable and unacceptable in a given culture is not only interesting, it is increasingly critical in our global economy where cultures interact every day and in multiple ways. Whether you are a traveler visiting different countries, a business person with international dealings, or simply someone who interacts with diverse people every day, it is well worth the time and effort to learn as much as you can about body language and other cultures.

Global similarities and differences

- 3 There are a surprising number of similarities in some body language across cultures, even across cultures separated by vast distances and with no interaction at all. How is this possible? How can one non-verbal behavior mean the same thing in two places located on opposite sides of the planet? The answer, most researchers agree, is based on preprogrammed human characteristics.
- 4 In other words, some non-verbal behaviors are innate to human beings and universal across cultures. What are these universal non-verbal behaviors? In short, facial expressions. Research shows that smiling and facial expressions of anger, surprise, fear, happiness, sadness, disgust, and so on, are interpreted the same way in nearly every part of the world. There are some slight differences, such as in Japan where people often have trouble differentiating between expressions of surprise and fear, but these are few in number and minor in significance.
- 5 Similarities among facial expressions are so universal, in fact, that researchers studying isolated cultures in New Guinea and West Irian Jaya found people in these tribes recognized and interpreted facial expressions in the same way as others across the rest of the world. This is significant, because the tribes studied had lived for hundreds of years without any contact with the outside world.

They were totally isolated and lived completely within the bounds of their own territory and culture, and yet they attached the same meanings to smiling and facial expressions of anger, sadness, and the like.

- 6 Despite these similarities, however, there are many more global differences in body language and non-verbal behaviors. The greatest differences and variations are seen in eye contact, touch, gestures, and territorial space, and the regions with the most local differences are Japan, some parts of Asia, and Arab countries. Before we move further along, I need to give you more precise definitions of each category of non-verbal behaviors.
- 7 Eye contact—Differences in eye contact include length of eye contact, intensity of eye contact, and even whether or not eye contact is made. Variations may be based on age, social status, hierarchical position, gender, and so on.
- 8 Touch—Differences in touch appear in terms of frequency and meaning. This means cultures engage in touching more or less often, and they attach vastly different meanings to different kinds of touch.
- 9 Gestures—Differences in gestures occur mostly in terms of insults and vulgarity. They typically involve hands, fingers, and/or the movements of these body parts.
- 10 Territorial space—Differences in territorial space occur in terms of personal space, such as how close people stand to each other, and working space, such as offices, living areas, and the like.

Common cultural misunderstandings

- 11 Now that we have definitions in place we can look at some of the most common cultural misunderstandings in each of these categories.
- 12 Eye contact—In Western cultures it is considered normal and acceptable for people of all kinds to make eye contact with each other in most situations, as long as that eye contact is not overly intense. So for instance, when a supervisor speaks with an employee it is appropriate and expected that the two people should make eye contact during the interaction. In some parts of Asia and the Middle East, however, employees would be expected to avert their eyes frequently in deference to the supervisor's higher rank in the hierarchy.
- 13 Gender differences in eye contact are most pronounced in Arab countries, where interactions between men and women are subject to strict cultural rules. In the strictest countries, women are not allowed to make eye contact with any man

who is not a relative, and even that eye contact is limited when in public *vs.* private environments.

- 14 **Touch**—Regions with the highest frequency of touching include Central America, South America, the Middle East, and southern areas of Europe. In these parts of the world people touch each other regularly during interactions, on the arm, the hand, the back, or even a pat on the knee. In Central America, for instance, when two people are sitting next to or facing each other it is common for them to reach out and touch each other's knees for emphasis during a conversation. This occurs frequently and the meaning is one of friendliness and expressiveness.
- 15 In Italy, on the other hand, frequent touching during interactions has a very different meaning. Italians tend to raise their hands and arms during conversation as a way to take the floor and control the interaction. If one person wants to take the floor from another person, he will grasp the arms of the other person and physically hold them down. This allows him to take control of the interaction and become the speaker commanding the most attention.
- 16 **Gestures**—When it comes to insulting and vulgar gestures, there are tremendous differences among cultures. What is acceptable and interpreted positively in one culture can easily be interpreted as a grievous insult in other cultures. I'll focus on three of the most common gestures that cross cultures in vastly different ways—thumbs up, the v-sign, and the ring gesture.
- 17 Giving a thumbs up in the United States, Australia, Great Britain, New Zealand, and any other place with a history of British influence means “okay,” “good job,” or is a signal used to hitch a ride from a passing vehicle. In other countries without that historic British influence, however, a thumbs up hand signal means “up yours,” “get stuffed,” or some other variation of an insult.
- 18 The v-sign (holding two fingers up in a “v” shape) is a sign of victory or acclaim when given with the palm facing outward, but in Great Britain the v-sign has a vastly different meaning when the palm is facing inward toward the person making the gesture. In this form it means “up yours,” “piss off,” or some similar vulgarity. It is a significant insult and one that is likely to generate a very strong reaction when used during an interaction.
- 19 The ring gesture (thumb and index finger forming a circle and the remaining fingers stretched outward) means “okay” in the United States and most other English-speaking countries. In France, however, it means “zero” or “worthless,”

while in Japan it means “money” and is often interpreted as a request for a bribe of some sort. In the Mediterranean region, Turkey, Greece, and Arab countries the ring gesture is a tremendous insult, implying that someone is a detestable person, or a homosexual, or it may even be interpreted as a threat. The same holds true for Latin American countries as well.

