Intercultural Communication Midterm

3. Read the section on ethics in Chapter 2. The book says, “…Australia, Austria, Great Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Sweden all have statues or constitutional provisions prohibiting forms of hate speech.” Would you be in favor of such constitutional provisions or statutes [degree, act, bill, order] in the U.S. prohibiting forms of hate speech? What kinds of hate speech would you target? Whether you say “yes” or “no” present clear arguments in support of your position.

Ethics is a guide for how we should follow rules for governing our decisions and choices in life. Kale (1997) makes a case on the importance of following peace to benefit ourselves and the atmosphere in which we are settled in (Jandt, 2013, p. 37). Furthermore Kale describes a standard for how we can live up to his argument as fulfilling the role of being “ethical communicators” (Jandt, 2013, p. 37). We can satisfy this ethical life style by respecting all people in other cultures, expressing our perceptions of the world with as much accuracy as we are knowledgeable of, supporting the expression of other culture’s customs, and reaching out to other cultures in finding commonalities with them (Jandt, 2013, p. 37-38). Provided with this ethical structure, I am in favor of constitutional provisions or statutes prohibiting forms of hate speech in the United States.

The existence of the First Amendment in the United States holds concern for the protection of individuals on a small scale. Hate speech should be prohibited in the United States. The book’s definition of hate speech reads as: “threats or verbal slurs directed against specific groups or physical acts such as burning crosses or spray-painting swastikas on public or private property” (Jandt, 2013, p. 52). The breakdown of the hate speech definition represents potential for outrageous disaster. The act of intentionally communicating threats or verbal slurs against a particular group is a form of expressing prejudice. This area of hate speech allows for extremely hostile situations. In an article written by Slagle, there is the recognition of Stanley Fish (1994) and his views on
controlling hate speech; “The descriptions of hate speech as merely ‘obnoxious’ or ‘offensive,’ … is dismissal of the very real harm it can inflict” (Slagle, 2009, p. 243). Groups who are of risk to such treatment could be or are legal citizens of the United States and their sense of safety should be rightfully protected under lawful terms recognized by the United States.

The second half of the hate speech definition states that burning crosses or spray-painting swastikas on public or private property is accepted under the allowance of hate speech. If a person or group of people trespassed onto someone’s private property and chose to burn a cross that had large flames which were hazardous to the safety of the public, how would this be considered as tolerable? There are laws under the United States that would find this as intentional endangerment and punishments would be served. Regarding the spray-painting to public or private property there are already specific laws that exist and justify that vandalism is illegal.

If prohibiting hate speech would in any way limit our right to freedom of speech (an area of concern to many) then why has it been categorized into its own category type of speech? If hate speech was taken into action on an academic campus there would be serious orders of punishment and consequence. This same idea is discussed in the article An Ethical Exploration of Free Expression and the Problem of Hate Speech by author Mark Slagle. The article discusses Cass Sunstein’s idea of free speech. Sustein fights against hate speech and supports that there is a need for regulation. He also uses a university setting as an example where regulations on hate speech are very important in allowing the operation of the school (Slagle, 2009, p. 243). With consideration to this example and other instances where hate speech would be punished, it can be assumed
that it is socially unacceptable and worthy of consequence. So why does the United States bypass it as legal?

Hate speech breaks all the codes of ethics that were earlier identified by Kale. Ethics is valued in the United States and therefore hate speech should be prohibited because its treatment to society is unethical. I am in favor of constitutional provisions or statutes prohibiting forms of hate speech in the United States. Equality needs to be restored within the United States and in order to achieve this hate speech needs to be eliminated or prohibited by a strict form of constitutional provision or statute.

References:


4. Imagine you are representing an American business, and you have business negotiations with a Japanese company. Discuss the concepts of hi/lo context and “face” (chapter 3, p.72) in the context of these negotiations and how the two will influence/affect your negotiations.

