**CHAPTER 6**

**What Is the Connection Between Verbal Communication and Culture?**

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**Chapter 6: Learning Objectives**

As a result of reading Chapter 6 and participating in related class discussions and activities, you should be able to

1. Identify four distinctive features of human language (arbitrariness, abstractness, meaning-centeredness, and creativity) and explain five rule patterns that are the broad rules governing language usage in a particular culture.

2. Describe the relationship between language and culture with regard to five language functions: cultural group membership identity function, everyday social reality function, worldview reasoning function, perceptual filtering function, and the social change function.

3. Compare features of low- versus high-context interaction patterns and discuss related variations such as verbal directness and indirectness, compact and verbose interaction styles, self-enhancement and self-humbling styles, and status-equality and status-sensitive respectful styles.

4. Effectively use what you’ve learned and apply thoughtful strategies to help you communicate adaptively when speaking with an audience or individual with a different communication style within or across cultures.

**Chapter 6: Brief Outline**

1. **Human Language: Distinctive Features and Rule Patterns**

Language: arbitrary symbolic system that labels and categorizes feelings, ideas, etc. (NOTE: This is a brief description; see textbook for complete definitions.)

* 1. Distinctive Language Features
     1. Arbitrariness: words have no innate meaning
     2. Abstractness: allows hypothetical thinking
     3. Meaning-centeredness: 2 levels of meaning
        1. **Denotative**: objective, dictionary meaning
        2. **Connotative**: subjective, interpretive meaning
     4. Creativity: 3 elements
        1. **Displacement**: talk about things far away
        2. **Productivity**: say things never said before
        3. **Traditional transmission**: pass on heritage, wisdom
  2. Multiple Rule Patterns
     1. **Phonological rules** (or **phonology**): combining basic sound units
     2. **Morphological rules** (or **morphology**):smallest units of meaning, a word or part or a word)
     3. **Syntactic rules** (or **syntactics**): word sequence and grammar practices
     4. **Semantic rules** (**semantics**): features of meaning attached to words
     5. **Pragmatic rules** (**pragmatics**): contextual rules governing language use
        1. **Speech community**: share norms, rules regarding communication
        2. **Speech codes**: norms, premises of distinctive cultural way of speaking of an ingroup

1. **Appreciating Diverse Language Functions**
   1. Cultural Group Membership Identity Function: common language evokes group sentiment; signals ingroup cohesiveness and outgroup division

\* **Communication Accommodation Theory**: speakers converge linguistically when seeking social approval, diverge when asserting outgroup identity

* 1. Everyday Social Reality Function
     1. Language acts as mirror, emphasizes what’s important/not, interesting/not
     2. Language categories capture our experience, shape our expectations
  2. Worldview Reasoning Function
     1. **Worldview**: philosophical outlook or ways of perceiving the world
     2. **Linear worldview**: rational thinking based on objective reality
        1. *Inductive reasoning*: facts and evidence in making a claim
        2. *Deductive reasoning*: big principles first, then move to specific points or conclusions
     3. **Relational worldview**: holistic, connected thinking
        1. *Spiral reasoning*: ingroup face-saving and honor, avoid polarized ends
        2. Chinese language avoids polarized ends, English Germanic do not
  3. Perceptual Filtering Function: **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis** (*linguistic relativity hypothesis*): language is “the shaper of ideas”
     1. Weak form (supported by research): language *helps* shape thinking patterns
     2. Strong form (not fully supported): language *determines* thinking patterns
  4. Social Change Function: humans use social tool of language, cause language changes.

1. **Verbal Communication Styles: A General Framework**
   1. Defining Low-Context and High-Context Interaction Patterns
      1. **Low-context communication** (LCC): intention or meaning expressed through explicit verbal messages
         1. Direct, matter of fact tone, assertiveness, sender-oriented values
         2. Speaker is responsible for clear message, can be decoded easily
      2. **High-context communication** (HCC): intention or meaning conveyed through embedded contexts and nonverbal channels
         1. Indirect verbal style, self-humbling, status-sensitive, silence important
         2. Listener expected to “read between lines,” infer nonverbal subtleties that accompany verbal message
   2. Direct and Indirect Verbal Styles
      1. Mannerism of speaking: verbal style, frames *how* message interpreted
      2. Continuum exists, with direct and indirect at ends
      3. **Direct**: statement in forthright tone clearly reveals speaker’s intentions (Individualistic cultures emphasize direct talk)
      4. **Indirect**: statement in softer tone camouflages speaker’s actual intentions (Collectivistic cultures emphasize indirect talk) (no need for hurt feelings)
   3. Compact and Verbose Interaction Styles: 4 conversational styles:
      1. **Understated** (indirect and compact)
      2. **Exacting** (direct and compact)

