Communication:

Interpersonal Communication: *interactional process between 2 people (dyad), either face-to-face or mediated forms.*

Unit of Analysis -- The unit of analysis for interpersonal communication is the dyad or the relationship itself.

Interpersonal Perspectives -- There are four specific perspectives from which to study interpersonal communication:
1. **Relational (Qualitative):** The roles of sender and receiver are shared by two people simultaneously in order to create meaning.
2. **Situational (Contextual):** Occurs between two people in a specific context.
3. **Quantitative:** Dyadic interactions, including impersonal communication.
4. **Functional (Strategic):** For the purpose of achieving interpersonal goals.

List of Representative Theories

- Attribution Theory (Heider)
- Cognition & Interpersonal
- Cognitive Complexity
- Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger)
- Communication Accommodation Theory
- Communication Privacy Management
- Communication Pragmatics / Interactional View (Watzlawick)
- Competence (Spitzberg & Cupach)
- Conflict
- Constructivism (Delia)
- Coordinated Management of Meaning (Pearce & Cronan)
- Culture, Meaning, and Interpersonal
- Emotional Communication
- Expectancy Violation (Burgoon)
- Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (Schutz)
- Health
- Identity Management Theory
- Interpersonal Deception (Buller & Burgoon)
- Interpersonal Influence
- Language
- Marital Communication (Fitzpatrick)
- Politeness & Face Threatening Acts
- Relational Dialectics (Baxter & Montgomery)
- Social Exchange & Investment Model (Thibaut & Kelley)
- Social Networks Theory
- Social Penetration (Altman & Taylor)
- Stages of Relationship Development (Knapp)
- Supportive Communication & Social Support
- Symbolic Interaction
- Systems Theory (Family)
- Uncertainty Reduction (Berger & Calabrese)
Attribution Theory

Explanation of Theory: Attribution Theory attempts to explain causes of behavior. It attempts to explain the causes of people's behavior and attributing or explaining reasons as to why people behave the way they do.


Metatheoretical Assumptions:
Attribution Theory is a humanistic theory. There is not a direct relationship between our behavior and its causes. There can be a variety of behaviors that are perceived resulting from a variety of causes. Because Attribution Theory is Humanistic, Epistemological assumption says that there are multiple realities, or truths as opposed to only one truth. Humanistic Ontological assumption says that our human nature is of free will and not predetermined. Lastly, Axiological assumption says that as opposed to objectivity, values are important in studying the discipline of Communications.

Strengths of Attribution Theory
One of the significant strengths of attribution theory is that it has heuristic value and has contributed to many other research studies, particularly in marketing research, law and criminology.

Weaknesses of Attribution Theory
One limitation of attribution theory is that it assumes that humans are rational actors and are unaffected by emotions, but this is rarely the case. Often times our emotions play a significant role in how we attribute others behavior as well as our own.

Critique:
Being a Humanistic Theory, its critique is based on Farrell's categories that make up a good theory. These categories are, Analytic Consistency, Methodological Rigor, Intuitive Credibility, and Heuristic Value (1987). This is good theory based on its strong Heuristic Value, because it is very applicable to many different situations and can be perceived in many different ways. It also has Intuitive Credibility. The theory makes sense relative to our actual communicative practice. In other words, it has practicality. On the other hand, this theory is not as refined as other humanistic communication theories.

Example:
Say you are expecting a very important phone call but you have to run out to the store. Your roommate is the only one home and you tell her to be sure to answer the phone because of this call. She says that she will take a message. When you return home, you ask your roommate if she answered the call and took a good message, and she said someone called, but she forgot who and how to reach them. There are several different reasons that this could have happened. One, she could have gotten a call right before your call, learning that her grandmother was ill, and she could have been too upset to remember to write it down. Or, the caller could have been short with her and not wanted to leave a message, and so on. As you can see, there are several different kinds of causal attributions to behavior, for example, situation causes, personal effects, ability to do something, obligation to do something ect. The attribution assigned to behavior centers on perceived causes. It is important to look very carefully at the context in which the behavior took place.


Attribution Theory is part of the Socio-psychological Tradition and explains how individuals go through a process that makes inferences about observed behavior. Attribution theory assumes that we make attributions, or social judgments, as a way to clarify or predict behavior. Attribution theory assumes that we are sense-making creatures and that we draw conclusions of the actions that we observe.

Steps to the Attribution Process
1 The first step of the attribution process is to observe the behavior or action.
2 The Second step is to make judgments of interactions and the intention of that particular action.
3 The last step of the attribution process is making the attribution which will be either internal, where the cause is related the person, or external, where the cause of the action is circumstantial.
An example of this process is when a student fails a test, an observer may choose to attribute their behavior to internal causes, such as they did not study because they are lazy or have poor work ethic. They might also attribute their behavior to external factors such as the test was too difficult or they had a lot of other stressful things going on in their life that caused them to be
distracted. We also make attributions of our own behavior. Using this same example if it were you who received a failing test score you might make an internal attribution, such as “I just don’t understand this material” or you could make an external attribution, such as this test was just too difficult.

**Fundamental Attribution Error**

As we make attributions, we may fall victim to the fundamental attribution error which is when we overemphasize internal attributions for others and underestimate external attributions.

**Actor-Observer Bias**

Similar to the fundamental attribution error, we may overestimate external attributions for our own behavior and underestimate internal attributions.

### Historical Foundations
- **Fritz Heider (1958).** Social psychologist who established the foundational premises of attribution theory and defined attribution as a three-step process.
- **Harold Kelley (1967).** Specified three aspects affecting attribution formation: **consistency** of the behavior across people, **distinctiveness** of the behavior across different contexts, and **consensus** of the behavior across most people and contexts/situations.
- **Edward Jones & Victor Harris (1967); Lee Ross (1977).** Fundamental Attribution Error; Actor-Observer Bias.
- **Bernard Weiner (1986).** Investigated how attributions influence emotion and achievement motivation.
  - Advanced a more specific framework which outlines 3 attribution dimensions.
  - Defined achievement attributions in terms of (1) effort, (2) ability, (3) level of task difficulty, & (4) luck
  - Linked attribution type to emotional reactions to success/failure.

### Conceptual Overview

Attribution theory is concerned with the ways in which we attribute causality to, or explain, human behaviors (of ourselves and others). Heider (1958) outlined a three-stage attribution process of (1) recognizing a behavior, (2) judging the behavior to be deliberate/intentional, & (3) determining whether behavior was compulsory or voluntary.

Heider’s levels of perceived responsibility are: (1) event association, (2) event causation, (3) foreseeability, (4) causation intentionality, and (5) justification.

Attributions are classified along three key dimensions (Weiner, 1974, 1985; 1986):
- **Locus of Control.** Internal (or dispositional) attributions assign causality to factors within the person whereas external (or situational) attributions confer causality to a force or agent outside of the person.
- **Stability.** Viewing causal factors as persistent over time (stable) or contingent upon time/context (unstable).
- **Controllability.** Actors also perceive factors which determine behavior/events as either within the limits of their power (controllable) or as beyond their individual capacities (uncontrollable).

### Major Assumptions

- Attributions arise from the inherent human need to reduce uncertainty.
- Attributions are central to issues of motivation, emotion, and blame/accountability.
- We are prone to a fundamental attribution error, or tendency to attribute behaviors to dispositional factors within a person rather than situational factors outside of a person.
- We are inclined toward **self-serving (actor-observer) biases** in which we typically hold others more accountable for their behaviors/actions than we hold ourselves – i.e. we tend to attribute behaviors of self conversely to the fundamental attribution error.

### Attribution Theory in Communication Research

- **Conflict, Blame, & Accountability**
  - Attributions of others’ intentions, locus of control, & stability influence actors’ conflict strategies (Sillars, 1980)
  - Actor-observer & self-serving biases are integral to blame & attributions during conflict interactions.
    - competence and appropriateness of conflict messages (Canary & Spitzburg, 1990)
    - blame for spreading of HIV & AIDS(Pittam & Gallois, 1997)
- **Persuasion & Compliance-Gaining**
  - Actors’ persuasive attempts and messages may be influenced by attributions of others’ behaviors.
• For e.g. Wilson & Cruz (1993) found that when actors encounter noncompliance, they attribute it to internal, controllable factors and respond with persistent, antisocial strategies.
  o “Tactical attributions” can be used to elicit partner responses/actions (Weber & Vangelisti, 1991)

➢ Emotion & Support in Relationships
  o The nature of actors’ supportive communications are more strongly determined by self-formed attributions rather than by the emotions elicited from the target recipient (Hullett, 2001)
  o MacGeorge (2001) noted that the nature of the interaction goal may impact this, though.
  o See also Fincham & Bradbury (1992); Harvey & Manusov (2001)

➢ Nonverbal Elements in Attribution
  o Evidence that negative NVs are viewed as intentional, stable, and controllable while positive NVs are seen as external and unstable (Manusov, 1990; Manusov, Floyd, & Kerssen-Griep, 1997)

➢ Attributions of Success/Failure (in academics)
  o Roghaar & Vangelisti (1996) found that age may influence responsibility attributions.
  o Berger (1973) found that interpersonal attraction may influence attributions of success/failure.

References (theoretical/foundational)

References (communication articles)
Cognition and Interpersonal Communication:
Chapter 6: Goals and Knowledge Structures in Social Interaction (Charles Berger)

- Social interaction is a goal-directed activity; to achieve the goal, knowledge is necessary
- Two types of common ground:
  - A. Communal common ground - community you belong to
  - B. Personal common ground - previous personal experience
- The more common ground, the more accurate & efficient communication is.
- What kinds of knowledge are important to achieve goals? (p. 184)
  - A. Role; B. Person; C. Emotion; D. Procedural; E. Context; F. General or specific
- To be useful, knowledge must be organized so that it is easily retrievable from memory when needed

The Nature and Significance of Goals in Social Interaction and Cognition
a. Adaptation and Goal-Directed Action
  - Human action is goal directed and human cognition is shaped by this goal directedness
  - Use words and/or actions to achieve goals; “reading” others’ intention is also goal directed behavior
b. Goal Structures in Cognition and Action
  - Action is organized around hierarchies of goals (e.g. Case of mailing a letter)
c. Goals and the Meaning of Social Interaction
  - We consider social interaction in terms of goal achievement. e.g.) Even when we talk about relationships with others, we interpret their interactions as goal achievement activities.
d. Goal Embeddedness
  - During interactions, we can focus on only limited goals.
  - The focus is likely to be on concrete goals. >>> Q4
  - Automatically activated goals would interfere with goals being pursued.
  - Make sure achieving our abstract goals will make us satisfied.

Organization of Interaction-Relevant Knowledge
How is knowledge organized, activated, accessed, and used to achieve goals?
- Communication Routines
  - Because we pursue recurring goals, our interaction must be routine.
    - e.g.) An example of ordering coffee.
- Plans, Script, and Memory Organization Packets
  - Because of the above argument, sequences of actions and discourses associated with goal attainment should be represented COGNITIVELY.
  - Knowledge organized in hierarchical fashion; abstract actions are at top & concrete actions are below them.
  - Plans often used to achieve goals become script.
  - Memory Organization Packet (MOP) organizes various scenes which are used to achieve the same goals.
    - Previous scenes generally used are modified to achieve similar but different goals by attaching specific scripts.

Knowledge Structures in Social Interaction
- Imagined Interactions -- Imagining an expected interaction improves performance.
- Planning, Plans, and Interaction Performance
  - Plan Complexity -- Complex plans are more effective; if plans are questioned, we make a more complex plan.
  - The more we commit to goals, the more complex plans we make.
  - If our planned action fails, our next plan will be more effective.

EXAMPLE of Cognition & Communication in Literature:

Introduction and Rationale
- Purpose: To investigate the complexity of the goal concept in an empirical investigation of how various facets of goals influence linguistic message features.
Five facets of goals - IV
1: Primary – They frame what an interaction is about.
2: Intensity – How important goals are.
3: Complexity – The extent that individuals pursue multiple goals.
4: Strain – How the multiple goals conflict with each other.
5: Challenge: How difficult it is to achieve goals.

Two linguistic features of messages - DV
1: Focal center - Information to which a speaker attends, as indicated by repeated reference to a topic or by the grammatical subject phrased on an utterance.
2: Message embellishment – Information which is used to generate favorable impressions or make an explanation more coherent.

Context: Problematic events
Hypothesis 1: Primary goal - Focal center
Hypothesis 2 a: Goal intensity - Focal center
   2b: Goal intensity - Message embellishment (Positive association)
Hypothesis 3: Goal complexity - Message embellishment (Positive association)
Hypothesis 4: Goal strain - Message embellishment (Positive association)
Hypothesis 5: The degree of goal challenge - Message embellishment (Positive association)

Study 1
Main results:
- H1 was partially supported: The goal to maintain the relationship was positively associated with a higher proportion of relationship-focused clauses and the goal to accept fault was a higher proportion of self-focused clauses.
- H2a was partially and H2b was fully supported: For H2a, Self-focused clauses was positively correlated with the importance of the goals to maintain the relationship, to accept fault, and to manage positive face. For H2b, intensity of five goals was associated with message embellishment.
- Results were consistent with H3 and H 5 and inconsistent with H4

Discussion: Primary goal, goal intensity, goal complexity, and goal challenge influences the focal center and embellishment of responses to problematic events in close relationships.

Limitations: 1 – Validity of recalled messages / 2 – Skewed frequency of primary goals

Study 2 – addressed limitations of study 1
Main results:
- H1 was partially supported: Primary goal had an impact on the proportion of clauses focusing on the self. The goal to accept fault was positively associated with self-focused clauses and the goal to manage the conversation was negatively associated with self-focused clauses.
- H2a was not and H2b was partially supported: Results for H2b showed significant associations between message embellishment and the intensity of the goals to maintain the relationship and to manage positive face.
- Results were consistent with H3 and H 5 and inconsistent with H4.

Discussion: The influence of primary goal was only evident in the proportion of self-focused clauses. Additionally, importance ratings for the goals to manage the relationship and to manage positive face were positively associated with message embellishment.

Limitations: 1 – Failed manipulation failed / 2 – Not actual talk / 3 – Questioned external validity

Conclusion: These results of two studies showed that goal challenge, intensity, and complexity were associated with message embellishment. Focal center was predicted by a respondent’s primary message goal to a limited extent.
COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS
George Kelly (1955) Personal Construct Theory

Individuals are “scientist-like” they attempt to understand, predict, and control events.

Personal constructs-cognitive “templates” thru which they seek to understand the world. Contrasting judgments, systematically organized & interrelated --> predictions/inferences

Measurement: Role Construct Repertory Test (Reptest)
Client (or subject) gives persons’ names for a number of different roles; subjects sort names so that 2 are perceived as similar in an important way & different from the 3rd person in the same respect.

