

Section IV

Modeling of Civilization

Chapter XV

Asymmetric Communication

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines a framework for the cross-cultural communication process, including efficiency and cost. The framework provides some directions for dialogue among civilizations, which is one of the main routes toward creation of the universal civilization. A developed architectural design of the cross-cultural communication process is based on a universal system approach that not only considers the complexities of the various cultural hierarchies and their corresponding communication climates, but also compares and quantifies the cultural-specific attributes with the intention of increasing efficiency levels in cross-cultural communication. The attributes for two selected cultures (Western-West and Egyptian) are estimated in a normative way using expert opinions, measuring on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 as the best value.

Quantifying cultural richness (R), cultural efficiency (η), modified cultural differences (D_{MC}), and cultural ability (B) reflects how a given culture's strength can overcome cultural differences and enhance its competitive advantage (V). Two components of the culture factor cost, explicit (C_E) and implicit (C_I), are defined, examined and quantified for the purposes not only of control-

ling the cost of doing business across cultures, but also to determine the amount of investment needed to overcome cultural differences in a global economy.

In this new millennium, global organizations will increasingly focus on the critical value of the cross-cultural communication process, its efficiency, its competence, its cost of doing business. In order to successfully communicate cross-culturally, knowledge and understanding of such cultural factors as values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors should be acquired. Because culture is a powerful force that strongly influences communication behavior, culture and communication are inseparably linked.

Worldwide, in the last 20 years, countries have experienced a phenomenal growth in international trade and foreign direct investment. Similarly, they have discovered the importance of cross-cultural communication. As a result, practitioners and scholars are paying attention to the fact that cultural dimensions influence management practices (Hofstede, 1980; Child, 1981; Triandis, 1982; Adler, 1983; Laurent, 1983; Maruyama, 1984). In recent years, empirical work in the cross-cultural arena has focused on the role of culture on employee behavior in communicating within business organizations (Tayeb, 1988). But current

work on cross-cultural business communication has paid little attention to either (a) how to adapt these seminal works on general communication to the needs of intercultural business or (b) how to create new models more relevant to cross-cultural business exchanges (Limaye & Victor, 1991, p. 283). There are many focused empirical studies on cross-cultural communication between two specific cultures (e.g., Wong & Hildebrandt, 1983; Halpern, 1983; Victor, 1987; Eiler & Victor, 1988; Varner, 1988; Victor & Danak, 1990), but such results must be arguable when extrapolated across multiple cultures. The prevailing western classical linear and process models of communication (Shannon & Weaver, 1949; Berlo, 1960) neglect the complexity of cross-cultural communication. Targowski and Bowman (1988) developed a layer-based pragmatic communication process model which covered more variables than any previous model and indirectly addressed the role of cultural factors among their layer-based variables. In a similar manner, the channel ratio model for intercultural communication developed by Haworth and Savage (1989) has also failed to account completely for the multiple communication variables in cross-cultural environments. So far, there is no adequate model that can explain the cross-cultural communication process and efficiency, let alone estimate the cost of doing business with other cultures worldwide.

The purpose of this research is to define the framework for a cross-cultural communication process, efficiency and cost of doing business in a global economy. This task is very important for the promotion of global peace through trade, since it aims at understanding how to communicate successfully among different cultures from different civilizations. This understanding should minimize conflicts, increase international trade and investment, and facilitate the development of the global economy. The research method is based on the architectural design of a cross-cultural communication process and system and their quantitative analysis. Their attributes are

estimated in a normative way on a scale from 1 to 5, when 5 is the best value. The attributes for two selected cultures (Western-West and Egyptian) are estimated by expert opinions.