Ma, silence – inner pause of speaker’s thoughts. holds strong meanings in HCC

* + 1. **Effusive**: (indirect and verbose)
    2. **Talkative** (direct and verbose)
  1. Self-Enhancement and Self-Humbling Verbal Styles
     1. **Self-enhancement:** draw attention to one’s abilities, accomplishments
     2. **Self-humbling:** modest talk, hesitation, self-deprecation
  2. Status-Equality and Status-Sensitive Respectful Styles
     1. **Status-equality**: LCC, balanced interaction regardless of status
     2. **Status-sensitive**: HCC, asymmetrical. Found in large power distance cultures

1. **Intercultural Reality Check: Doables**

When using your native language in communicating with a nonnative speaker:

* 1. Understand languaculture: emphasizes tie between language and culture
  2. Verbal tracking: pay attention to content meanings
  3. Verbal patience: slow pace, less complexity and restatements; rephrase
  4. Nonverbal tone of voice: pay attention to yours
  5. Multiple modes of presentation: visual representations (pictures, gestures)
  6. Master cultural pragmatic rules: know appropriate speaking norms if speaking in a different language
  7. Understand HCC, LCC patterns
  8. Verbal code-switching: practice this mindfully

**Chapter 6: Chapter Checkup**

**Check out the following cultural literacy questions and self-assessment questions:**

**QuikTrendz 6.1**: Can you name the three countries with the most native English-language speakers? Click on [**QuikTrendz 6.1**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-quicktrendz-6-1?previousFilter=tag_chapter-06)to find out. To see the rest of the top five, check out QuikTrendz 6.1 in the text

**QuikTrendz 6.2**: Check out [**QuikTrendz 6.2**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-quicktrendz-6-2?previousFilter=tag_chapter-06) to name the top three countries with the most native Spanish-language speakers. To see the rest of the top five, check out QuikTrendz 6.2 in the text.

**QuikChoice 6.1**: Click on [**QuikChoice 6.1**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-quickchoice-6-1?previousFilter=tag_chapter-06)to check your understanding of the social change function of language. To learn more and to take the complete poll, see QuikChoice 6.1 in the text.

**QuikChoice 6.3**: Click on [**QuikChoice 6.3**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-quickchoice-6-3?previousFilter=tag_chapter-06)to examine two different kinds of verbal styles. Then, check out QuikChoice 6.3 in the text for the full assessment.

**Chapter 6: Critical Incident Analysis**

**Check out the following intercultural activity:**

(NOTE: See “Chapter 6 Class Handouts” for a printable version.)

**Connotative Meanings**

*Directions:* As you read each word in the left column, note your immediate emotional, or gut-level, reaction and put a check mark (🗹) in the column that most closely matches your reaction. In the far right column, list other words that come to your mind. Compare and contrast your answers with those of a classmate. Interview each other in terms of where you learn your meanings for this set of words.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Words | Reactions | | | | | Connotations: |
|  | Strongly  positive | Somewhat  positive | Neutral | Somewhat  negative | Strongly  negative |  |
| Commitment |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Silence |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Loyalty |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Control |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Justice |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Compromise |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tolerance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Conflict |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Chapter 6: Glossary-Matching Quizzes**

Click here for[**Matching Quiz 6.1**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-glossary-matching-quiz-6-1?previousFilter=tag_chapter-06)**.**

Click here for [**Matching Quiz 6.2**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-glossary-matching-quiz-6-2?previousFilter=tag_chapter-06)**.**

**Chapter 6: Practice Quiz**

Take the[**Chapter 6 Review Practice Quiz.**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/ting-toomey3e-student-resources/ting-toomey3e-chapter-6-review-prep-quiz?previousFilter=tag_chapter-06)

**Chapter 6: Exercise Handouts**

**Note: Your instructor may ask you to** [**download,**](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/ting-toomey3e-student-resources#tag_chapter-06) **print out, and/or e-mail the following class handouts for this chapter:**

**Connotative Meanings**

**Decision-Making Scenarios (2 pages)**

**Scoring for Decision-Making Scenarios**

**“Roommates” Video Activity Sheet**