James Bieri (1955), argues the structure of one's cognitive system (way to actively interpret the world) is key to understanding human behavior from perceptual perspectives; the structure of cognitive system is determined by its "cognitive-simplicity."

Role of perception in behavior:
- Active process: transforming sensory data into conceptual scheme (relates to previous experiences/learning)
- Conceptual schemes are individualized, understanding structural differences help predict individual behavior

Posits dimension of Complexity-Simplicity:
- Measuring complexity of perceptions to events --> inferences about overall complexity of one's cognitive system
- Cognitively complex: construct system that differentiates highly among persons
- Cognitively simple: construct system that poorly differentiates among persons

Complexity: operationally defined by "variability of responses given to a finite realm of stimuli" (Bieri, 1955, p. 122; see also Bieri, 1955)
- How many different ways can people perceive a particular set of events?
- > alternative perceptions available, then > alternative behaviors are available in those situations

Cognitive Complexity defined: "the degree of differentiation in an individual’s construct system, i.e., the relative number of different dimensions of judgment used by a person" (Tripodi & Bieri, 1964, p. 122; see also Bieri, 1955)

Complexity of cognitive system affect the perception of people/events?
- Cognitive complexity affect predictive behavior of others
- CC relates to accurate predictions regarding differences b/w self & others; CS relates to inaccurate projections

Measurement: Bieri Index
- Subjects must supply names to fit a series of role descriptions & complete a 10x10 construct-by-person grid; investigator supplies constructs & subjects indicate degree in which they apply using a 6 pt. scale.
- Complexity determined by comparing ratings b/w constructs

Walter Crockett (1965), interprets Bieri's work and presents "differentiation" and "integration"

"Get inside your head"
- Centers on the categories of personality & action that we use to define other's character
- More concerned with the construct structure than with the content of judgments

Measurement: Role Category Questionnaire (RCQ)
- Subject identifies people fitting various role descriptions, then is given 5 min. to write an impression of each role person (they are asked to describe the person as fully as possible
- The # of constructs are counted (personality/behavior)
- Total score = sum across several descriptions; higher score = > cognitively complex

KEY RESEARCHERS/THEORISTS
| James BIERI- Cognitive Complexity-Simplicity | Beverly SYPHER/Theodore ZORN - CC enhances org. effectiveness |
THEORY OVERVIEW

- Underlying Premise: interpersonal constructs are the foundation through which all social perception processes occur, personality traits may influence a person's complexity level (Burleson, 1998).
- Cognitive complexity is an information processing variable; developed systems of personal constructs contribute to greater info processing & expertise in particular areas (i.e. elaborate knowledge about American politics vs. simple ideas regarding music/entertainment).
  - O'Keefe & Sypher (1981) Construct system becomes more differentiated as it develops (Orthogenetic Principle), can be understood as a progression that moves from simple to complex & specific. (i.e. infancy → adulthood)
  - Constructs are learned through interaction and have social origins (i.e. culture = significant factor), often polarized (i.e. good - bad)
- Broad empirical data support the conclusion that a more cognitively complex person is more interpersonally competent/possesses more social skills than less complex person (Burleson, 1998).

CC definition: "A sophisticated set of mental constructs that enables a person to distinguish subtle differences among people" (Griffin, 1991)

Complexity defined in terms of 3 components (Knapp & Daly, 2002):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Differentiation</td>
<td># of different constructs one has to describe others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Integration</td>
<td>Degree to which constructs cohere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Articulation/Abstractiveness</td>
<td>Level of abstraction that constructs have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual differences in complexity are reflected in interpersonal communication/functioning (Crockett, 1965)

CC associated with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Perception</td>
<td>Perspective-taking, I.D. other's states, info integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Production</td>
<td>Person-centered Messages, Communicative Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Reception</td>
<td>Responses to complex/person-centered mssgs., Listening,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Mgmt.</td>
<td>Topic management, planning processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH & THEORY CRITIQUE

Contemporary Research

- Technology/Media
  - Experiments addressing various dialogue structures involved in human-computer interaction, argues that CC increases when users have to learn more rules (Bastide et. al, 2005)
  - Research conducted on relationship between news frames & political predispositions and a persons cognitively complex responses (Shah, et. al, 2005)

- Culture/language
  - CC of cultural representations in bicultural/monocultural individuals to evaluate possible cognitive consequences of biculturalism (Benet-Martínez, et al. 2006)

- Family/Relationships:
- How family communication patterns, cognitive complexity, and interpersonal competence influence certain adolescent risk behaviors (Koesten & Anderson, 2004).
- High CC persons creates messages more effective at making romantic partners feel guilty (Bacue & Samter).
- Assess CC among couples, men & women provide > personal constructs w/ acquaintances of similar gender. Substantial correlation between participants & their partners in terms of CC, reflects mutual sociality in development of a couple's role relationship (Adams-Webber, 2001).
- Student perceptions of communication skills for teacher-student relationships; CC positively associated with regulative skill & negatively related to narrative and persuasive skills in relationships (Brooks, 2003).

Organizational
- Examining CC in congregation context, suggesting that higher CC is not required of persons who make up learning congregations (education happens as a result of identifying/solving probs, examining assumptions, etc.)
- Non-verbal research, emotional support, lying/deception, prisoners, environmental issues, etc.

Critique
- Much more research is focused on message production than reception; more research could focus on the role that CC plays in the process of message reception (Burleson states the need for hypothesis testing regarding how the effect of CC comes about in mssg. reception)
- Are high complexity levels a negative factor in basic/routine social situations? (i.e. Expertise is inappropriate, a kind of “trained incapacity” in simple situations)
- Research is often limited because conversational interactions are observed outside their natural settings
- Training modules/programs?
- Socioeconomic considerations?

KEY REFERENCES

PERSONAL CONSTRUCTS/CONSTRUCTIVISM:

COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY:
Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Leon Festinger, 1957)

Overview of Cognitive Dissonance Theory

The theory of Cognitive Dissonance, part of the Cybernetic Tradition, explains how humans are consistency seekers and attempt to reduce their dissonance, or discomfort, in new situations. When individuals encounter new information or new experiences they categorize the information based on their preexisting attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs. If the new encounter does not coincide with their preexisting assumptions, then dissonance is likely to occur. When dissonance does occur, individuals are motivated to reduce the dissonance they experience by avoiding situations that would either cause the dissonance or increase the dissonance. For this reason, cognitive dissonance is considered a drive state that encourages motivation to achieve consonance and reduce dissonance. An example of cognitive dissonance would be if someone holds the belief that maintaining a healthy lifestyle is important, but they don’t regularly work out or eat healthy, they may experience dissonance between their beliefs and their actions. If there is a significant amount of dissonance, they may be motivated to change their attitudes and work out more or eat healthier foods. They may also be inclined to avoid situations that will point out the fact that their attitudes and beliefs are inconsistent, such as avoiding the gym or not reading health reports.

The Selection Process

1 Selective Exposure- is a method for reducing dissonance that only seeking information that is consonant with ones current beliefs, thoughts, or actions.

2 Selective Attention- is a method for reducing dissonance by only paying attention to particular information or parts of information that is consonant with current beliefs, thoughts, or actions.

3 Selective Interpretation- is a method for reducing dissonance by interpreting ambiguous information so that it seems consistent with ones beliefs, thoughts, or actions.

4 Selective Retention- when an individual only remembers information that is consistent with their current beliefs.

Types of Cognitive Relationships

According to Cognitive Dissonance Theory there are three types of cognitive relationships; Consonant relationships, Dissonant relationships, and Irrelevant relationships. Consonant relationships are when two elements, such as your beliefs and actions, are in equilibrium with each other or coincide. Dissonant Relationships are when two elements are not in equilibrium and cause dissonance. Irrelevant Relationships are when two elements do not possess a meaningful relationship with one another, they are unrelated and do not cause dissonance.

Strengths of Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive Dissonance Theory has had a significant impact in the Communication Discipline. It heuristic in that it has allowed for many other scholars to further their research and use Cognitive Dissonance theory as a basis for their own studies. It has been particularly useful in examining the relationship between cognitions the relationship between behaviors and attitudes.

Weakness of Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Many critics of Cognitive Dissonance theory argue that it lacks testability and practical utility. Many argue that it is a theory that is unable to be proven incorrect and therefore is not testable. It also assumes that in order for people to act the magnitude of dissonance must be great, but that is not always the case. Sometimes we adjust our attitudes and beliefs even if we do not experience any dissonance. Also, Cognitive Dissonance theory does not take into consideration when individuals do allow for dissonance in their lives and are not motivated to change their thoughts or behaviors.
Communication Privacy Management Theory (Sandra Petronio 2002)

how people negotiate openness and privacy in concern to communicated information. This theory focuses on how people in relationships manage boundaries which separate the public from the private (Petronio, 2002).

Boundaries An individual’s private information is protected by the individual’s boundaries. The permeability of these boundaries are ever changing, and allow certain parts of the public, access to certain pieces of information belonging to the individual. This sharing occurs only when the individual has weighed their need to share the information against their need to protect themselves. This risk assessment is used by couples when evaluating their relationship boundaries. The disclosure of private info to a partner may result in greater intimacy, but it may also result in the discloser becoming more vulnerable.

Co-ownership of Information When someone chooses to reveal private information to another person they are making that person a co-owner of the information. Co-ownership comes with rules, responsibilities, and rights which the discloser of the information and receiver of it negotiate. Examples of such rules would be: Can the information be disclosed? When can the information be disclosed? To whom can the information be disclosed? And how much of the information can be disclosed? The negotiation of these rules can be complex, the rules can be explicit as well as implicit, and they can be violated.

A Rule Based Process Rules, much like an individual’s decision to disclose information, are developed using the following criteria: risk assessment, cultural expectations, gender differences, personal motivations and situational demands. Certain criteria can be more prominent when managing boundaries depending on the context. For example, if you’re called to testify in a court of law against the co-owner of information, and the cost of not testifying would be imprisonment, the situational demands are the primary criteria you’ll use for managing your boundaries.

Boundary Turbulence What Petronio refers to as “Boundary Turbulence” occurs when rules are not mutually understood by co-owners, and when a co-owner of information deliberately violates the rules. This usually results in some kind of conflict, is not uncommon, and often results in one party becoming more apprehensive about future revelation of info to violator.

Strengths and Weaknesses strengths are that it recognizes disclosed information can still be private and that access to that info is determined by all parties privy to it not one party in particular. Second strength of theory is that it includes numerous criteria in its explanation of how boundary management rules are established between co-owners of information. A weakness is: theory can’t consider all influences that go into decision to disclose or retain private info (boundary management).

Foundations of CPM (Petronio, 2002) ---- self-disclosure is not always positive.

- Acknowledges that people struggle with whether to disclose private information, even within families.
- Designed to “understand everyday privacy issues that families face.”
- People own their private information and place a personal boundary around that information.
- As people disclose private information, they “bestow various degrees of ownership” to others. The disclosees of private info. become co-owners of private information and part of collective boundaries shared by discloser and disclosee.
- People use privacy rules to help them decide whether to reveal or conceal private information. These rules consider cultural issues, motivations, situational factors, gender criteria, and the cost of revealing.
- Families operate on rules, e.g., not telling Grandma something; not telling non-family members about Uncle’s alcoholism; not talking about a gay brother’s sexuality.
- Rules are also used to manage co-owned information between the discloser and the recipient of the disclosure (this process is called boundary coordination). When privacy rules are broken (e.g. due to a breach of privacy, or a family privacy dilemma), boundary turbulence occurs.
- Turbulence is problematic in that it disrupts family equilibrium, but helpful in that privacy breaches force families to look at the reasons why the family’s rules broke down and adjust their rules.

CPM in Families -- When it comes to managing their privacy boundaries, families can have one of the following orientations:

- high permeability (families members are fully open either within their families or with outsiders);
- moderate permeability (more guarded with regards to internal and external disclosures); or
- low permeability (private information heavily guarded both within the family and with outsiders).

Privacy dilemmas (“conversational hot potatoes”) are particularly encountered in families. There are four types:

- confidant dilemma (by keeping a secret, the confidant may be putting the confidant at harm),
- accidental dilemma (finds out private info about family member and telling someone would cause harm),
- illicit family privacy dilemma (person snoops/finds out something harmful either for them or their family member),
- interdependence dilemma (family member has to decide what is best for him/her or another family member).
Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)

Historical Foundations
CAT was originally introduced in the 1970’s by Howard Giles. Then called Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT), it was born out of Giles’ and others’ dissatisfaction with the field of sociolinguistics at the time, as well as their desire to see the study of language take on a more theoretical quality. The theory’s original purpose was to understand changes in speech patterns during social interactions, but the theory soon evolved to encompass a broader range of communication behaviors, even nonverbal behaviors. Historically, this theory can generally be broken up into two phases:

- SAT (1970's-1987); focused primarily on convergence and divergence in conversation
- CAT (1988- p); focuses on communication in variety of in-group contexts (from interdisciplinary perspective)

Several other theories have contributed to the development of CAT, including Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1973), and Similarity-Attraction Theory (Byrne, 1971). Similarity-Attraction Theory has generally been dropped from recent writings on CAT, but Social Identify Theory and Attribution Theory remain foundational to the current theoretical framework.

Key Researchers/Theorists -- Howard Giles (at UCSB) Ph.D., D.Sc. in Psychology from University of Bristol in England (where Communication Accommodation Theory was developed)

Overview of Theory -- In communication, style decisions are not just a matter of our background and personality. They can also be intentional. Additionally, stylistic concerns are not always a secondary, less-important matter when it comes to understanding what is happening in communication.

In conversation, we may see people interacting from different backgrounds—social, economic, gender, nationality, age, etc. How do they negotiate identities and communication styles in order to create, maintain, or decrease social distance within their interaction with each other? This is what Communication Accommodation Theory tries to predict. People either:

- Converge—become more like their speaking partner (most research has focused on convergence)
- Diverge—become less like speaking partner
- Maintain—continue at the level of distance with which they began the interaction

Convergence -- Language is part of what creates convergence, but it is also influenced by things like dress, hairstyles, cosmetics, eating patterns—whatever you might use to signal identity. Speech can be adapted in various ways—speech rate, pauses, utterance length, accents, nonverbals (such as smiling, gazing), etc.

Convergence is often motivated by a desire to gain approval. Similar people attract each other—the more similar we are to our conversation partner, the more we get along, the more respect we obtain, the more social rewards we gain. It also improves effectiveness of communication if common style is reached, increases predictability, lowers uncertainty, and lowers anxiety. Drawbacks of convergence include loss of personal and social identity.

Attempts to converge are usually rated positively by receivers. It does depend on the perceived motivations, but usually, all participants in a conversation are rated more attractive when convergence happens. Convergence is context-dependent—for example, what is the appropriate language to be used in the situation. People in subordinate positions are expected to converge upward. However, full convergence can be seen with distrust—native-speaker-like fluency from a non-native-speaker.