US.GAB is an American business that was developed in Farmville, Virginia in early 2012. As founder and President of the company, it is my responsibility to represent our business and negotiate with the Japanese company, JAPANCO. In one month I will be traveling to Japan to negotiate with the President of JAPANCO and will be communicating in a cross-cultural circumstance, therefore it is crucial that I become familiarized with Japan’s culture so we can communicate respectfully and effectively.
Edward T. Hall (1976) introduced the concepts of high-context cultures and low-context cultures (Jandt, 2013, p.69). Messages in high-context cultures are easily understood without the need for verbal dialogue or communication. In high-context culture messages and their meanings are communicated in the sharing of events, circumstances or situations. High-context culture is very focused on sharing contexts and communicating through nonverbal messages. Another important aspect of high-context culture is that people are not seen as individuals, they are viewed as part of a group. Low-context cultures differ from high-context cultures. In low-context culture meanings of messages are understood through open and specific verbal communication. Low-context cultures value individualism, and being perceived as independent or separate from a group.

According to Ting-Toomey (1985) the United States is a low-context culture. We are defined as a low-context culture because Americans are focused on being independent and private. Ting-Toomey explains, being a low-context culture, the United States uses “direct-face negotiation” and we practice preservation of our own face (Jandt, 2013, p. 72). This means that Americans are concerned with being seen as independent individuals and we value protecting our face or upholding our reputation.

When I travel to Japan I will keep in mind during our negotiations that their high-context culture does not use the same practice of negotiation as Americans. The Japanese practice “indirect-face negotiation” and convey concerns for communal protection of face or the concern for the common good of the group (Jandt, 2013, p. 72).

In order to be prepared for my future negotiations I researched sources that discussed Japanese business negotiation processes and styles. In Pizziconi’s book review
of Yotsukura’s work, there is mention of the United States and Japan relationship:

“existence of a considerable body of anecdotal evidence that United States-Japan
relations often experience conflict due to differences in cultural styles” (Pizziconi, 2003, p. 313). The review quotes a section on Japanese-specific style and explains that American’s business method is used in a direct set up, whereas the Japanese business plan was the opposite. This is generally the first challenge in the cross cultural communication between the Americans and Japanese because our cultures differ in how we deal with business style of negotiations. It is also the first occurrence that can create a conflict of interest between what American’s want and what the Japanese want.

When negotiating with JAPANCO I want to adjust to their high-context culture and participate in the meeting using indirect plans. It is important to identify with the Japanese on a similar communication style especially when I am the minority culture. By displaying concern for the group rather than the individual I hope our negotiations will be successful and beneficial for US.GAB and JAPANCO. My goal is to create a trusting and long lasting business relationship with the Japanese for future business endeavors and networking connections.

References:


The United States today still struggles in eliminating racism completely. Many claim that the United States has overcome the color barrier but the truth is that Black-White perceptions still impede our culture’s development. The United States is challenged by three elements of intercultural communication that are feeding into the existence of Black-White perceptions. Ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice, in the United States, are equally responsible for judgments that have been lingering since the start of racism.

An example of frequent Black-White perception is the economic situations of Blacks and Whites in the United States. A study done by Kaplowitz, Fisher, and Broman found several perception tendencies that Whites and Blacks have exaggerated. Results of the study found that, “Whites are less likely to believe that racial discrimination continues than are blacks” (Kaplowitz, Fisher, & Broman, 2003, p. 242). Given this information the results also found that there is much inaccuracy in the perceptions that Whites and Blacks have posed about the economic and educational statuses of Blacks. To further understand Black-White perception in the United States correlations to ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice must be investigated.

Ethnocentrism is a term that explains the critical opinion made by one culture passing judgment on another culture’s conditions and characteristics (Jandt, 2013, p. 83). People acting under the description of this term believe that their culture and its customs are best or most idealized. Stereotypes are judgments concluded about individual people based on obvious or supposed membership to a group, and they can be utilized in negative or positive light (Jandt, 2013, p.85). Even though they can be used positively,
stereotypes are ultimately an obstacle for communication. Prejudice is considerably more harmful to our culture. Prejudice describes an unreasonable amount of hatred towards a specified group, race, religion, or sexual orientation (Jandt, 2013, p. 85). Prejudice people express hatred and decide that a person is to be identified with a group that their exterior traits match or resemble.