The developed framework based on the architectural design of a cross-cultural communication process adopts a systems approach (of which the traditional linear process and the nonlinear approach are only parts) that can be applied to managing communication between western and non-western cultures. The designed system and its quantitative analysis (based on operations research and information systems) is broad enough not only to include but to go beyond Fisher's (1988) non-linear approach to general communication (with a focus on international political negotiation). The design considers the complexities of the various cultural hierarchies and their corresponding communication climates as they influence behavioral differences and filter communication messages and intentions between business partners in different cultures. Moreover, the design offers a way to compare and quantify attributes that are culture-specific. The intention is not only to reduce the miscommunication between global business partners but also to increase the level of efficiency in cross-cultural business communication between western and non-western countries. Many countries in Asia, the Middle East, and parts of Latin America have recently become successful in world trade. This has forced upon western business organizations a new reality of non-linear culture patterns of communication processes, behavior and practices. The universal approach in our architectural design will accurately delineate the non-western reality that exists in other cultures around the globe. This also will raise awareness and encourage research to improve cross-cultural communication processes, efficiency and practices.

A conceptual framework is introduced to evaluate and estimate the implicit and explicit cost of cultural-specific differences in entering new foreign markets. Such valuation is undoubtedly an

important addition to the study of cross-cultural communication processes and efficiency in the global economy. It enables global organizations to estimate the cost of overcoming cultural differences and allows them to achieve not only efficiency but also effectiveness in communicating and operating across cultures.

A CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Culture is a value- and symbol-guided continuous process of developing patterned human behaviors, feelings, and reactions, based upon symbols, learning from it and being a product of it. Cultures do not satisfy needs; rather, they demand values and define symbols. In turn, values in their broadest sense define for the citizen of each culture the nature of any culture's need for rationality, meaningfulness in emotional experience, richness of imagination and depth of faith (Laszlo, 1972). Human communication, therefore, is on the one hand a vehicle for cultural dissemination, while on the other hand is itself culture-driven.

Cultures are the components of a civilization that guide their behavioral patterns. For example, Western civilization currently is composed of the following cultures:

- The Western-West, containing Western Europe and Northern America
- The Western-Central, embracing Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Croatia, and Slovenia
- The Western-Jewish
- The Western-Latin, composed of Latin America's states

There is some opinion that, after the end of the Cold War in 1989-1991, world politics is entering a new phase. Intellectuals have not hesitated to proliferate visions of what it will be—the end of history (Fukuyama, 1992) or the clash of civili-

zations (Huntington, 1996). Huntington (1996) predicts that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. He perceives that the great divisions among humankind and their dominating source of conflict will be cultural (values- and symbols-driven)

The consequences of the clash of civilizations and cultures have already been seen in business undertakings, particularly after the Asian crisis in 1997-99, when Islamic Malaysia said that the West speculates too much in the Asian market and that Asian countries are not going to pursue the policy of westernization. In general these clashes take place around the following issues: security, westernization, modernization, trade, globalization, freedom, intellectual property, population control, and ecology.

The clashes of civilizations and cultures make a strong impact on the costs of pursuing business in international settings. There are only a few cases of businesses and countries that are making a profit in the global economy (Rodrik, 2003). Most businesses and countries, however, support the development of the global economy, first because it is difficult to stop, and second, because perhaps one day this economy may bring some positive solutions to global problems. One of the factors that can contribute to the positive outcome of the global economy is understanding the cross-cultural process, including efficiency and cost in the global business environment.

THE CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PROCESS

We assume that doing business in the global economy depends mostly on the partners' ability to communicate successfully in a cross-cultural environment. People pursue and communicate many common aims, including the values of pure biological survival, social collaboration, creative expression, organizational adaptability and busi-

ness undertakings. From such common values one can form a hierarchy of human cultural layers:

1. Biological culture layer
2. Personal culture layer
3. Group culture layer
4. Organization culture layer (e.g., business enterprise)
5. Regional culture layer
6. National culture layer
7. Global culture layer (including supra-national, regional ones)