Divergence --- Divergence accentuates differences. It is often motivated by a desire to emphasize distinctiveness and tends to happen more with intergroup communication than interindividual communication—when we are seeing ourselves as representative of a group. It can also be used to encourage one speaker to modify their communication to become more effective. For example, if someone is talking too loud or fast and you purposely talk slow and at moderate volume to highlight where you would like them to be.
**Maintenance** --- maintaining original style regardless of the speaking partner. It can be a result of insensitivity to others’ styles, or it can also be a deliberate attempt to affirm your own identity without emphasizing it.

Convergence or divergence can be assessed in terms of whether it is upward or downward, and this usually judged by societal valence. For example, upward convergence might be an interviewee adopting prestige patterns of an upper class interviewer. Downward divergence could be emphasizing minority heritage. An important part of this theory is that communication exists in a sociohistorical context. It’s not just individuals interacting; they are also representatives of groups. The groups have current & past relationships, which influences accommodation

**Review of Key Literature**
Giles, H., Taylor, D.M., & Bourhis, R. 1973. Towards a theory of interpersonal accommodation through language: Some Canadian data, *Language in Society*, 2(2), 177-192. This is possibly the first article to fully elaborate on Communication Accommodation Theory. The researchers gave Canadian English speakers a tape of a Canadian French speaker giving them directions for how to complete a drawing. The tape included an interaction with a cohort and the French speaker discussing which language should be used. The cohort tells the French-speaking “actor” to give directions in whatever language he/she wants. The actor either used French; a mix of French and English; English with heavy accent; or broken English with great struggle. These tactics were rated as progressively higher terms of accommodating to the English speakers. The French speaker was seen more favorably depending on how much he/she accommodated to Canadian English speaker’s language.

**Summary of Methods**
- Dyadic questionnaires (both members of a dyad report based on their interaction; e.g. grandparent studies)
- Group observation + interviews (work groups study)
- FFT analysis (“fast fourier transform” analysis; machine mimics the treatment of sound by the human ear)
- LTAS analysis (“long-term averaged spectra”; measurement of speech utterances)

**Critique of Theory**
- The theory oversimplifies the conversational act by limiting it to convergence-divergence patterns.
- The theory does not address the possibility of convergence and divergence happening in the same conversation by one or both parties
- While SAT has often been used to look at language differences, the theory does not explicitly address how race and/or ethnicity might play into the process of convergence-divergence.
- The theory does not take into account the dark side of communication or unreasonable levels of conflict during communication.

**Theoretical Articles**


**References**
Communication Pragmatics / Interactional View

Explanation of Theory:
“Relationships within a family system are interconnected and highly resistant to change. Communication among members has both a content and relationship component. The system can be transformed only when members receive outside help to reframe the relational punctuation.” (Griffin 3rd, p. 494.)

Theorist: Watzlavick, Beavin, & Jackson

Primary Article:

Individual Interpretations:
The Interactional View is also known as the theory of pragmatics because of the dependence on the particular situation at hand. Miscommunication occurs because people are not "speaking the same language." These languages contrast because people have different points of view from which they are speaking. When people's content and relationship component do not match up, miscommunication is likely to occur.

Metatheoretical Assumptions:
While this theory uses axioms, it seems that the theory is more humanistic. The axioms provide a framework for how communication takes place, but these axioms are only a framework. The theory is dependent upon the situation in order to explain what is really taking place. Each situation is unique, so there are multiple truths. Ontologically, the theory leans more toward free will. While the axioms are a framework, in a situation, people can choose to communicate in certain ways. Axiologically, the theory is value-laden since it is so dependent on independent interpretation.

Critique:
Many of the critiques of this theory are based upon scientific criteria, but since the theory is more humanistic, the humanistic criteria will be applied. The theory does seem to have analytical consistency, and heuristic value. Its methodological rigor is questionable since applying it to individual situations can make approaching this theory systematically difficult. While the theory seems practical, its application can be somewhat difficult. There have been many questions surrounding the axioms on which the theory is loosely based. These criticisms are not of great value since the actual axioms are supports for the theory, but not the sole basis.

Ideas and Implications:
This theory has many implications for everyday life. Since families often suffer from miscommunication, this theory is able to explain why such things take place. The theory's suggestion to reframe problems in order to gain a better understanding of what is going on seems like sound and practical advice.

Example:
A man and his wife are having a difficult time talking to one another about issues surrounding their child. The wife believes that the problems are a result of not having both parents around enough at home. The father feels that the problems are a normal part of adolescence and that the child will grow out of it. In fact, the child is suffering because of tremendous pressure to succeed at school. The pressure is coming from the child's teacher, not from the parents. Watzlawick would suggest that a discussion that would involve the child and both parents would prove beneficial because it would allow the parents to reframe their misinformed position and take action that would address the true problem. The parents could then speak with the teacher and reassure their child that he/she should try to perform their best, without feeling pressure from others.

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION: Feuerbach (1843); Simmel (1950; Buber (1958). Main Contributor: Gregory Bateson (1936):
1. Interaction patterns are symmetrical and complementary;
2. Communication has report (content) and command (relationship) functions;

KEY LITERATURE & RESEARCH: Pragmatics of Human Communication (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967) is one of the most widely cited texts in communication; The Interactional View (Watzlawick & Weakland); collection of related studies.

MAIN IDEAS: Shifted focus of communication research from cognitive aspects of individuals to the individual’s interaction within family system and patterns of behavior exchanged by individuals (Rogers, L.E. & Escuerdo, V., 2004.).
In every communication people seek to define/offer definitions of the nature of their relationships. Communication is circular, not linear (Jackson, D.D., 1977). Because systems resist change, people can’t change (reframe) their behavior (communication) without understanding certain rules:

**Five Axioms of Communication:** (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967):

1. One Cannot Not Communicate (in the presence of another, all behavior is communicative)
   Communication Options: Reject/Accept/Disqualify/Use Symptom
2. Human Beings Communicate Both Digitally (verbally) and Analogically (non verbally).
3. Communication = Content (what is said—conveys information) and Relationship (how it’s said & should be taken—defines nature of the relationship). To understand communication need to consider both elements.
4. The Nature of a Relationship Depends on How Both Parties Punctuate the Communication Sequence
   Punctuation often a source of conflict as we fail to realize that no one’s behavior can be said to cause the other’s.
5. All Communication is Either Symmetrical (equal power) or Complementary (differences in power).

Rogers and Farace coding system categorizes who has the power: one up (gain control); one down (yield control); one across (neutralize control)

**INFLUENCE ON OTHER THEORIES & Research:**

- **Relational Theory (Millar & Rogers):** How individuals relate to each other (and the patterns in that interaction) using content and relationship dimensions and studying symmetrical and complementary behavior (Sabourin, T.C., 2006).
- **Confirmation Theory (Buber):** Comes directly from interactional view: premise is people have innate need to be confirmed (validated) by others in order to achieve their own awareness of self (Watzlawick, et. al., 1967).
  - **Confirmation Theory:** “Confirmation in parent-adolescent relationships and adolescent openness: Toward extending confirmation theory” (Dailey, 2006).

**INTERACTIONAL VIEW CRITIQUE:**

- Huge influence on the field of interpersonal communication; foundation theory
- Process of “Reframing” Unclear (few tangible ways provided to improve one’s communication)
- Concept Confusion You “cannot not communicate” axiom is a bit unclear
- Subjectivity of dealing with human interactions, emotions, observations, etc. should be considered

**Relational Patterns of Interaction Theory (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson 1967)**

Relational Patterns of Interaction Theory of the cybernetic tradition, studies how relationships are defined by peoples’ interaction during communication (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). Gregory Bateson, Paul Watzlawick, et al. laid the groundwork for this theory and went on to become known as the Palo Alto Group --- became the foundation from which scholars in the field of communication approached the study of relationships.

**Ubiquitous Communication** The Palo Alto Group maintains that a person’s presence alone results in them, consciously or not, expressing things about themselves and their relationships with others (i.e., communicating) (Beavin, 1990). A person cannot avoid interacting, and even if they do, their avoidance may be read as a statement by others. This ubiquitous interaction leads to the establishment of “expectations” and “patterns” which are used to determine and explain relationship types.

**Expectations** Individuals enter communication with others having established expectations for their own behavior as well as the behavior of those they are communicating with. These expectations are either reinforced during the interaction, or new expectations are established which will be used in future interactions. These new expectations are created by new patterns of interaction, established expectations are a result of established patterns of interaction.

**Patterns of Interaction** Established patterns of interaction are created when a trend occurs regarding how two people interact with each other. There are two patterns of particular importance to the theory which form two kinds of relationships. These relationships are, symmetrical relationships and complementary relationships.
Symmetrical Relationships These relationships are established when the pattern of interaction is defined by two people responding to one and other in the same way. This is a common pattern of interaction within power struggles.

Complementary Relationships These relationships are established when the pattern of interaction is defined by two people responding to one and other in opposing ways. An example of such a relationship would be when one person is argumentative while the other is quiet.

Relational Control Relational control refers to who, within a relationship, is in control of it. The pattern of behavior between partners over time, not any individual’s behavior, defines the control within a relationship. Patterns of behavior involve individuals’ responses to others’ assertions. There are three kinds of responses: One-down responses are submissive to, or accepting of, another’s assertions. One-up responses are in opposition to, or counter, another’s assertions. One-across responses are neutral in nature.

Complementary Exchanges A complementary exchange occurs when a partner asserts a one-up message which the other partner responds to with a one-down response. When complementary exchanges are frequently occurring within a relationship, and the parties at each end of the exchange tend to remain uniform, it is a good indication of a complementary relationship existing.

Symmetrical Exchanges Symmetrical exchanges occur when one partner’s assertion is countered with a reflective response. So, when a one-up assertion is met with a one-up response, or when a one-down assertions is met with a one-down response, a symmetrical exchange occurs. When symmetrical exchanges are frequently occurring within a relationship, it is a good indication of a symmetrical relationship existing.

Strengths and Weaknesses strengths: (1) approaches relationships from a cybernetic perspective, taking into account interaction patterns, and how they systematically shape and reshape relationships over time. (2) effective and pragmatic approach to relationships because relationships do involve more than one person, they always contain expectations, they are always fluctuating to some extent, and they are influenced by interaction and not simply verbal communication. Weaknesses: (1) the fact that it focuses on two primary forms of relationships and exchanges. Every relationship is not going to fall into one of two categories, regardless of how broad those categories are. And (2) the culture and demographics of those within a relationship have a major impact on its relational patterns and the interaction which occurs within it. The theory’s basis for determining complementary and symmetrical relationships does not span demographics and cultures, and as a result, doesn’t take into account how age, gender, religion, and more might impact relational control and exchanges.

REFERENCES

Communication Competence

KNOWLEDGE- SKILLS- MOTIVATION

Explanation of Theory:
Communication competence is the ability to choose a communication behavior that is both appropriate and effective for a given situation. Interpersonal competency allows one to achieve their communication goals without causing the other party to lose face. The model most often used to describe competence is the component model (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984) which includes three components: 1) knowledge, 2) skill, and 3) motivation. Knowledge simply means knowing what behavior is best suited for a given situation. Skill is having the ability to apply that behavior in the given context. Motivation is having the desire to communicate in a competent manner.

Theorist: Spitzberg & Cupach

Date: 1984

Primary Article:

Individual Interpretations:
The component model's three parts requires that a communicator be able to 1) recognize what communication practice is appropriate (knowledge), 2) have the ability to perform that practice (skill), and 3) want to communicate in an effective and appropriate manner (motivation).

Critique:
The component model of competence is not a theory about communication, but rather a model that sets the framework for what makes someone a competent communicator. The component model has been used as the basis for many other models of competence because of its breadth. The model can be easily applied to the criteria of effectiveness and appropriateness that make up a competent communicator.

Ideas and Implications:
Specifically there is a new focus on this idea of competence that is concerned with how the dyad creates competency rather than the focus on the individual competency. In this model a dyad's communication can be competent in that within the relationship it is both effective and appropriate, but to those outside of the group, it might seem incompetent.

Example:
In order to be a competent communicator, one must be able to recognize which skills are necessary in a particular situation, have those skills, and be properly motivated to use those skills.

Relevant Research:

Location in Eight (8) Primary Communication Theory Textbooks:
Interpersonal Conflict

“Conflict arises whenever a person’s actions have an adverse impact on another individual.” —Michael Rolof & Kari Soule

Types of Incompatibility:
- Principled/Communal Conflict
  - Principled conflict concerns disagreements about ideals and reflects value differences; communal conflict assumes that the disputants agree as to their values but differ concerning how they should be acted upon
- Realistic/Nonrealistic Conflict
  - Nonrealistic conflicts often arise from situations in which individuals are unable to confront the causes of their frustration and subsequently take out their anger on others
- Personal/Superindividual Conflict
  - Personal: conflict in which an individual is acting in his or her own self-interest
  - Superindividual: conflict in which the individual is serving the interests of the collectivity
- Unexpressed Versus Expressed Conflict
  - Reasons for Unexpressed Conflict
    - Irritation is unimportant; Negative relational consequences; Discloser’s self-image would be damaged; Communication about irritation would be futile; Relationship is insufficiently intimate to justify disclosure; Complaint is illegitimate; Indirect complaining preferred; Situational cues inhibit disclosure
  - Reasons for Expressed Conflict
    - There is a close relationship between the individuals; Issue is important; Angry feelings were intense; Angered individual expected the peer to react positively to confrontation
- Behavioral/Attributional Conflict
  - Behaviors
    - Passivity; Poor affectionate or sex role behavior; Insensitivity or unyielding actions; Irresponsible or annoying behavior; Emotional or aggressive actions; Avoidance of particular activities; Situational ineptness or social rejection; Habitual engagement in activities disliked by the other partner; Overly caring or demanding behavior
  - Attributions
    - The circumstances or the actor’s characteristics; Actor’s preferences/beliefs or the actor’s characteristics; Desirability of the behavior or the actor’s characteristics; The partner’s or the actor’s characteristics; Positive or negative attitudes toward the partner
- Transgression/Nontransgression-Based Conflict
  - Focus
    - Romantic Infidelity; Lack of openness/honesty; Inconsiderate or insensitive behavior; Dominating behavior; Considering the relationship to be of low priority
  - Salience
    - Factors that keep transgressions salient
      - Imagining partner committing transgression; Recalling prior instances of transgression; Plotting revenge; Considering breaking up with partner; Trying to understand partner’s perspective
  - Consequence
    - Impact on the transgressor; Impact on the likelihood of a confrontation; How the victim of a transgression responds to the transgressor; Impact of a transgression on the future of the relationship
- Antagonistic/Dialectic Conflict
  - Antagonistic incompatibility arises when relational partners have opposing needs
  - Dialectic incompatibility occurs when partners pursue interdependent needs that at face value seem contradictory
- Conflict Issues:
  - sex, relationship maintenance, foods/errands, housekeeping, exercise, secure stimulation, entertainment/cultural, partying, sports/games, companionship