- 20 Territorial space—If you travel to Italy or Latin America you will find people stand very close to each other, practically touching in many situations. This is difficult and uncomfortable, though, for people from the United States, Great Britain, and many Asian countries. In Japan especially, territorial space is considered very personal and not to be violated; you will not see people shaking hands, hugging, or otherwise standing in close proximity to each other. There are exceptions to this, though, such as two women or two men walking together and holding hands; to the Japanese this is a sign of friendship.
- 21 Territorial space also comes into play during greetings and farewell interactions. For instance, in Scandinavia, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and most Arab countries, greetings and farewells are usually expressed by kissing on the cheek once, twice, or even three times.
- 22 In the United States and Great Britain, however, such greetings are awkward and usually avoided as much as possible; a handshake is the preferred greeting or farewell gesture.

The influence of culture and history

- 23 Culture and history are powerful influences on body language and non-verbal behaviors, sometimes in ways that might surprise you. Here are some examples:
- 24 Blowing your nose—In European and Western countries, the modern practice of blowing your nose in a tissue or handkerchief is rooted in preventing the virulent spread of tuberculosis. This terribly contagious disease spreads through nose secretions and saliva so governments faced with epidemics of tuberculosis launched huge campaigns encouraging people to use tissues and handkerchiefs. The practice went a long way toward helping reduce the spread of the disease.
- 25 In Asian countries, especially Japan, just the opposite is true. Their cultural practice is to openly spit or snort mucus and secretions rather than blow them into a tissue. People from these cultures, in fact, are horrified at the thought of blowing your nose into a handkerchief and then putting it into your pocket.
- 26 The stiff upper lip—This facial expression is famous and typical of people

from Great Britain who use it to avoid displaying emotions. King Henry VIII popularized this facial gesture as an expression of superiority and control in the 16th century, and it is still in use today. The effect of the stiff upper lip is perceived as cold, unemotional, and unfriendly by many other cultures, especially those where expressing emotions is expected and considered highly desirable.

- 27 The v-sign—I mentioned earlier the different meaning of this gesture, particularly in Great Britain, and the reason for this is rooted in British and European history. Centuries ago when archery was a primary tool in warfare, captured archers often had their two shooting fingers removed as a sign of degradation. It was, for most men, considered a fate much worse than simply being killed.
- 28 Because of this, the v-sign was used as a taunt by archers. They would flash the v-sign as a way of saying, “Hey, look, I still have my shooting fingers,” and insult the enemy. It became a very powerful insulting gesture in Great Britain that continues unabated today.
- 29 American media—Many diverse cultures are now developing body language and non-verbal behaviors that are very American, thanks to the spread of movies and TV from the United States. As our media has spread to the far corners of the world, our common gestures and non-verbal behaviors have spread as well. In many places, younger generations have been exposed to so much American media that they readily pick up and understand American body language, while the older generations still perceive these things in their own traditional ways.

Respect and accommodation for others

- 30 Even if you don’t travel to different countries you are still very likely to encounter situations that require respect and accommodations for the body language of other cultures. In the United States, for example, the mix of cultures is unlike that of nearly any other place in the world. You can walk down the street in some parts of the country and see people from Europe, the Middle East, Asia, South America, and such, all within a short distance. You cannot hope to interact in a positive way with diverse groups of people without being familiar with and understanding their body language and non-verbal behaviors.
- 31 Colleges and universities often attract students from around the world. If students are not familiar with each other’s non-verbal behaviors, this can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations between students as well as between students and professors. A student from Germany or Great Britain is not accustomed to communicating with hand and arm gestures, so when sitting

in a class taught by a professor who uses such gestures, these students may feel intimidated.

- 32 Another common misunderstanding occurs when interacting with someone from Japan. In that culture, it is considered polite to nod the head and smile when listening to another person as a sign of respect and close attention. In other cultures, however, those same movements are used to indicate agreement with what a person is saying. You can imagine, then, the problems that may arise when a Westerner interacts with someone from Japan. As the Japanese person nods to show respect, the Westerner perceives agreement.
- 33 Any time you travel to another country or will be in contact with people from another culture, you would be wise to familiarize yourself with the body language and non-verbal behaviors typical of that culture. It will help you tremendously when it comes to successful interactions and communication and show your respect for other customs. When you go to another country you are far more likely to be well received if you make the effort ahead of time to learn a bit about what is appropriate and what is not appropriate in that country.

(2,216 words)

Intercultural Reflection

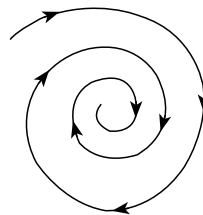
The more we ponder over non-verbal communication in cross-cultural contexts, the more fascinating problems we will come across. The following questions are just a few examples. Choose one from them, have a group discussion based on prior independent research, and then prepare a five-minute presentation or write an essay of 200-300 words.

1. What do you think are the major differences in non-verbal communication rules between China and the United States? Please make a list as long as you can, and divide these differences into different categories.
2. While eye contact is acceptable and often necessary during verbal communication in American culture, it is not required or even sometimes avoided in East Asian countries. What do you think are the causes for such a difference?
3. As Tannen mentions in Text A, Kaplan (1966) has presented interesting discoveries about cross-cultural differences of thought patterns in our use of language. One of his implications is that the Chinese way of thinking tends to be more circular while the English way is more direct as is shown graphically below:

English



Chinese



Do you agree with this claim? Can you give examples to support/challenge it? Is this rule applicable to non-verbal communication? Why or why not?