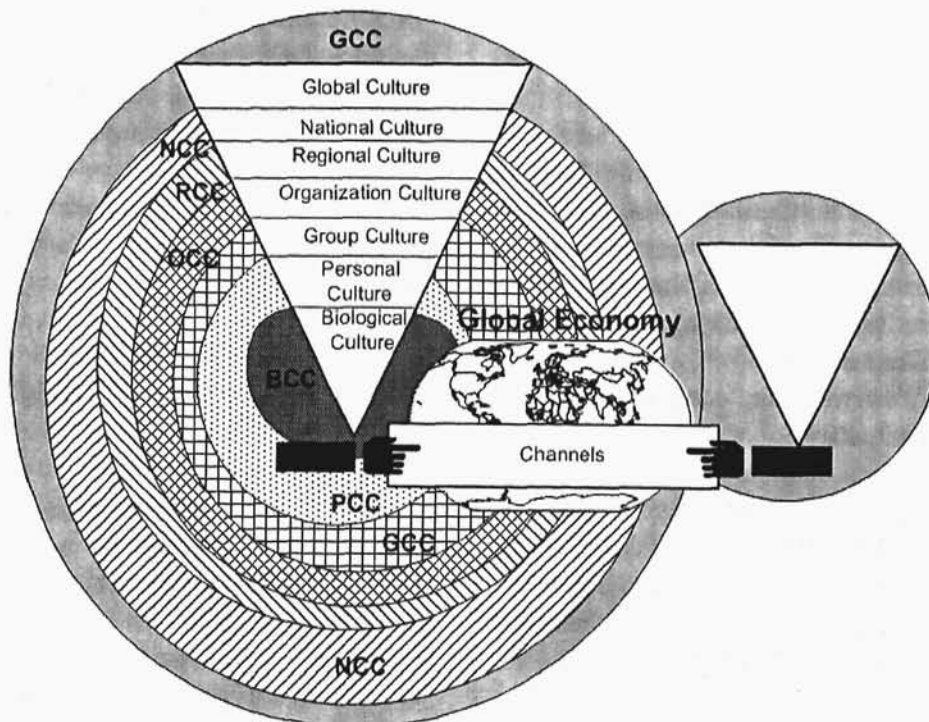
Those layers of cultures and the communication climates associated with them filter messages and intentions of business partners and determine the success of business undertakings. A model of the cross-cultural communication process is

shown in Figure 15-1 (Targowski & Bowman, 1988).

The model of the cross-cultural communication process applies at least between two partners who, in order to communicate, must send both a message and their intentions through several layers of cultures. For example, to communicate in the global economy between two different cultures each partner filters a message and intentions through seven layers of cultures (biological, personal, group, organization, regional, national, and global). Of course, to be successful, such cross-cultural communication must be based upon a good understanding of the rules and practices that govern each layer of culture.

Let us define components of the cross-cultural communication process in the global economy.

Figure 15-1. The culture layers and communication climates in the cross-cultural communication process (CC-Communication Climate, GCC-Global CC, NCC-National CC, RCC-Regional CC, OCC-Organization CC, GCC-Group CC, PCC-Personal CC)



Global Economy

The global economy is largely understood in terms of world-wide economic and political convergence around liberal market principles and the increasing real-time integration of business, technological and financial systems (World Bank, 1997). Based on an expansion and deepening of market conditions, globalization is synonymous with an irresistible process of economic, political and cultural change that is sweeping all national boundaries and protectionist tendencies before it. This pervasive neo-liberal assumption has been dubbed "hyperglobalization" (Held et al., 1997).

"Globalization" is not yet truly global; it has yet to touch a large chunk of the world's economy. Roughly half of the developing world's people have been left out of the much-discussed rise in the volume of international trade and capital flow since the early 1980s. Governments' hesitance to open up to the world economy is partly understandable. Joining the global economy, like devolving power from the center, carries risks as well as opportunities. For example, it can make countries more vulnerable to external price shocks or to large, destabilizing shifts in capital flows. But the difficulties should not be exaggerated, particularly when laid against the risks of being left out of the globalization process (World Bank, 1997, p.12).

Global economic integration gives rise to international threats such as wars, terrorism, global warming, instability and conflict. Economic, cultural and other differences between countries, civilizations and cultures can make cooperation difficult—at times, even impossible. This is why the understanding and practice of good cross-cultural communication is so important.

The globalization process is supported by electronic communication that makes geography, borders, and time zones irrelevant to the way we conduct our business and personal lives. The "death of distance" will be the single most

important economic force shaping all of society over the next half century (Cairncross, 1997). Friends, colleagues, and customers could easily be anywhere—around the corner or around the world—and new ways of communicating will effectively wipe out distance as a cost factor, indeed as a perceptible concept from our lives.