Relational Contexts:
- Intimacy
  - Cross-Relational Comparisons
    - Compare conflict across a variety of relationships
    - Conflict is more frequent and intense in intimate relationships
  - Developmental Comparisons
Asks individuals to recall levels of conflict at certain developmental points in romantic relationships

Relational Stages
- Casual dating; Become couple; Commit to relationship; Uncertain about future of relationship

- Dependence
  - Chilling Effect
    - Greater relational dependence leads to conflict avoidance and less conflict disclosure
  - Responses to Dissatisfaction
    - Dependence has a positive impact on relational functioning

Social Networks:
- Social Networks as Causes of Dyadic Conflict
  - Members of a person’s social network may compete for that person’s resources
  - Relational partners may disagree about how they should treat the members or their social networks
- Social Networks as Shapes of Conflict
  - Through socialization individuals acquire preferences for modes of conflict resolution that are used in other contexts

Perceptions:
- Knowledge Structures
  - Conflict Frames
    - Reflects person’s memory of past experiences as well as perceptions of salient cues within the situation
  - Conflict Metaphors
    - Provide information about the perceptual sets that individuals use to make sense of disputes and that one might determine how individuals will act based on the metaphors they use
  - Conflict Scripts
    - Individuals may develop expectations for the behaviors typically enacted in those situations and the order in which those behaviors will occur
  - Relational Beliefs
    - Beliefs about sexual perfectionism, beliefs that the sexes are different, that mind reading is expected, that partners cannot change, and that disagreement is destructive
  - Problem Conceptualization
    - Person compares conflict with other disagreements so as to gauge its uniqueness and relative frequency
    - Person assesses the goal he or she wants to achieve in the conflict
    - Person considers the degree of uncertainty he or she is experiencing about the partner, the relationship, or how to manage the problem
    - Person determines whether problem should be attributed to self, partner, relationship, or environment
    - Person considers his or her feelings for the partner

- Perceptual Biases
  - Sentiment Override
    - Partner’s emotional/cognitive responses to each other’s behaviors may be biased
  - Reactivity
    - Relational satisfaction varies from day to day and that such fluctuations predict relational dissolution
  - Positive Illusions
    - Idealizing a partner by using positive illusions is quite functional
  - Information Processing
    - Individuals may be motivated to think about why conflicts occur

Conflict Management Styles:
- Responses to Dissatisfaction
  - Exit, Neglect, Loyalty, Voice
- Conflict Resolution Styles
  - Positive Problem Solving
    - Compromise and negotiation
  - Conflict Engagement
    - Use of personal attacks and losing control
o Withdrawal
   ▪ Reflects degree to which the individual refuses to discuss a problematic issue and tunes out the partner
o Compliance
   ▪ Occurs when the individual gives in and does not defend his or her own position

- Conflict Tactics
  o Rationality
    ▪ Involves rational discussion, argument, and reasoning
  o Verbal Aggression
    ▪ Includes verbal and nonverbal acts aimed at hurting or threatening the partner
  o Physical Aggression
    ▪ Involves the use of physical force

- Avoidance-Distributive-Integrative Strategies
  o Passive and Indirect Strategies
    ▪ Involve no direct discussion of a problem and reflect low information disclosure
  o Distributive Strategies
    ▪ Include explicit acknowledgment and discussion of conflict aimed at gaining concessions from partner
  o Integrative Strategies
    ▪ Openly acknowledge the conflict and the views of the partner with the aim of achieving mutual goals

**Argumentation Patterns:**

- Defining Features
  o Although disagreement may be an obvious characteristic of an argument, other factors must be present before observers will make such an attribution

- Argument Sequences
  o Demand/Withdrawal Pattern

- Argument Escalation
  o Escalation Sequences
    ▪ Request compliance, impatient demands, complaints, angry statements, threats, harassment, and abuse
  o Social Control Sequences
    ▪ Individuals disengage from conflict before violence occurs and aggression reflects face-saving behavior
  o Argument Attenuation
    ▪ Individuals are aware of the potential for escalation that is inherent in confrontation and take actions to keep their arguments under control

- Serial Arguing
  o Arguments that are recurrent and focused on the same issues as earlier arguments

- Relational Effects
  o Arguing has a generally negative impact on relationships, this impact is moderated by a number of factors, including the style of conflict and relational orientation
CONSTRUCTIVISM

Cognitive Complexity --> Rhetorical Design Logic --> Sophisticated Communication --> Beneficial Outcomes

Explanation of Theory:
People who are cognitively complex in their perceptions of others have a greater capacity for sophisticated communication that will achieve positive outcomes. They can employ a rhetorical message design logic that creates person-centered message that simultaneously pursues multiple communication goals. (Griffin 3rd ed., pp. 493-4)

Theorist: Jesse Delia

Date: 1982

Primary Article:

Individual Interpretations:
As a theory, Constructivism is concerned with the cognitive processes that proceed the actual communication within a given situation. Measuring and observing these cognitive processes can be a difficult task. While I agree that people who are able to adapt their messages to particular situations and audiences are more successful than those who are not able, saying that those who are more cognitively complex are always more successful is probably misrepresenting the truth.

Metatheoretical Assumptions:
Epistemologically, Constructivism allows for multiple truths depending on both the abilities of the communicator and receiver in creating and understanding cognitively complex messages. Ontologically, some people have the ability to act (humanistic) using a rhetorical design logic while others are forced to react (scientific) through the use of either expressive or conventional design logic. Axiologically this theory is value-conscious because while it recognizes the capacity for value influence, it does not subscribe to any particular patterns.

Critique:
Constructivism is a scientific theory that attempts to explain why some people are more successful in attaining their interpersonal communication goals than others. It also makes predictions that people who are more cognitively complex will be more successful because of their ability to use rhetorical design logic in sending messages. Attempting to study cognitive processes is a difficult task and can make a situation quite complicated; therefore the application of this theory is not very simple. However, this theory does a good job in laying the foundations for some important future research about what role the cognitive process plays in people’s communication effectiveness.

Ideas and Implications:
Those who are more cognitively complex in their formation of messages are more capable of achieving their interpersonal communication goals. These people are also better suited for interpreting messages in a more clear manner.

Example:
In a situation where a student might have an argument with a teacher about a grade he or she received, an example of a statement that might use expressive design logic would sound like this:
“You are so unfair. You are always out to get me!”
An example of a statement using conventional design logic might sound like this:
“I worked hard on this project. Your expectations of me are higher than anyone else in this class because I am the only one who is a major.”
An example of a statement that uses rhetorical design logic might sound like this:
“I would like to sit down with you and go over the grading of my project. I believe that if I have the chance to explain a bit more about what I did, you might be able to re-evaluate my grade. Additionally, I am unclear about some of the comment you made. I hope that through discussing it, I might get a better idea about exactly what it is that you expected to be done for this assignment.”

Relevant Research:

Location in Eight (8) Primary Communication Theory Textbooks:
Coordinated Management of Meaning

Explanations of Theory:
Persons in conversation co-construct their own social realities by achieving coherence, coordinating actions, and experiencing mystery. Coherence is a unified context for stories told, coordination comes through stories lived, and mystery is a sense of wonder for stories unexpressed. (Griffin 3rd ed., p. 492)

Theorists: Pearce and Cronen

Date: 1980

Primary Article:

Metatheoretical Assumptions:
The idea that Pearce and Cronen view “social world” as plural says that depending on specific situations and contexts, the meaning created and understood can be varying. This is the definition of having multiple truths (epistemology). In discussing contexts, varying levels of importance of episodes, relationships, self-concept and culture play key roles. People choose which context is most important in the situation and act accordingly (ontology). Finally because this theory is dependent on people’s experiences and beliefs, the values play a role in each situation and how it plays out.

Critique:
As a humanistic theory, CMM seems to be both analytically consistent and systematic in its approach. The theory must be applied to each individual case in order for it to work properly (systematically). While it has specific use for certain situations, practical widespread application of the theory would seem to be both time-consuming and overwhelming. Overall, the theory has value because of the way in which it approaches how people within a dyad can create a shared meaning through the exchange of individual ideas.

Ideas and Implications:
Creating meaning in conversation is a mutual responsibility. Both sender and receiver are capable of doing so, and should exercise equal responsibility.

Example:
In using e-mail, a couple decides to create abbreviations for many words that appear repeatedly in their conversations (love=luv, etc.). The list of abbreviations is quite long, but each person knows what all of them are. Someone outside of this relationship would struggle to understand an e-mail from one to the other using these abbreviations. This "new language" serves the couple well when interacting with one another, but it would not be useful in trying to communicate with someone outside the relationship. It would only work in the context of the relationship where the meaning of the abbreviations are understood by both parties.

Relevant Research:

Location in Eight (8) Primary Communication Theory Textbooks:
Overview: Coordinated Management of Meaning is a theory assuming that two individuals engaging in an interaction are each constructing their own interpretation and perception behind what a conversation means. A core assumption within this theory includes the belief that all individuals interact based on rules that are expected to be followed while engaging in communication. “Individuals within any social situation first want to understand what is going on and apply rules to figure things out” (Littlejohn, 1996, p. 191).
There are two different types of rules that individuals can apply in any communicative situation. These include constitutive and regulative rules.

Constitutive Rules – “rules of meaning used by communicators to interpret or understand an event or message” (Littlejohn, 1996, p. 191).

Regulative Rules – “rules of action used to determine how to respond or behave” (Littlejohn, 1996, p. 191).

An example of this can be seen if one thinks of a hypothetical situation in which two individuals are engaging in conversation. If one individual sends a message to the other, the message receiver must then take that interaction and interpret what it means. Often times this can be done on an almost instantaneous level because the interpretation rules applied to the situation are immediate and simple. However, there are also times when one may have to search for an appropriate interpretation of the ‘rules’ within an interaction. This simply depends on each communicator’s previous beliefs and perceptions within a given context and how they can apply these rules to the current communicative interaction. Important to understand within the constructs of this theory is the fact that these ‘rules’ of meaning “are always chosen within a context” (Littlejohn, 1996, p. 191). Furthermore, the context of a situation can be understood as a framework for interpreting specific events.

The authors of this theory believe that there are a number of different context an individual can refer to when interpreting a communicative event. These include the relationship context, the episode context, the self-concept context, and the archetype context.

Relationship Context – This context assumes that there are mutual expectations between individuals who are members of a group.

Episode Context – This context simply refers to a specific event in which the communicative act is taking place.

Self-Concept Context – This context involves one’s sense of self, or an individual’s personal ‘definition’ of him/herself.

Archetype Context – This context is essentially one’s image of what his or her belief consists of regarding general truths within communicative exchanges.

Furthermore, Pearce and Cronen believe that these specific contexts exist in a hierarchical fashion. This theory assumes that the bottom level of this hierarchy consists of the communicative act. Next, the hierarchy exists within the relationship context, then the episode context, followed by the self-concept context, and finally the archetype context.

Strengths of Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory
Strengths of this theory include the fact that it can cover both interpersonal as well as intrapersonal exchanges. Another strength includes the fact that it is a practical theory which can be used to understand daily communicative exchanges between individuals.

**Weaknesses of Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory**

Critics believe that one of the weaknesses of this theory lies in the fact that the authors believe meaning to be an intrapersonal experience, whereas other researchers sometimes disagree with this. Many believe that meaning is a shared construction of symbols, signs, and messages.

**Philosophical Tradition:** This theory can be used under both the symbolic interaction perspective as well as the systems perspective.

**Concepts/Constructs:** The concepts and constructs within this theory the context and rules that are to be studied when individuals are involved in a communicative act.

**Underlying Assumptions:** Underlying assumptions include the belief that all communicative acts are situated within a specific context. Furthermore, another underlying assumption includes the belief that individuals always engage in rule interpretation when involved in an act of communication.

**Boundary Conditions:** Boundary conditions within this theory consist of the need for an event, action, or text to be interpreted in which both communicative contexts coupled with the interpretation of rules can be applied.
Culture, Meaning, and Interpersonal Communication

Summary: Culture is viewed from a variety of perspectives (1.a.i, 1.a.ii, 2.a, 2.b, 11a), including the perspective that culture is made up of symbolic structures that convey meaning (2.a.i, 2.a.ii). Communication is often used as a method of making the distinction between cultures and to create bridges as well (2.b). In addition, communication is a conduit of culture (4.c.i). With regards to methodology, those within the field have used ethnographies and qualitative analysis (10.a, 3.a) to understand the relationship between communication and culture.