Ethnocentrism is rooted in the years when Whites believed themselves to be the ideal superior race and culture of the United States. Ethnocentrism has been an inconvenience to our culture and provides one reason as to why Black-White perceptions are based on many stereotypes and prejudice expressions. Ethnocentrism can be traced back to when Whites were portrayed as dominant in the U.S. and Blacks were inferior. This historical perception has cemented itself in prejudice attacks and stereotype judgments that remain today. I recently witnessed a stereotype that is frequently discussed in the U.S. today and is one way of continuing influence on perceptions, not solely Black-White perceptions. A teammate on my flag football team at Longwood University is Hispanic. Another teammate complimented the Hispanic player on his impressive speed. His response was “well of course I am great at running how do you think I got here? Crossing the border legally?” This self-applied stereotype was intended to be humorous but the reality is that these situations are influencing further stereotyping and continuing White ethnocentrism.

In America today prejudice surfaces frequently. Since I have been in college I have encountered numerous instances of deliberate prejudice use. Last fall semester I was a junior and visiting Hampden Sydney’s campus on a Saturday night. I noticed a boy sitting alone at the party not speaking to anyone. I approached him and we got into a
lengthy conversation. He was a freshman and confessed that he was having a hard time making friends. I reassured him that he would find great people to surround himself with soon. I also offered him an open invitation to visit Longwood’s campus so I could introduce him to my friends. After we finished talking I turned around to walk inside and realized that many people were staring at me. Later that night three boys took me aside. They actually said to me that they were genuinely concerned and did not understand why I was talking to “the weird black kid”. They also made racist sexual jokes and taunted me for “having jungle fever”. Prejudice attacks are casually thrown around in many contexts. Evil perceptions and circumstances, similar to my example, provide evidence linking the existence of prejudice to the continuation of narrow Black-White perceptions.

The United States still has cultural challenges to address regarding ethnocentrism, stereotypes, prejudice and how they correlate to persistence of Black-White perceptions. All individuals have to take responsibility for stopping occurrences like the examples I shared. Our culture will only develop if the perceptions of its people are influenced in ways that do not support intercultural communication barriers such as ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice. It would be beneficial to create cultural norms against these communication barriers.

References:


In the United States culture there is an overall consistent understanding of the rules governing proxemics, kinesics, chronemics, silence, territoriality, and olfactics. These terms are defined in our class text *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community*, written by Fred E. Jandt. Beginning with proxemics, this term is described as a person’s use of personal space (Jandt, 2013, p.114). Kinesics includes body language or gestures, movements of the body, expression of face, and eye contact (Jandt, 2013, p.115). Examining how we use our time is the study of chronemics (Jandt, 2013, p.121). We also engage in silence with communication; silence in conversation can represent a range of connotations depending on the situation (Jandt, 2013, p.123). Territoriality is a person’s declaration of space and it can signify an intended message (Jandt, 2013, p.126). The final term, Olfactics is the study of interaction by smell (Jandt, 2013, p.126).

Within the United States culture proxemics is highly valued. We define distances between others and ourselves as what is appropriate based on the relationship we have with the person to whom we are interacting with. Our text identifies four areas of proxemics- intimate, personal, casual, and public (Jandt, 2013, p.114). An example of the intimate level of proxemics can be applied to romantically involved couples. Romantic couples are comfortable being at a close physical distance. They display their affection by holding hands, standing closely, and kissing lip to lip. In the article titled *Proxemics: Some Challenges and Strategies in Nonverbal Communication*, the author mentions a quote by Hall describing intimate space being a sphere of privacy, which is valued as sacred (Prahbu, 2010, p.10). If a devoted romantic partner has their intimate space
invaded by a stranger or someone whom they are not familiar with, their physical
intimate space has been threatened and or violated, resulting in a sense of discomfort.