The growth of the global economy triggers the growth of a global information infrastructure (GII) which improves connections among organizations and individuals. Most people on earth will eventually have access to computer networks that are switched, interactive, and broadband, with capacity to receive TV-quality motion pictures. While the Internet will continue to exist in its present form, it is also being integrated into other services, such as telephone and television (Targowski, 1996).

Although the communication revolution has increased connections among partners through technology, it simultaneously requires a better understanding of rules and practices of cross-cultural communication, regardless of the media being applied.

Culture Layers

The biological culture layer is the basic stratum of human background which provides common reactions, based on the similarity of physical needs that results from a common biological makeup. This layer is common for humankind in all civilizations and cultures.

The personal culture layer is the means by which the individual survives, operates and develops within the group, organization, region, nation, and globe. The essence of an individual's personal culture is the acceptance of underlying assumptions or "theories-in-use" (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1976). These assumptions are, for the individual, an inarguable understanding of reality, time and space (Schein, 1985). Consequently, since personal culture differentiates between all individuals, all communication between two or

more parties must be seen as intercultural to that degree. Besides personal culture, each individual is additionally a member of various groups and organizations, as well as regional, national, and global cultures.

The group culture layer is a manager's or an employee's tool to accomplish an organizational task or to protect the interest of group members (formal or informal). A *group* may be here defined as any collection of individuals united by a common relationship (i.e., work, profession or family). Group culture is the organizational equivalent of regional culture within the setting of national culture.

The organization culture layer is a management tool which uses professional communication to influence organizational performance (Sypher et al., 1985) and which is created (or destroyed) by its leaders (Schein, 1985). A derivative of organization culture is a corporate culture, which is a set of broad, tacitly understood rules (policies) informing employees how to behave under a variety of circumstances. Cultural rules have economic efficiency; they allow firms to administer effectively contracts or terms of employment with employees. Because employees and firms cannot anticipate all of the contingencies in their work relationships, broad cultural rules created by the firm act as a substitute in unanticipated situations for deciding appropriate courses of action (Camerer & Vepsalainen, 1988).

The regional culture layer contains commonalities based on the values of variables which individuals bear within a given region of a nation. Regional variables derive from two sources: 1) environmental influences (Farmer & Richman, 1966; Terpstra & David, 1985; Borisoff & Victor, 1989) which have particular historical, political, economic, and social characteristics; and 2) traditions whose participants have similar ways of viewing space, time, things, and people (Schein, 1985; Weiss, 1988).

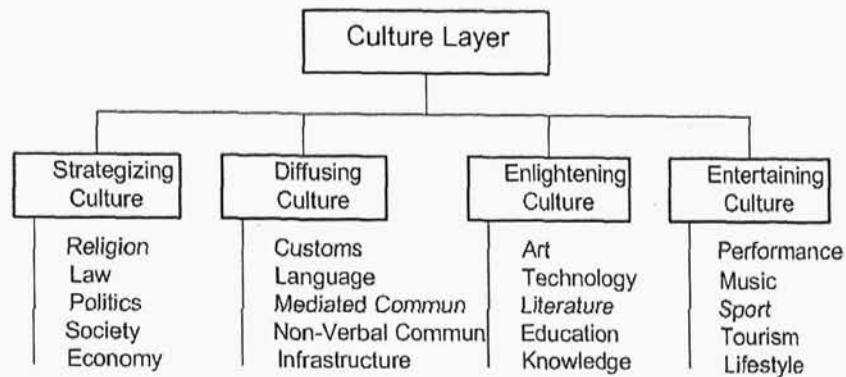
Regional culture may extend beyond national boundaries. In such cases, regional culture is *supranational*. For example, European culture encompasses dozens of nations with some shared values. Supranational culture can also be global (Featherstone, 1990). Regional culture may act as a subset of a particular national culture. In such cases, regional culture is *sub-national*. For example, Brittany has a distinct regional culture within France but remains a part of French national culture. Finally, regional culture may overlap with national culture. For example, Australian culture is at the same time both the culture of a nation state and that of a region (when compared to European or Latin American regions) which happens to be coterminous with the nation state.