1. The Changing Status of Culture (p. 300)
   a. Definitions of culture
      i. stuff that is the byproduct of invention and tradition, not biology (p. 300)
      ii. E. B. Tylor (1871): “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art…and any other habits acquired…as a member of society” (p. 300)
   b. To use culture as a count noun (e.g. multiple types of culture) assumes distinction of boundaries (p. 301)
      i. Communication mechanism is often used to achieve this distinction, making comm. an antecedent of cultural identity (p. 302)

2. An Anthropological View of Culture (p. 303)
   a. Culture as a set of symbolic and representation systems (p. 303)
      i. Most important aspect is that they structure and communicate meaning (p. 304)
      ii. Meaning is public and shared (Bruner, 1990) (p. 304)
   b. Dual nature of meaning systems: each cultural form can be “read” as part of culture or part of older human achievements (e.g. politeness) (p. 303)

3. Precursors to Symbolic Approaches to Culture and Communication (p. 304)
   a. Ethnography plays a key methodological role (p. 304)
   b. Pre-history of culture and comm.
      i. Gesture serves as the first language of intercultural exchange (p. 304)
      ii. Always a gap between human desire and social forms of human action dictated by culture (Freud, 1955, 1960) (p. 305)
      iii. Darwin discovered the continuity and evolution of culture (p. 306)
         1. Humans evolved in the way they did partially because of the need to communicate (p. 306)
      iv. Durkheimian perspective: patterns of comm. are shaped and understood only within the realm of shared norms (p. 307)
         1. “Action is a direct manifestation of a society’s norms” (p. 307)
   v. Human behavior is part of a code (Mauss) (p. 308)
   vi. Social anthropology (p. 308)

4. Culture, Language and Relativity
   a. No meaning, experience, structure, or syntax within any other language should be assumed as like one’s own (Boas) (p. 309)
   b. Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: relationship between grammatical categories one speaks and that person’s behavior and understanding of the world (p. 310)
      i. Also known as the linguistic relativity hypothesis
   c. No genetic basis to culture (Boas, 1912) (p. 311)
      i. This is why transmission (comm.) is so important to culture (p. 312)

5. Culture and Personality (p. 311)
   a. Human beings select their cultural forms from a “great arc” of possibilities (Benedict, 1934) (p. 312)
   b. Benedict may mean personality on a large scale when she refers to culture (Geertz, 1988) (p. 312)

6. The Concept of “Ethos”
   a. Ethos is expression of a culture’s affective aspects (Bateson, 1958) (p. 314)
b. Complementary schismogenesis – progressive differentiation of norms resulting from interaction (Bateson, 1958) (p. 315)
   i. “‘personality’ is thus a sedimentation of the patterning of interactional contexts.” (p. 315)
c. Visual abstraction – placing multiple photos in groups to represent different themes of a cultural ethnography (p. 316)

7. Symbolic Anthropology (p. 316)
a. Meaning is available through language, art, names, etc. (Geertz, 1973) (p. 316)
   i. The “self” is different in every culture, and this affects the way in which they communicate with each other (p. 317)

8. The Person Behind the Smile (p. 318)

a. Emphasis placed on cognitive and conceptual aspects of emotions (p. 321)
   i. Communicating emotions is done within the frameworks that our culture provides (p. 321)
   ii. Emotions are theorized by cultures (p. 321)
b. Emotions are conceptually tied to social scenarios, which means they are part of the community’s norms and expectations (p. 321)

10. Empirical Studies of Communication in its Cultural Context (p. 322)
a. Three empirical approaches in line with “symbols and meanings” view
   i. Ethnography of communication
      1. Includes studies of speech communities
      2. Description of speech events (p. 324)
      3. Speech acts
   ii. Microethnography (context analysis)
      1. The study of microunits of behavior (e.g. hand movements) (p. 324)
      2. Typically identify phenomena and structure in hindsight
         a. Includes the study of expressive culture (p. 325)
   iii. Conversation analysis
      1. Describing “the procedures by which conversationalists produce their own behavior” and understand that of others (Heritage, 1984) (p. 326)
      2. Enabling, forward-looking rules (not restrictions) are produced by organizations, and conversation analysis is the account of the rules (p. 326)

11. Conclusion: Where is Culture?
a. A way of organizing our data and framing experience (Goffman, 1974) (p. 327)
b. Artifacts have been understudied within the field of comm. (p. 327)
Emotional Communication

Foundation:
- People can and do alter the expression of even the primary emotions suggesting that emotional display or emotional expression may be more aptly termed emotional communication (emotional information is shaped for audiences)
- Previous research on message variables and pragmatics still serves as a solid basis for current work on how emotion is communicated in face-to-face interaction
- Related journals: Motivation and Emotion; Cognition and Emotion; Consciousness and Emotion; Emotion

Relevant Research:
- Interpersonal Communication
    - Investigates empirical links between appraisal, emotion, and empathy and shows how individuals use appraisal information to decode emotional messages and how this contributes to empathy
    - Contains chapters on basic principles, strategic embarrassment, communication strategies used to manage negative emotions, communication problems associated with depression, the communication of social support, and the role of emotion in persuasion
  - Planalp’s Communicating Emotion (1999)
    - Synthesizes a range of interdisciplinary research around basic issues that bear upon emotional communication, not only in dyadic interaction but also in social, moral, and cultural systems
- Psychology
  - Expression and suppression of emotion
    - Making choices about whether and how to express and suppress feelings
    - The growing attention to social emotions
  - Manifestation and effects of emotion
    - After exploring the influence of type of relationship on emotional expression found that emotion expression is greater in communal rather than exchange relationships
    - How families communicate emotional styles to children
- Sociology
  - Shared emotional dynamics, strategies to control emotion, empathy burnout, dilemmas of self-control, sincerity, and the influence of social context on emotional issues in dyads
  - What counts as unfairness, lack of supportiveness, or excessive dependence depends on social norms not just dyad rules

Interpersonal Communication Perspective on Emotional Communication:
- General Points:
  - Emotions emerge from interactions between people; find meaning within social and personal relationships
  - Emotions are both motivational systems and contextualized challenges
  - Our concern is not so much with types of emotions that might be salient in relationships at different times as it is with the process of emotion communication more generally
- Characterizing Emotional Expression
  - Ekman found that several basic emotions (fear, disgust, anger, sadness, surprise and joy) could be recognized from facial expressions at levels better than chance across cultures
  - Fernandez-Dols & Ruiz-Belda found in their laboratory studies that very few people (2/35) who reported these basic emotions were actually exhibiting the prototypical facial expressions
  - Ekman and Friesen identified 5 ways in which persons alter emotional expressions to conform to display rules:
    1. Inhibition – suppressing the expression of a felt emotion
    2. Simulation – expressing an emotion when no arousal is felt
    3. Intensification – expressing emotion to a greater degree than it is felt
    4. Deintensification – expressing emotion to lesser degree than it is felt
    5. Masking – expressing one emotion when another one is actually felt
  - Reasons interpersonal scholars view emotion information manifested while in presence of others as message:
    - The nature of its manifestation is constrained
      - By historical, cultural, relational, and situational circumstances
    - The manifestation of emotional information is pragmatic
      - Emotional signals stimulate responses from others, be they cognitive, affective, or behavioral
Manifestation of emotion in the presence of others is **strategic** and achieves goals

- Whether or not it is conscious, messages serve primary and secondary goals

**Principles of Interpersonal Communication from a Developmental Perspective**

- Cultural or social-level knowledge is not abandoned during more interpersonal interactions, but continues to inform and guide participants
- Interactions, including those involving emotional communication, are characterized by emergent and contingent features as well as preexisting relational patterns

**Distal Factors:**

- **Emotion Prototypes and Scripts**
  - Emotion schemata, prototypes, or scripts are defined as knowledge structures that represent a culture’s view of the critical features of an emotion
    - Type of event, behavior, or other stimulus that is expected to trigger a certain type of emotion (**prescriptive norms**)
    - How and with what intensity that emotion should or shouldn’t be revealed, exhibited, or otherwise communicated to others (**reactive norms**)
    - Nature of the relationship with relevant others (those who are the target of the emotion and those who are present when it is experienced or communicated)
    - Status or power constraints

- **Sex Role Expectations**
  - Challenges –
    - This inquiry is complicated by operational difficulties
    - Categorization of emotions
      - Some scholars examine a limited range of emotions, typically the primary emotions
      - Others are interested more broadly in positive emotions versus negative emotions
      - Some distinguish between levels of intensity for an emotional experience
    - Any interaction under scrutiny is embedded within a relational context that may reformulate social expectations
    - Challenge of controlling for individual differences in emotional experience and expression
  - General Claims –
    - Whether or not actual differences exist, the assumption that men and women enact different emotional scripts is a pervasive heuristic in American society
      - Support for the presence of a gender-emotion heuristic can be found when looking at studies that ask respondents to rate hypothetical other or imagine themselves in emotion-producing situations
    - Observed differences in emotional communication patterns between men and women, both in expressing emotions and in decoding the emotions of others, are probably better framed in terms of different social motives than in terms of different ability or biology
      - Example: Women’s greater empathic ability and interpersonal sensitivity compared with men
      - Findings indicate that men and women report different motives for either expressing emotion or suppressing emotion
      - The assumption that women are more emotional than men is rarely upheld empirically
    - A few elements of the broader gender stereotype have received support
      - Women tend to feel more comfortable with emotional disclosure
      - Women are better judges of nonverbal cues to emotion
      - Women tend to both smile and cry more
      - Other gender differences depend on a number of factors including the emotion at issue and the factors arising in particular situations
    - Nearly all explanations center on social and cultural expectations associated with sex roles rather than on biological factors

- **Individual Differences**
  - Two Broad Approaches –
    - People do differ in how they process and express emotional information
    - People differ in personality features that indirectly influence the coordination with relational partners
  - Explanations –
    - Gohm and Clore’s findings suggest four clusters of individual differences in experience and expression of emotion
• Absorption and attention
• Clarity
• Intensity
• Expression

- Gross, John, and Richards studied whether dispositional tendency to be expressive is consistent across positive and negative affect
  - Certain personality features influence vulnerability to valenced affect in that some people are sensitive to cues of reward and thus positive emotionality, whereas others are sensitive to cues of punishment and thus negative emotionality

- Personality variables that appear to be relevant to emotional communication
  - Attachment style
    - Ambivalent attachment was associated with greater distress
    - Avoidant attachment was negatively associated with distress
    - Attachment style may serve as a behavioral control mechanism during intense negative arousal
  - Romantic beliefs and the tendency to display accommodation toward one’s partner
  - The “Big Five” personality variables have shown consistent associations with emotion feelings, display, and regulation
    - Extraversion is associated with happiness and joy
    - Openness is associated with greater felt intensity of emotion (positive and negative)

- Proximal Context
  - As relationships develop the persons involved in them encounter increasingly complex levels of interconnectedness
  - Although individuals enter relationships with a shared understanding of what emotions are considered negative and what emotions are considered positive, this is responsive to reinterpretation during the interactional process of emotional communication
  - Because attributions and perceptions are made during interactions, and because messages are contingent, couples tend to construct habitualized sequences of emotional communication over time
  - Habitualized sequences seem to entail characteristic interpretive patterns as well
  - Relationship-destabilizing events are often managed in the moment, although partners may be drawing on cultural scripts

- The emotional meaning of messages is a flexible substance that is shaped and negotiated in the moment (proximal context) and yet built from resources developed by the participants though their experiences, predispositions, and cultures (distal context)

**Recommendations for Future Research:**
- Implicit theories of emotional communication
  - Under what circumstances do people feel compelled by their feelings or able to control them?
  - When do people find that their feelings seem to facilitate their communicative goals or obstruct them?
- Scripts of emotional communication episodes
  - What kind of emotional episodes do people deal with on a daily basis?
    - Develop a typology of emotional episodes
  - What kinds of episodes do people feel well or ill equipped to handle?
- Unique emotional patterns that partners in close relationships work out between themselves
  - Dyadic patterns that customize cultural scripts for handling transgressions, irritations, dueling preferences, or mood discrepancies
  - What effects do the patterns have on the task at hand, the relationship, and both partner’s feelings?
- Real interactions where emotions are negotiated in the moment
  - Put more emphasis on topics and verbal statements
- Longitudinal studies linking relational development, emotion, and communication
  - How each person’s feelings about the partner change as intimacy develops and how partners communicate those changes to each other
  - How other feelings change and get negotiated as interdependence develops and coordination increases


EXPECTANCY VIOLATION THEORY

Explanation of Theory:
Expectancy Violation Theory sees communication as the exchange of information which is high in relational content and can be used to violate the expectations of another which will be perceived as either positively or negatively depending on the liking between the two people.

Theorists: Judee Burgoon

Date: 1978

Primary Article:

Individual Interpretations:
When our expectations are violated, we will respond in specific ways. If an act is unexpected and is assigned favorable interpretation, and it is evaluated positively, it will produce more favorable outcomes than an expected act with the same interpretation and evaluation.

Metatheoretical Assumptions:
Ontological Assumptions:
This theory assumes that humans have a certain amount of free will. This is because it assumes that humans can survey and interpret the relationship and liking between themselves and their conversational partner and then make a decision whether or not to violate the expectations of the other person depending on what outcome they would like to achieve.

Epistemological Assumptions:
The Expectancy Violations theory assumes that there is one truth. This truth is that there are norms for all communication activities and if these norms are violated, there will be specific, predictable outcomes.

Axiological Assumptions:
This theory seeks to be value-neutral because the study was done empirically and seeks to objectively describe how humans react when their expectations are violated.

Critique:
Expectancy Violations Theory is a scientific theory because it assumes that there is only one truth. It further assumes that these norms and reactions to their violations are universal. It seeks to predict the outcomes that will result when specific violations are presented.

Ideas and Implications:
The Expectancy Violations theory is a very practical and useful theory because it assumes that there are universal norms and reactions to violations to those norms. It also seeks to predict what the reactions to each violation of norms will be.

Example:
An applicable example to help understand Expectancy Violations Theory can be demonstrated when Chris goes for a job interview. He feels that he is not getting very positive feedback from the potential employer, so he knows he should not violate expectancies and further hurt his chances of impressing the interviewer. However, if Chris suddenly felt more confident about the relationship he was building with the interviewer, he might consciously violate his or her expectations. He could pick up a picture on his or her desk and comment positively on the picture, hoping that this act would make him positively stick out in the employer's mind later.

Relevant Research:

Location in Eight (8) Primary Communication Theory Textbooks:
Expectancy Violations Theory (Judee Burgoon, 1988)

“We rarely if ever confront others without some expectations about how they should behave.” (Jones 1986)

Overview of Expectancy Violations Theory
Expectancy Violations Theory is part of the Socio-psychological Tradition, and explains the relationship between non-verbal message production and the interpretations people hold for those non-verbal behaviors. Individuals hold certain expectations for non-verbal behavior that is based on the social norms, past experience and situational aspects of that behavior. When expectations are either met or violated, we make assumptions of the behavior and judge them to be positive or negative.

- Proposes that expectancy will influence the outcome of the communication as positive or negative and predicts that positive violations increase the attraction of the violator and negative violations decrease the attraction of the violator (Burgoon & Hale, 1988).
- Expectancy typically denotes cognitions about “anticipated behavior that may be generalized or person-specific” (Burgoon & Walther, 1990, p. 235).
- Violations are also posited to activate a dual interpretation and evaluation process in which perceivers attempt to make sense of the violation and evaluate its desirability (Burgoon & Hale, 1988).

Historical Foundations:
- EVT has its roots in uncertainty reduction research and is primarily a nonverbal theory
- In 1976 Judee K. Burgoon explored issues of personal space and how communicative functions could be seen through expectations and expectation violations (Burgoon & Jones, 1976).
- EVT evolved from a model designed by Burgoon, called the Nonverbal Expectancy Violations Model. This theory brings together two components: proxemics and kinesics (Burgoon & Hale, 1988).