   Gestures, body movements, facial expressions, and eye contact are a large part of
communication. The use of kinesics within the United States is important in
understanding complete communication. Hand gestures in the United States represent a
person’s intention of attitude that is represented in the action of the nonverbal. For
example, imagine you are a Longwood student and meeting the President of Longwood
University for the first time. What is the appropriate greeting of introduction? In the U.S.
we value respecting our seniors and people who are in honored positions. The formal and
courteous use of kinesics when meeting the President would involve the student
extending their right hand for a firm handshake while simultaneously holding strong eye
contact with the President. This gesture of kinesics is a sign of respect. If this interaction
played out differently, the president might believe that the student is intentionally being
disrespectful, which would break the norm of our culture.

   Punctuality is an aspect of chronemics that is important in the United States. Our
study of chronemics is based on being on time or even early for scheduled meetings. In
the American business world punctuality is extremely crucial in an ordinary workday.
We consider it unacceptable if a subordinate is late to a meeting or late walking into
work. If your boss witnesses you coming into work late, it could cost an American their
job. Our culture is impatient and we do not tolerate lateness. This can also be applied to
our Longwood University academics handbook. The rules state specific punishments for
late work, and we are not given warnings. If you hand in a paper a day late ten percentage
points will be deducted from your assignment grade. These examples provide evidence of our cultures value in structured and planned timing- the idea of chronemics.

Silence is used as a communication tactic across cultures. Within our culture silence can represent a range of meanings within communication. Our culture finds silence to be awkward or uncomfortable in most situations. In a classroom setting silence most generally is a sign to the teacher or professor that the class is unprepared or preoccupied in other thoughts not relevant to class material. Most everyone has been caught in a position when they were unprepared for class, whether it was that you did not complete the assignment, you don’t have the book, or you were too busy typing a text message under the desk. Given this scenario your professor calls on you, “Gabby, what do you think about the author’s perspective on intercultural communication?” You’re stuck. Silence is building between you and the professor and your classmates are desperately trying to get your attention and whisper you the answer. Why? Because silence in this situation is uncomfortable and your classmates are feeling awkward tension building in the room and feeling bad for you as they watch your face turn bright red. This circumstance is one of the many meanings of silence in the United States culture.

Territoriality is a serious variable in communication. It is the space that a person has clearly identified as their territory or ownership of space. It is common in the United States for a middle class family of two parents and two children to own a home and have individual designated bedrooms for each child. Siblings are often protective over what they consider as “theirs”. Imagine the children in this family consist of the eldest daughter being 17 years old and the youngest daughter is 13 years old. The oldest
daughter does not allow her sibling to enter her room without permission because she believes it is an invasion of her privacy and it is her room—she is claiming ownership over the space and sending a message of warning. When she catches her younger sister in her closet the older daughter is immediately infuriated and in following up with her message of warning the older sister tells on her younger sister to their parents. In the United States we find territoriality as our own private space that is rightfully ours and when we feel an intruder has threatened our territory we react to protect our claimed space.

Even our sense of smell plays a part in communications. When we identify a smell it is because of the olfactory epithelium in our noses, which then directs a link of information to our brains and results in the control over our bodies feelings and emotions (Jandt, 2013, p. 126-127). An example to display the study of olfactics can be summed up in this . Excite Deodorant Advertisement:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQFikDj8Twk&feature=fvwrel. This clip is a perfect explanation of how women are affected by olfactics across cultures. The commercial shows female angels falling from heaven because they are attracted the man’s combination of pheromones (his sweat) and the scent of the Axe product. This smell triggers a sexual emotion in the women depicted as angels in the commercial.

The rules governing proxemics, kinesics, chronemics, silence, territoriality, and olfactics in the United States are defined within the standards and norms of our culture. These variables exist within other cultures but the meanings identified with them are or can be exceptionally different. It is important when engaging in intercultural
communication to understand the differences regarding these forms of nonverbal communication.

References:


YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQFikDj8Tkw&feature=fvwrel