The national culture layer is a set of common understandings, traditions, and ways of thinking, feeling, behaving, and communication, based on the same judgments about variables which influence communication throughout the nation. National culture is a learned behavior of its members' historical experience. For example, one can recognize an American culture, a Chinese culture, an Egyptian culture, a Polish culture, and so forth.

The global culture layer is the new emerging layer, triggered by the developments of the global economy. At this layer, partners from different cultures and civilizations deliberately apply the same patterns of behavior in order to achieve successful communication in business (political, social, and so forth) endeavors. These patterns may not come all from their own national cultures, but they are applied in order to create a level playing field among all partners or participants. For example, partners may speak in English, which is being recognized as the global business language, or they may use the dollar or euro as a currency in business transactions.

Figure 15-2 provides the basic structure of a culture layer.

Figure 15-2. The basic structure of a culture layer



Communication Climates

Communication climate (or “atmosphere”) can be defined as a set of conditions which transforms cultural behavior and information into desired (or undesired) states of a given entity (person, group, organization, region, nation, the globe) through the communication process. Communication climate refers to the prevailing condition which exists within a specific entity. An entity’s communication climate affects the degree of openness with which people communicate (Perkins & Stout, 1987). For example, within China there are at least three communication climates. The most open communication climate exists in Hong Kong, a less open one is allowed in special economic zones such as in Shenzhen, and a closed communication climate operates in the remaining parts of China, albeit one that is being loosened by the spreading Internet.

Communication climate consists of seven components: space (territory), style, time, desire for interaction (or relationship), frequency (participation), tone (receptivity or friendliness), and quality. Table 15-1 provides weighted attributes of

communication climates for all layers of culture except the biological, which is more or less the same for all cultures.

Because the process of cross-cultural communication in the global economy is dynamic, its success depends upon the communication climate among communicating parties. For example, the business communication climate between the U.S. and China at the beginning of 1999 was very good; however, after the accidental bombardment of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in May of that year, the communication climate between both countries was briefly at a very low level.

Communication Channels

A communication channel is the vehicle or medium in which a message travels. Thus, channels range from light waves for non-verbal cues to radio or computers as modes for transmitting sound and visual messages. For example, the effective operation of a highly complex weapon system may hinge on adherence to formal channels of communication, while effective performance in investment banking may rely on informal as well

Table 15-1. The weighted attributes (A) of communication climates

CC Layer	(Territory) Space	Style	Time	Relationship	Frequency (Participation)	Tone (Friendliness)	Quality
Global CC	5-Personal 4-Semi-formal 3-Formal 2-Informal 1-Impersonal	5-Open 4-Semi-open 3-Semi-controlled 2-Controlled 1-Closed	5-Fixed 4-Semi-fixed 3-Inflexible 2-Semi-flexible 1-Flexible	5-Very Friendly 4-Friendly 3-Semi-friendly 2. Unfriendly 1. Hostile	5-High 4-Moderate 3-Low 2-Infrequent 1-Ad-hoc	5-Supporting 4-Guiding 3-Commanding 2-Manipulating 1.Critiquing	5-Transcommunication 4-Pseudocommunication 3-Paracom-munication 2-Miscommuni-cation 1-Metacom-munication
National CC	5-Personal 4-Semi-formal 3-Formal 2-Informal 1-Impersonal	5-Democratic 4-Authoritarian 3-Dictatorial 2-Totalitarian 1-Chaotic	5-Fixed 4-Semi-fixed 3-Inflexible 2-Semi-flexible 1-Flexible	5-Very Friendly 4-Friendly 3-Semi-friendly 2. Unfriendly 1. Hostile	5-High 4-Moderate 3-Low 2-Infrequent 1-Ad hoc	5-Supporting 4-Guiding 3-Commanding 2-Manipulating 1.Critiquing	5-Transcommu-nication -Paracommu-nication -Pseudocom-munication -Metacommu-nication -Miscommuni-cation
Regional CC	5-Personal 4-Semi-formal 3-Formal 2-Informal 1-Impersonal	5-Laisser-faire 4-Coordinated 3-Partnership 2-Dominance 1-Hegemonic	5-Fixed 4-Semi-fixed 3-Inflexible 2-Semi-flexible 1-Flexible	5-Very Friendly 4-Friendly 3-Semi-friendly 2. Unfriendly 1. Hostile	5-High 4-Moderate 3-Low 2-Infrequent 1-Ad hoc	5-Supporting 4-Guiding 3-Commanding 2-Manipulating 1.Critiquing	5-Transcommu-nication 4-Pseudocom-munication 3-Paracommu-nication 2-Miscommuni-cation 1-Metacommu-nication
Organi-za-tion CC	5-Networks 4-System structure 3-Matrix structure 2-Flat hierarchy 1-Tall hierarchy	5-Merito-cratic 4-Pluto-cratic 3-Techno-cratic 2-Bureau-cratic 1-Chaotic	5-Fixed 4-Semi-fixed 3-Inflexible 2-Semi-flexible 1-Flexible	5-Very Friendly 4-Friendly 3-Semi-friendly 2. Unfriendly 1. Hostile	5-High 4-Moderate 3-Low 2-Infrequent 1-Ad hoc	5-Supporting 4-Guiding 3-Commanding 2-Manipulating 1.Critiquing	5-Transcommu-nication 4-Pseudocom-munication 3-Paracommu-nication 2-Miscommuni-cation 1-Metacom-munication