Key Researchers / Theorists:
- Judee K. Burgoon – responsible for the development of Expectancy Violations Theory
- Hale, Jones, LePoire, & Walther – assisted Burgoon in expanding and improving EVT
- Afifi & Metts – explored common types of expectancy violations in close relationships

Key Literature / Research:
- “Toward a Theory of Personal Space Expectations and Their Violations” (Burgoon & Jones (1976). Human Communication Research, 2, 131-146)

Concepts –
- Factors Influencing Expectations – (Afifi, 1998)
  - Communicator Characteristics: sex, race, culture, status, and age
  - Relational Characteristics: information about the relationship between interactants
  - Contextual Characteristics: space available, nature of the territory surrounding the interaction, social norms, purpose of the interaction, and formality of the situation
- Violation Valence – (Houser, 2005)
  - The association that the receiver places on the behavior violation
  - Valence can be positive or negative and depends on two conditions:
    - Interpretation of the Behavior – positive or negative
    - Rewardingness of the Violator - attractiveness, prestige, ability to provide resources

Assumptions – (Burgoon, 1978, p. 131-133)
- Ontological --- EVT assumes that humans can assess and interpret the relationship and liking between themselves and their conversational partner, and then make a decision whether or not to violate the expectations of the other person depending on what outcome they would like to achieve.
• **Epistemological** --- EVT assumes there is one truth. This truth is that there are norms for all communication activities and if these norms are violated, there will be specific, predictable outcomes

• **Axiological** --- This theory seeks to be value-neutral because the study was done empirically and seeks to objectively describe how humans react when their expectations are violated

**Propositions** — *(Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995, p. 97)*

1. Interactants develop expectations about the verbal and nonverbal communication of others
2. Violations of communication expectations are arousing and distracting, causing an attentional shift to communicator, relationships, and violation characteristics and meanings.
3. Communicator reward valence moderates the interpretation of ambiguous communicative behaviors.
5. Violation valences are a function of: the evaluation of the enacted behavior, the direction of the discrepancy between the expected and enacted behavior toward a more favorably or unfavorably valued position, and the magnitude of the discrepancy.
6. Positive violations produce more favorable outcomes and negative violations produce more unfavorable ones relative to expectancy confirmation.

**Arousal** -- When a deviation of expectations occurs there is an increased interest in the situation, also known as arousal. There are two types of arousal: Cognitive arousal- our mental awareness of expectancy deviations Physical arousal-challenges our body faces as a result of expectancy deviations.

**Reward Valence** -- When an expectation is not met, we hold particular perceptions as to whether or not that violation is considered rewarding. How an individual evaluates the interaction will determine how they view the positive or negative impact of the violation.

**Proxemics** -- A significant focus of Expectancy Violations Theory is the concept of proxemics, or the study of individual use of personal space. There are four types of proxemic zones:

- Intimate distance- 0-18 inches
- Personal distance- 18 inches- 4 feet
- Social distance- 4-12 feet
- Public distance- 12 feet or more

**Strengths of EVT** -- it contributes a great deal of research to non-verbal communication and focuses on personal space violations. Additionally, research on EVT has been very consistent in its theoretical framework.

- Relatively broad in scope & offers a way to link cognition and behavior

**Weaknesses of EVT** -- it is hard to measure. Since levels of arousal are personal perceptions, it is hard to have a valid way of measuring them. Arousal is such a large part of EVT, which makes being hard to measure an important factor in examining the weaknesses.

- Self-perception may not be a valid measure for arousal
- Interactions between individuals are too complex to predict behavioral outcome

**REFERENCES:**

**Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation (FIRO)**

**Explanation of Theory:**
This theory concentrates on three interpersonal needs that most people share: the needs for inclusion, for control and for affection. Schutz maintains that people begin relationships in order to satisfy one or more of these needs.

**Theorists:** W.C. Schutz

**Date:** 1958

**Primary Article:**

**Metatheoretical Assumptions:**
This is a humanistic theory because it has intuitive credibility, it makes sense and is relative to actual communication practice. It has a systematic approach and is timely. There are multiple truths. It also has heuristic value because it is easily applicable to situations.

**Critique:**
Although Schutz believes that persons seek ways to fulfill these three needs, his system does not presume that all persons are equally motivated by them or that the needs can predict human behavior precisely in any given circumstance. The three basic interpersonal needs are inclusion, control and affection. Inclusion refers to people's need to be recognized as participants in human interaction. If a feeling of inclusion is a baseline condition for healthy human existence, then the need to make a difference through control is the next logical level. The use of the term control as it applies to this theory refers to people's desires to make a difference in their social environments and to have some say over what happens. Finally, people seek a sense of interpersonal warmth or of being liked or loved. Friendship and other intimate relations often serve this function, of course, and the absence of such relationships is a source of much of the alienation we feel from time to time.

**Example:**
Student Friendly Example: Jessica moved into the dorms as a freshman. The first moments after her parents had moved her in and said their goodbyes were the scariest of her life. She realized that for the first time in her life, she was alone. It didn't take long for Jessica to convince herself that she was going to make an effort to make new friends. She knew if she didn't, life would be miserable. She soon began to meet girls on her floor and many times they would all go to dinner together. She was starting to be included in the girls activities which made her feel better about being in a strange town and not knowing a soul. As time went by, the girls on Jessica's floor became her best friends. They shared so much their first year of college and continued to as the years went by. Jessica's basic needs for inclusion, affection and control were all important in making her life in college more pleasant.

**Relevant Research:**

**Location in Eight (8) Primary Communication Theory Textbooks:**
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND HEALTH CARE

- Research on interpersonal communication in health care has grown tremendously in recent years, due to greater number of publications and awareness of the topic’s importance.
- Chapter Goals: provide an overview of research in health care communication so that future researchers can build on this information and increase understanding of health communication and interpersonal communication in general.

PRIMARY FOCUS ON DESCRIBING COMMUNICATION

- Studies on health communication have primarily focused on descriptions of communication in the medical context, e.g. providing support, using humor, communicating about dying, dealing with tough patients, discussions of quality of life, communication about prescriptions, parent vs. doctor interaction with children, etc.
  1. Information Giving: Focuses on the adequacy of information exchange in health care interaction. Information exchange is important during diagnosis, during progression of disease, in regard to pain, sexual functioning, and financial issues. According to studies, lack of information can be a serious barrier to patients (can result in negative outcomes, medical malpractice, etc.)
  2. Time Allocation
- Specific focus on length of interaction, amount the patient vs. the doctor talked, kinds of things that were said.
- Study findings include: nurses wish they had more time to talk with patients; doctors overestimate time they spend talking; doctors discourage question asking; providers do not communicate more with patients due to “lack of time”; increased patient questioning is associated with greater understanding of treatment and better outcomes.

Coding Provider-Patient Interaction:

- Coding measurements have increased with the interest in health communication. As of 1996, 44 measuring instruments exist, some use real-time observation, and some use rating scales, some use self-report measures. Those that code patient-provider interactions are of greatest interest.

Communication Skills

- Does not refer to communications competence, but refers such skills as nonverbal communication, active listening, self-disclosure, questioning, explaining, counseling, influencing, and interviewing. Most of the research involves health care providers’ self assessments of their communication skills, which they find to be lacking. Effective communication skills → increased clinical competence and competence in bad news delivery.
- Training: Communication skills can be taught; effective training programs → increased recovery time, decreased length of hospital stay, increased life satisfaction for nursing home residents, improved patient satisfaction, fewer patients’ rights complaints, fewer attacks on staff, less stress, etc. Research has focused on training of providers.

Non-Verbal Communication:

Health-care specific research has found that rapport between doctors and patients in communication nonverbally, patients disclose more when doctors use more facial reinforces such as head nods and fewer negative facial behaviors. Most research has focused on cases where the patient can not speak, focusing on the importance of touch.

Language:

Most research looks at language in regards to doctors’ reliance on such medical terminology as jargon (even a word like risk is confusing) and acronyms and how these “esoteric” terms result in mystification, power differences, and the patient’s lack of understanding, satisfaction, recall, and increased feeling of vulnerability.

Diversity

- Recent areas of study: Articles provide advice to providers on how to improve their communication with patients from different cultures. New research is looking at how people with disabilities interact in health care environments, as well as communication with visually and hearing impaired, mentally challenged, confused or demented, and physically disabled. There has been little research on these issues beyond encouraging doctors to adapt to these populations’ needs.
- Children: Researchers have just begun studying communicating with children in the health care environment and suggesting techniques and skills needed to interact with children.
- The Elderly: Growing research area, as older adults and families are increasingly treated in a “routine, disease-focused manner.” Research on the quality of communication in nursing homes and long-term care facilities has found that inappropriate and poor communication takes place between nurses and patients and that it is difficult to communicate info to the elderly.
• Terminality: Communication even harder when the patient is terminally ill. Research finds that providers are very uncomfortable talking with patients who are dying and that training programs can help.

• Gender: Very little research on effect of gender on provider-patient interaction. Studies have shown that women visit more and different doctors, ask more questions, ask for more help, and that women’s ratings of physicians interpersonal care are more favorable. Research also finds that: women doctors are devalued; women doctors are more emphatic and less directive than male doctors and that they make more positive comments, smile more; that patients had higher satisfaction with female doctors.

Control: Control over the health care interaction is very important. Research shows that providers tend to dominate over patients, who become more submissive, although both patients and physicians tried to control the interaction. Patients’ individual and cultural factors affect their interaction.

Disclosure and Truth-Telling Issues
• Studies about the barriers and facilitators to disclosure during interaction between providers and patients exploded in the late 1990s. Research found that patient disclosure positively affects patient outcomes. Legal pressures involving disclosure/informed consent have also increased interest in this area and researchers study how disclosure and privacy are balanced. More research is needed on strategies patients use to disclose.

Informed Consent Issues
• Legal boundaries of disclosure are the focus of study
• Providers run into ethical problems because they tend to provide information in general and abstract terms instead of specific and concrete, like their patients’ experiences. Also important is that the patient discloses conditions to the physician.

End of Life Discussions: Physicians withhold information from patients when it involves terminality. Studies show difficulty in disclosure about end of life issues. Training programs can help doctors better talk about this issue.

Bad News Delivery: In addition to tend of life discussions, bad news delivery includes talking about serious health or future health problems; both difficult for doctors to talk about. Bad news is hard to talk about because doctors fear hurting or upsetting the patient and are uncomfortable being around the patient post-bad news delivery. Research suggests that some doctors withhold information to “keep hope alive” for patients.

HEALTH PROMOTION ISSUES
Evidence suggests that the general public depends on providers for health promotion on such topics as high blood pressure, weight, smoking, lack of exercise, high-fat diets, etc. This increased focus has resulted in more research. Health care professionals are viewed as credible sources of information, yet because time is limited during physician-patient interactions, doctors may not be able to practice much preventive health care.

• Alcohol Use: Although patients are asked questions about alcohol in medical history-taking forms, doctors avoid initiating conversations about alcohol use, especially excessive drinking, due to time shortages and worries about ruining their relationship with their patient.

• Tobacco Use: Little research exists on how doctors should talk with patients about tobacco use. Concrete approaches and paternalistic and empathic strategies have been examined.

• Sexuality Issues: As a result of HIV/AIDS, there is a great emphasis on doctors to talk about issues of sexuality, including birth control. Improved communication may reduce sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

III. OUTCOMES OF PROVIDER-PATIENT INTERACTION
Outcomes fit within 3 domains: cognitive, behavioral, psychological
• Cognitive outcomes in health care settings include: “understanding and knowledge; diagnostic information; commitment to health; adjustment of health beliefs; confidence; satisfaction and trust; self-efficacy; managed expectations; fears.”

• Behavioral outcomes in health care settings include: “patients’ compliance with treatment regimens; adoption of prevention/health promoting behaviors; communication competence, team/partnership building; relational quality; and assertiveness/motivation.”

• Physiological outcomes in health care settings include: “disease prevention; recovery and recuperation processes; and maintenance of desired health, long-term survival, and quality of life.” Few studies have assessed these outcomes because of the expense of longitudinal designs and because the indirect effects of communication over time.
Identity - Management Theory (Imahori & Cupach 1993)

Falling under the Socio-Cultural tradition and developed by Tadasu Todd Imahori and William R. Cupach, identity-management theory explains the establishment, development, and maintenance of identities within relationships, as well as changes which occur to identities due to relationships (Imahori & Cupach, 1993).

Establishing Identities People establish their identities (or faces), and their partners, through a process referred to as “facework” (Domenici & Littlejohn, 2006). Everyone has a desired identity which they’re constantly working towards establishing. This desired identity can be both threatened and supported by attempting to negotiate a relational identity (the identity one shares with their partner). So, our desired identity is directly influenced by our relationships, and our relational identity by our desired individual identity.

Cultural Influence Identity-management pays significant attention to intercultural relationships and how they affect the relational and individual identities of those involved. How partners of different cultures negotiate with each other, in an effort to satisfy desires for adequate autonomous identities and relational identities, is important to identity-management theory. People take different approaches to coping with this problem of cultural influence.

Tensions within Intercultural Relationships Identity freezing occurs when one partner feels like they’re being stereotyped and not recognized as a complex individual. This tends to occur early on in relationships, prior to partners becoming well acquainted with each other, and threatens individuals’ identities. Showing support for oneself, indicating positive aspects of one’s cultural identity, and having a good sense of humor are examples of coping mechanisms used by people who feel their identities are being frozen. It is also not uncommon for people in such positions to react negatively, and cope by stereotyping their partner, or totally avoiding the tension.

When tension is due to a partner feeling that their cultural identity is being ignored it is referred to as a nonsupport problem. This is a threat to one’s face, and individuals often cope with it in the same ways people cope with identity freezing. Self-other face dialectic occurs when one partner wants to, but has trouble with, supporting their partner’s cultural identity while also asserting their own. They cope with this by standing their ground, giving in, alternating in their support of each identity, and also by avoiding the issue completely.

Positive – negative face dialectic occurs when an individual wants to affirm a cultural value but doesn’t want to restrain or stereotype. Such a tension exists when one partner is trying to support the other’s cultural identity but is afraid of giving them the impression that they’re being stereotyped. Partners cope with this by getting to know each other well enough to recognize what can be done to support the other’s cultural identity without making them feel like they’re being stereotyped.

Relational Stages of Identity Management Identity management is an ongoing process which Imahori and Cupach define as having three relational stages (Imahori & Cupach, 1993). Typically, each stage is dealt with differently by couples.

The trial stage occurs at the beginning of an intercultural relationship when partners are beginning to explore their cultural differences. During this stage each partner is attempting to determine what cultural identities they want for the relationship. At this stage cultural differences are significant barriers to the relationship and it is critical for partners to avoid identity freezing and nonsupport. During this stage individuals are more willing to risk face threats to establish a balance necessary for the relationship.

The enmeshment stage occurs when a relational identity emerges with established common cultural features. During this stage the couple becomes more comfortable with their collective identity and the relationship in general.

The renegotiation stage sees couples working through identity issues and drawing on their past relational history while doing so. A strong relational identity has been established by this stage and couples have mastered dealing with cultural differences. It is at this stage that cultural difference become part of the relationships and not a tension within them.

Strengths and Weaknesses addresses both individual identities and relational identities as well as how they influence each other. Its weaknesses are that it focuses on cultural differences between partners and not other differences such as gender, age, and life experiences which are also significant when considering identity management.
INTERPERSONAL DECEPTION

Explanation of Theory:
Communication senders attempt to manipulate messages so as to be untruthful, which may cause them apprehension concerning their false communication being detected. Simultaneously, communication receivers try to unveil or detect the validity of that information, causing suspicion about whether or not the sender is being deceitful.