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Table 15-1. continued

Group CC	5-Sub-networks 4-Networks 3-informal 2-Semi-Formal 1-Formal	5-Meritocratic 4-Plutocratic 3-Technocratic 2-Bureaucratic 1-Chaotic	5-Fixed 4-Semi-fixed 3-Inflexible 2-Semi-flexible 1-Flexible	5-Very Friendly 4-Friendly 3-Semi-friendly 2. Unfriendly 1. Hostile	5-High 4-Moderate 3-Low 2-Infrequent 1-Ad hoc	5-Supporting 4-Guiding 3-Commanding 2-Manipulating 1.Critiquing	5-Transcommunication 4-Pseudocommunication 3-Paracom-munication 2-Miscommunication 1-Metacom-munication
Personal CC	5-Home 4-Social 3-Semi-social 2-Anti-social 1-Work	5-Meritocratic 4-Plutocratic 3-Technocratic 2-Bureaucratic 1-Chaotic	5-Fixed 4-Semi-fixed 3-Inflexible 2-Semi-flexible 1-Flexible	5-Very Friendly 4-Friendly 3-Semi-friendly 2. Unfriendly 1. Hostile	5-High 4-Moderate 3-Low 2-Infrequent 1-Ad hoc	5-Supporting 4-Guiding 3-Commanding 2-Manipulating 1.Critiquing	5-Transcommunication 4-Pseudocommunication 3-Paracommu-nication 2-Miscommunication 1-Metacom-munication

as formal communication channels. The formal channels of communication help create and maintain authority as well as give authenticity to messages, but they also inhibit communication; indeed, they alienate users. In the global economy, informal channels such as the Internet prevail. They create a horizontal society which exchanges messages that otherwise would not have been created.

The fact that electronic media create new inter-organizational and interpersonal networks raises concerns about the individuals and groups excluded either intentionally through organizational policy and politics or accidentally through inadequate access to networking resources.

THE EFFICIENCY OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Applying these attributes in cross-cultural communication, let us take an example of communication in the global economy between the

Western-West and Egyptian cultures. To assess the influence of each attribute in the communication process, apply weights on the scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest value of the attribute. Table 15-2 compares those attributes of two cultures, based on the authors' expertise within both cultures.

The cultural difference (D_c) in attribute weights of Western-West culture richness (RWW) and Egyptian culture richness (RE) is:

$$D_c = R_{ww} - R_E = 91 - 75 = 16 \text{ points} \quad [1]$$

in favor of the Western-West culture. This means that the two cultures are not at the same developmental level; but to succeed in communication among both partners in the global economy, both partners must invest in their own abilities to cross-communicate successfully. We shall see how to evaluate the cost of such investments.

The efficiency of Western-West culture in the global economy is $\eta = 91\%$. This means that only 9 times out of 100 is a Western-West business