Theorists: Buller and Burgoon

Date: 1996

Primary Article:

Individual Interpretations:
There are three aspects of deceptive messages:
* The central deceptive message, which is usually verbal.
* Ancillary message, which includes verbal & nonverbal aspects of communication that often reveals truthfulness of a particular message.
* Inadvertent behaviors which are mostly nonverbal and help to point out the deceit of the sender through a term called leakage.

Metatheoretical Assumptions:
Ontological Assumptions:
As far as the nature of reality, Deception Theory is very humanistic in that it views multiple realities all contingent on the different situational factors on individuals involved.

Epistemological Assumptions:
In terms of knowledge, this theory is also humanistic. What is discovered from the research depends entirely on who is doing the knowing.

Axiological Assumptions:
The IDT is humanistic in the sense of values. Values of the individuals involved are concluded from their own values and experiences.

Critique:
From the research I have found on this theory, I believe Interpersonal Deception Theory to be mostly a humanistic theory. Besides the fact that it predicts that humans attempt to deceive and the receiver evaluates the communication behavior to determine the validity of the message, it has very little predictive power. It can not predict truthfulness in a specific instance between two specific people because such a unique event is contingent on so many things. Contingencies include whether the deception was premeditated, if there was time available to plan, the consequences of being detected, and the anticipated success of escaping detection. This theory mostly explains the different types of deceptive acts, motives for deception, and describes the factors that measure whether an attempt at deception will be a successful act.

Ideas and Implications:
Interpersonal Deception is a useful theory for someone who has either attempted to deceive or thought someone was trying to deceive them. It helps when looking back on a situation to evaluate the verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors to discover if someone has lied. This theory is usually self-serving, but can also be used to maintain an interpersonal relationship. Everyone has lied and everyone has been lied to, so Deception Theory is very useful and practical.

Example:
A concrete example to help understand Interpersonal Deception is an experience between two best friends, Madeline and Isabell: Last weekend while Isabell was out of town, Madeline got too intoxicated at a fraternity party and kissed her best friend's boyfriend. Not only is Madeline not telling Isabell about what happened, even when she questioned her about what she did last weekend, Madeline lied and said she went to a friend's house and did not even drink.

Relevant Research:

Location in Eight (8) Primary Communication Theory Textbooks:
Interpersonal Influence
(James Price Dillard, Jason W. Anderson, and Leanne K. Knobloch)

1. Defining Interpersonal Influence (p. 425)
   - To perceive or change the behavior of another individual
   - To maintain or modify aspects of another individual that are proximal to behavior, such as cognitions, emotions, and identities

2. Descriptive Aspects of Interpersonal Influence (p. 426)
   - Social interaction provides a forum for expressing and seeking fulfillment of needs
   - Close relationships are constructed from and maintained through reciprocal, ongoing influence interactions

3. A History of Interpersonal Influence (p. 427)
   - The roots of interpersonal influence
     - 3 processes influence changes in behavior or opinion: internalization, identification, and compliance
   - Compliance
     - Study of behavior change, usually as a function of some brief message
     - Labels were given to compliance techniques
     - Dyadic
   - The beginnings of compliance-gaining research
     - Compliance-gaining behavior describes message strategies intended to produce behavior change
     - Marwell and Schmitt’s paper on application of 16 compliance-gaining techniques
       - illustrated that persuasion takes place in interpersonal relationships and public contexts,
       - set a research agenda and provided methodology for attaining it, and
       - identified that an effects-only orientation to the study of communication was too limiting
   - The beginnings of constructivism
     - Individuals differ in terms of the domain-specific social-cognitive abilities and variation in these abilities explain variation in message production
     - Interpersonal cognitive complexity is best measured by the Role Category Questionnaire
   - The rise and fall of compliance-gaining research
     - Failings of the compliance-gaining: (1) relies on paper/pencil measures instead of comm. Behavior
     - (2) Utilized “one-message-then-done” designs (3) the absence of viable theory
   - Initial influences of discourse perspectives
     - Politeness theory offered theoretical framework within which interpersonal influence could be studied
   - Message effects in interpersonal influence: principles of compliance
     - Cialdini’s six psychological principles of compliance: reciprocation, commitment/consistency, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity
   - The methodology wars
     - Compliance-gaining researchers collected likelihood-of-use data by using pre-formulated strategies
     - Constructivists used message construction tasks in which participants, when presented with a hypothetical scenario, spoke or wrote out what they would say
   - The onset of goals research
     - One view of goals is that they are psychological entities that are in principle, although often not in practice, accessible to conscious awareness
     - Another view is that goals are conceptualized and analyzed as the central elements in social codified representations of situations
     - All goal pursuit models agree (1) individuals may possess multiple goals simultaneously & they try to achieve them through talk, and (2) goals are imposing structures on message behavior of interactants
   - Discourse perspectives again
     - Used as an umbrella term for all of those interpretive approaches that emphasize close analysis of talk and build their arguments from examples

4. Message Production (p. 434)
   - Research on situation perception and goals
     - Perceiving influence interactions
       - Cody and McLaughlin’s six dimensions: 1) degree of intimacy between source and target, 2) extent to which the outcome of the attempt would personally benefit the source, 3) consequences
of the attempt for the source-target relationship, 4) rights of the source, 5) power differential between the source and target, and 6) degree of resistance the source anticipates from the target

- Results provide an exhaustive map of the perceived structure of influence episodes
- The identification of the dimensions prompted research that used these dimensions as predictors of message production or selection

- Goals that motivate interpersonal influence
  - Interaction goals are states of affairs that individuals want to attain/maintain through talk
  - Types of influence goals: gain assistance, give advice, share activity, change orientation, change relationship, obtain permission, and enforce rights and obligations

- Models of influence and message production
  - Goals-planning-action
  - Regarding components of the model, goals are defined to align with cognitive perspectives
  - Regarding process, goals precede plans and plans precede actions
  - Two types of goals: 1) primary or influence goals are those that motivate the speaker to engage in interaction while 2) secondary goals are those concerns of the speaker that logically arise from consideration of the influence attempt
  - Planning and metagoals
  - Metagoals are constraints that influence the selection of tactical goals in the service of primary goals
  - Two metagoals: 1) Efficiency is the ratio of outcome to effort where higher values are more efficient, and 2) social appropriateness is the degree to which the behavior is suitable of fitting in a specific interaction

- Discourse models of message design (coordinate message features to meet goals)
  - Politeness theory
  - People are motivated to achieve three aims within influence attempts: 1) gaining compliance, 2) be efficient, and 3) preserve the face of both the speaker and the hearer
  - People possess two specific face wants: 1) positive face, desire to gain approval from others, and 2) negative face, desire to maintain autonomy from others
  - Obstacles
  - Individuals anticipate potential impediments to target compliance and attempt to craft their requests in ways that address those obstacles
  - Message design logic
  - expressive design logic view communication as vehicle to express thoughts & feelings
  - conventional design logic conceive of communication as cooperative game played by rules dictated by social norms
  - rhetorical design logic engage in negotiation of social selves and situations
  - Conversational constraints
  - Five issues guide message production: (1) concern for clarity, (2) concern for minimizing opposition, (3) concern for avoiding damage to the hearer’s feelings, (4) concern for avoiding negative evaluation by the hearer, and (5) concern for effectiveness

5. Action and Interaction (p. 444)

- Classifying influence and resistance messages
  - Top-down category schemes
    - French and Rave’s 5 types of powers
- Not theoretical
  - Bottom-up category schemes
    - How categories are created
    - Marwell and Schmitt’s 16 compliance-gaining behaviors
  - Top-down dimensional schemes
    - Hoffman’s parental discipline, 2 forms
    - 6-level hierarchical coding scheme (a good example)
  - Bottom-up dimensional schemes
    - Falbol’s two dimensions: direct vs. indirect, and rational vs. irrational
    - Other studies suggest 3 dimensions: explicitness, dominance-submissiveness, and argument
    - Implications: multidimensional characterization is required if we are to achieve a full understanding of their operation
  - Evaluating categorical message classification schemes
    - Kellerman and Cole
      - 64 unique strategies
      - 3 problems
    - Causes and implications of the problems are in dispute
      - Groups, at the levels of disciplines or areas, develop assumptions and preferences that facilitate comparison within groups but inhibit comparison across groups
  - Evaluating dimensional message classification schemes
    - Advantages
    - Disadvantages
    - Overall, value in both dimensional and categorical approaches
  - The role of theory in the development of message classification schemes
    - Bottom-up is not theory free (operative theory, though not explicit)
    - Compliance-gaining or compliance-resisting – they are static

6. Interaction: Research and Theory (p. 450)
   - The rebuff phenomenon
     - A durable empirical regularity
     - Description on p.450
     - Lim study – norm reciprocity (resistance and variation)
     - Hample and Dillinger - cognitive editing model
   - The content and sequencing of influence interactions
     - Not simply compliance seeking or resistance
     - Inconsistent nurturing as a control theory (INC): dyadic-system analysis grounded in learning theory, eliminating substance abuse
     - Abusive mothers

7. Message Effects (p. 453)
   - Compliance techniques: research emphasized planned and scripted methods for enhancing compliance, not spontaneous, top-of-the-head utterances
     - Single-interact techniques
       - The that’s-not-all technique (TNA); The lure – bait-and-switch; The disrupt-then-reframe technique (DTR); The even-a-penny technique
     - Triple-interact techniques
       - Pregiving – return in kind; Relational obligations remind targets of an existing relationship; The door-in-the-face technique (DITF) large then small request; The foot-in-the-door technique (FITD) small then large request; The low-ball technique – making first and second requests; The foot-in-the-mouth technique – (FITM) feelings before request
     - A multi-interact compliance technique
       - High-probability procedure – series of questions to produce compliance
   - Reflections on compliance technique research
     - Some are limiting: trade-off and prosocialness of requester
     - Multiprocess accounts
Overview
- Discourse Analysis: process developed to bridge communication concepts & language structure & functions
- Any model of discourse must be compatible with certain fundamental properties
- Shift from “normative/code” model to “inferential,strategic” model

Central Problems and Basic Properties
1. The Problem of Meaning
   - How do we know facts about language and what information is expressed in discourse structures: language is used to convey attitudes, beliefs, and desires through both explicit and indirect means.
2. The Problem of Action
   - How do we assemble messages and what choices and assessments enter the decision making process: when producing messages, we decide what will work and what will not, and people tend to construct messages with the need to be polite. (e.g. the consequences are taken into account when constructing language for communication)
3. The Problem of Coherence
   - What are the patterns among linguistic elements and what rules govern such patterns: all the organization and skills needed involve the application of a knowledge system for how discourse units fit together as level of order.
4. Properties of Linguistic Communication
   - Linguistic communication requires shared principles for inference beyond information given by a “surface” reading.
   - Linguistic communication requires generative principles.
   - Communicative meaning is context determined.
   - Language structures are functional designs; Language use is multifunctional.

The Normative Code Model
1. Linguistics and Grammar
   - “A grammar describes logical structure of relations between meaning & signals that are created by a code” (p.221).
   - Syntax: The rule governing the combinatorial relations among words in sentences
   - Semantics: Component of grammar that assigns meaning to words and specifies the logical form of sentences
   - Phonology: The rules that specify the sounds of a language and their permissible combinations
   - Surface vs. Deep Structures: Surface structures consist of words in the sentences that are in order of occurrence in actual sentence. Deep structures correspond to levels of representations on which semantic mapping is made. (pp. 223-224)
2. The General Model
   - Doing a Chomsky: “showing how the organization of linguistic communication reflects a normatively regulated code for structuring an using linguistic categories” (p. 224).
   - Normative Code Model: “Portrays linguistic communication as transmission of a message in which a sender encodes meanings into a physical signal & a receiver decodes message to derive a meaningful representation of it” (p. 224).
   - Normative Code Models predict that communication will be successful if the receiver uses the same rules to decode the message as the sender.
3. Extensions of the Normative Code Model to Conversational Interaction
   - Sequencing rule approaches and turn-taking rules (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974)
   - Adjacency Pairs: Action sequences such as question/answer; greeting/greeting; offer-acceptance/refusal-request-acceptance/rejection
   - Patterns of sequential expansion rules (p. 227)
   - “Sequencing rules provide no obvious way to characterize broad array of acts that can be coherent replies. At best, adjacency pair relations are normatively standardized pattern, not general principle of sequential coherence” (p. 229)
   - Utterance-Act Rules (e.g. questions are characterized by interrogative forms; commands with imperative forms; and statements with declarative forms)

Toward an Inferential/Strategic Model
- The context is the message.
- Normative Code is insufficient to explain the basic properties of language structure and use.
- Inferential/Strategic Model: “Messages are not understood to be transmitted through an encoding and decoding process that applies self-sufficient code rules to determine meaning” (p. 233).
- To understand message, construction of context of beliefs must take place to enable sense-making process of utterance.
- Cooperative Principle & Four Classes of Conversational Maxims (quality, quantity, relation, and manner)
- “By juggling the unknowns in various ways, we may obtain more than one solution—a theoretically derived conclusion that accords well with the real-life uncertainties of human communication” (p. 235).
Marital Communication

Explanation of Theory:
By measuring three major factors, this theory suggests that married couples tend to cluster into three distinct groups along these dimensions - the traditionals, the independents, and the separates.

Theorist: Mary Anne Fitzpatrick

Date: 1988

Primary Article:

Individual Interpretations:
Couples will engage in marital dimensions based on the characteristics of their relationship. They can also fluctuate from one to another and may engage in more than one simultaneously.

Metatheoretical Assumptions:
There are multiple truths within this theory. It does allow for free will because people can choose which type is most comfortable for them. Oxiologically, this theory says that these behaviors will take place regardless of values and couples may mix the three types which is naturally more complex.

Critique:
This is a scientific theory that makes predictions about marital dimensions based on three factors - ideology, interdependence and conflict. This theory says that one dimension does not necessarily define a good or bad marriage. What is best depends on the needs of the couple.

Ideas and Implications:
The traditional type of marriage according to Fitzpatrick would consist of conventional views and place more value on stability and certainty in role relations than on variety and spontaneity. The couple would have strong interdependence and share much companionship. Although they are not assertive about disagreement, they do not avoid conflict. The independent style of marriage tends to be more unconventional in its views of marriage and does not rely on the other as much. Although a couple may spend time together and share a great deal, they value their own autonomy and often have separate rooms in the house. They may also have separate interests and friends outside the family. The third type of marriage, according to Fitzpatrick, is the separates. These individuals seem to be ambivalent about their roles and relationship. They may have a fairly conventional view of marriage, but they are not very interdependent and do not share much.

Example:
Wanda and Earl have been married for several years. Throughout their marriage, their relationship has evolved. At the beginning, they took on traditional roles of couples and spent a lot of time together. But as time went by, Wanda and Earl pursued individual interests which is defined as more of a independent style of marriage.

Relevant Research:

Location in Eight (8) Primary Communication Theory Textbooks:
Politeness Theory and Facework

**Historical Foundations**

In 1955, Erving Goffman first introduced the term “face” and “facework” in his writing “On face work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction.” In 1970 - 1980, Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson developed these concepts and created Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987) on the basis of the framework of facework. Moreover, many researchers have conducted communication studies using facework as a research framework in different contexts, such as message design logic (Searle, 1969, 1976; O'keefe & McCormack, 1987), intercultural communication (Ting-Toomey, 2004), and relationship development (Baxter, 1987).

**Key Researchers:** Erving Goffman (Sociologist); Penelope Brown/Stephen Levinson

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**OVERVIEW: Assumptions and Main Concepts of Facework**

**FACE** is the self-image people desire to maintain by communication through a particular interaction.

- “positive social value a person effectively claims for him/herself by the line others assume s/he has taken during a particular contact” (Goffman, 1955; 1967, p.5).
- “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for her/himself” (Brown & Levinson, 1978).
- “the projected image of one’s self in a relational situation” (Ting-Toomey, 1988).
- “conception of self that each person displays in particular interactions with others” (Cupach & Metts, 1994).

**Expressive order**

- “an order which regulates the flow of events, large or small, so that anything that appears to be expressed by them will be consistent with her/his face” (Goffman, 1955; 1967, p.12).
- >>> Situation where people around a person would make efforts to create an environment which helps the person to think that the face the person wants to maintain is actually maintained.

**Face Threatening Act (FTA)** - Face may be threatened if people’s desired identity in a particular interaction is challenged.

**Facework** --- Communicative efforts which are designed to maintain face of ourselves and others.

- “the actions taken by a person to make whatever s/he is doing consistent with face” (Goffman, 1955; 1967, p.12).
- **Preventive facework:** Efforts to prevent face threat (i.e., avoiding inappropriate topics; changing subject of convo).
- **Corrective facework:** Efforts to repair face damage that has occurred (i.e., acting as if face has not been threatened; using humor to make the predicament comical).

**Main Concepts of Politeness Theory**

- **Positive face** -- Desire to gain approval and be positively evaluated from others
- **Negative face** --- Desire to maintain autonomy from others; to freedom of action and freedom from imposition

**Assumptions of Politeness Theory**

1. All people have positive and negative face and they choose means to maintain the face.
2. Face maintenance is mutual interest of participants, such that Speaker (S) wants to maintain Hearer’s(H) face.
3. Some acts could threaten the face – face threatening acts (FTAs)
4. The more an act threatens S’s or H’s face, the more S will want to choose a higher-numbered strategy.

**Strategies for Politeness**

- **Bold – on – record** -- Direct request without concern for H (e.g., Do X!)
- **Positive politeness** -- Request with words to soften the influence by showing respect or liking for H – Concern for H’s positive face (e. g., It would be great if you could…)
- **Negative politeness** -- Request with efforts to soften the imposition of the request – Concern for H’s negative face (e. g., I am so sorry for bothering you and asking this, but could you…)
- **Going – off records** -- Indirect way to request (e.g., My grand mother has been hospitalized and I hope to see her)

**Key Literatures and Research**
Facework

Politeness Theory

Relevant Theories and Practices
- **Face Negotiation Theory (Intercultural context)** --- Ting-Toomey (2004) suggested that there is a significant difference in ways of face work between individualistic cultures like U.S. and collectivistic cultures like Japan or China. (Ting-Toomey, 2004)
- **Speech Act Theory (Message design context)** --- Searle (1969, 1976) mentioned that message designing is rule-governed and language speaking is performed as speech acts, such as asking questions and giving commands. He considered face concern plays an important role to design messages.
- **Dialectics (Relationship development context)** --- Baxter (1987) suggested that a process of close relationships is dialectically managed and face wants between partners are important predictor of the process especially of a disengagement stage.
- **Negotiation** --- Wilson (1992) mentioned that previous studies from perspectives of social psychology and discourse interaction studies found the importance of concerns for faces of negotiators and participants.

Analysis and Critique of the Theory
- Critique to Politeness Theory: It does not consider that the perceived politeness should vary depending on contexts (Becker, Kimmel, & Bevill, 1989).
- My analysis and critique: As a critique, it seems to be assumed that face we want to preserve should be socially positive. However, there might be situations in which we want to show our socially negative aspects and want others to know them. For example, Self-Verification Theory suggests that negative self-view people want a person close to them, such as marital partner, to see their real, negative personality (Swann, 1983; Swann, 1987; Swann, Hixon, & Rond’s 1992; Swann: Swann, Jr., Chang-Schneider, & Angulo, in press; Swann, Stein-Seroussi & Giesler, 1992). However, facework is very meaningful because it has been widely used as a research framework by quantitative and qualitative researchers.

Description and Critique of Relevant Research Articles
**Example Study 1** --- Lee, H. E., Park, H. S., & Imai, T. (2008). “Why Japanese are more likely to favor ‘apology,’ while Americans are more likely to favor ‘thank you.”
- **Purposes**: Researchers investigated which speech act is more preferred in favor asking between apologies and thanks in the US and Japan & explored how positive and negative face concerns relate to preferences for apologies or thanks.
- **Method**: Participants read a hypothetical situation where their grand mother is hospitalized and were asked to make a favor asking message of switching their presentation time with other classmates by email. They wrote or chose what they would write in the email and four different messages were prepared. That is, messages end with words of gratitude, apology, both, and none. Finally, they rated the message regarding how much the message seemed to threaten positive/negative face of a speaker/hearer.
- **Results**: Japanese were more likely to use apology and American were more likely to use gratitude when they made a favor asking message. However, the difference was not systematically related to face concerns.
- >>> Hypotheses of a relationship between different face concerns and different usages of messages were not confirmed, but this study helps us to know how to quantitatively apply politeness theory to intercultural communication.

- **Purposes**: Researchers examined compliance-gaining as an instance of politeness or face redress, and how factors, such as relationship distance, relationship power, the magnitude of the face threat, and the agent’s gender influence the use of and perception to different strategies.
• **Method:** Participants read a hypothetical situation where they want a group project member to do more work. Relationship closeness, power, and the magnitude of face threat were manipulated by changing a part of the paragraph of the situation. Then, they were asked to rate a list of different politeness strategies on the basis of how often they would use them and how much they seem to be concerned about positive/negative face of the hearer.

• **Results:** Females and persons in close relationships used more polite tactics than males and persons in more distant relationship. Persons with power used less politeness than less powerful person.

>>> It is valuable for this study to give us ways of a practical application of this theory. Variables they added, such as gender, are meaningful to develop this theory.

**Definitions:**

• Facework or politeness strategies are ways we use communicative devices to mitigate any potential threats to face. In other words, one strategically manipulates one’s language so as to minimize the other’s loss of ‘face’.

• Attempts to mitigate threat within a face-threatening act (FTA) are called politeness strategies (negative politeness and positive politeness).

• An FTA is what is intended to be done by a verbal or non-verbal communication, and certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten one’s face.

**Historical foundation: what is face?:**

“Face”: “The positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line [content and character of a message] others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes” (5).

- Feelings are tied up in one’s “face”
- Every interaction is a commitment

**Theoretical assumptions:**

• Politeness is universal: “Politeness … is basic to the production of social order” (Brown & Levinson 1987).

• Face is universal: all persons have ‘face’ and recognize it in others

• Face as wants are universal: ‘faces’ are tied up in our desires.

• Some acts are intrinsically face-threatening (e.g., directives)

• Conversationalists assume the efficiency and rationality of talk; talk is both an efficient and rational form of communication (Grice’s theory of conversational implicature)

• Certain types of speech acts affect only one of two distinct kinds of face: negative and positive

**Negative face:** the desire to be left alone or unimpeded in one’s progress (autonomy)

**Positive face:** the desire to have one’s personality and possessions liked, respected, or evaluated positively (approval)

FTAs vary in degree of threat depending on 3 factors:

1) degree of imposition
2) relative power of the speaker over the hearer (addressee)
3) social distance between speaker and hearer (friend vs. stranger)

**Strategies to mitigate face threat: how do we honor face?** (Goldsmith, MacGeorge, 2000; Duthler, 2006)

- Positive politeness (#2) – expression of solidarity; e.g., the use of in-group language, expressing sympathy with the listener, presupposing common ground, etc. (“Let’s meet to discuss your ideas.”)

- Negative politeness (#3) – the expression of restraint softens the forcefulness of the FTA to minimize the imposition (“Would you be willing to meet with me for just a minute about this?”)

- Off-record politeness (#4) – the avoidance of unequivocal impositions, i.e., ambiguity (FTA is implied but not stated; e.g., “Oh no, I’m out of cash, I forgot to go to the bank today.”)

Not honoring face: **Baldy, on record (#1)** – imperative, most direct and efficient (“Meet with me!” or “Give me cash!”)

Not honoring or threatening face: **Don’t do the FTA (#5)** – simply avoid the act altogether

The more an act threatens the speaker’s or the hearer’s face, more speaker will want to choose a higher-numbered strategy:
IVs affecting choice of strategy: liking; presence of an audience

Some empirical findings:

- The more imposing the request, the more polite the language of the speaker’s request
- When requests are highly imposing, email enhances communicators’ abilities to construct more polite messages than voicemail communicators
- Certain types of speech acts can affect both negative and positive face threat (e.g., “you need to start putting forth some effort”).
- Perceived regard for face is associated with hearer’s perception of speaker’s goals
- The act of giving advice is generally more threatening to negative than positive face (at odds with findings by Goldsmith & MacGeorge, 2000).
- Sequencing of acts affects type and degree of face threat, and thus sequential placement of advice solicitation is associated with perceived regard for face

Current Research using politeness theory and face work:

Health Communication:
- End of life issues (Planalp, Trost, 2008; Dyregrov K, 2003)
- Social Support for HIV/AIDS victims (Brashers, Neidig, Goldsmith, 2004)

CMC – identity formation and maintenance online/VE

References

- Lee, H. E., Park, H. S., & Imai, T. (2008). “Why Japanese are more likely to favor ‘apology,’ while Americans are more likely to favor ‘thank you,’” presented at the annual convention of International Communication Association, Montreal, Canada
**Relational Dialectics**

**Graphical Representation of the Theory**

**Explanation of Theory:**
Communication parties experience internal, conflicting pulls causing relationships to be in a constant state of flux, known as dialectical tension. The pressures of these tensions occur in a wavelike or cyclical fashion over time. Relational Dialectics introduces the concept that the closer individuals become to one another, the more conflict will arise to pull them apart.

**Theorist:** Baxter and Montgomery


**Individual Interpretations:**
There are three primary relational dialectics:

* **Connectedness and Separateness** — Although it is only natural to desire a close and permanent bond in our interpersonal relationships, no relationship can endure unless the involved individuals spend some time alone. Much connection results in the loss of individual identity.

* **Certainty and Uncertainty** — Relational partners need predictability along with a sense of assurance in their interpersonal relationships. However, without the spice of variety that comes from novelty, mystery, and spontaneity in relationships (featuring too much predictability), they become bland and monotonous.

* **Openness and Closedness** — In an interpersonal relationship, communication partners feel the pressure to be transparent and reveal extensive personal information. However, this pull counters a natural individual desire for privacy. This dynamic struggle demonstrates that intimacy in relationships is not a straight-line path.

**Metatheoretical Assumptions:**

**Ontological Assumption:** In this sense, the theory is extremely humanistic. Relational Dialectics believes that there are many truths, dependent on the individual nature of each relationship.

**Epistemological Assumption:** The theory is also quite humanistic in the relationship between the research being done and the researcher. What is researched is dependent on the observer.

**Axiological Assumption:** I feel that Relational Dialectics is humanistic in the values sense as well. Research being done is value-laden and biased because each dialectic is an opinion which must be made by the individual researcher.

**Critique:** Relational Dialectics if a humanistic theory based on the idea that people are responding to the pulls and tugs that surround them in a relationship. It presents a practical hypothesis, but because it is unique to the situation, it becomes difficult to make generalizations.

However, it does do an excellent job of explaining specific instances.

**Ideas and Implications:** Relational Dialectics is useful to apply in situations when trying to explain dramatic or sudden changes in human communication behavior. The pressures each pole (or dialectic) exerts is comparable to the waxing and waning periods of the moon. Relational partners are constantly fluctuating between the poles; each extreme behavior offsetting tendencies toward the other pole. In studying an maintaining interpersonal relationships it is essential to understand this phenomenon.

**Example:** To help illustrate Relational Dialectics involves two college students in a romantic relationship, Jill and Josh.

* **Connectedness and Separateness** — Jill and Josh are very close and Josh insists on spending all their free time together. Jill enjoys Josh's company very much, but sometimes she feels like she needs her own space and personal space. She tries to help Josh understand they can still be very close without being together every second of the day.

* **Certainty and Uncertainty** — Jill and Josh also need a little more excitement in their relationship. Their activities with each other have become somewhat redundant, and they desire some spice in their relationship. They rarely go out anymore and when they do, they always participate in the same activities with the same people.

* **Openness and Closedness** — Jill and Josh have a very high level of self-disclosure with Josh which helps maintain a sense of openness in their relationship. Josh has progressively gotten less and less open with Jill about stories from his past, how his day was, and his feelings toward Jill. This change confuses Jill and makes her feel less comfortable opening up.

**Relevant Research:**

**Location in Eight (8) Primary Communication Theory Textbooks:**
RELATIONAL DIALECTICS THEORY

Introduction to Theory
- A centerpiece of Dialectic is the dialogic view: social life is a process of contradictory discourses
- Literary example of the dialogic view
  - Dickens, Tale of Two Cities, “It was the best of times….” -- but, how can this be?
  - Likewise, consider the following pairs of folk proverbs:
    - Opposites attract but birds of a feather flock together
    - Out of sight, out of mind but absence makes the heart grow fonder
    - Two’s company; three’s a crowd but the more the merrier
- Practical example of relational dialectics – how might this look in real life
  - “I’ve never understood how I could want so much to be with [insert name here] for a while and then feel suffocated and need to get a way. I’ve worried that it means I don’t love them anymore or that there is something wrong between us, but now I see how both needs are normal and okay.”
  - Or, what about across relationships. When you are in a romantic relationship, you might be both interdependent on your romantic partner while feeling independent from your friends. Those separate emotions are both a part of you and yet likely causing their own world of tensions within the individual relationships.
  - In other words, you don’t want just connectedness and interdependence; nor do you want just autonomy or independence…. We don’t live in a world of this or that. We live in a world of “both/and”

Rooted in Relational Tension and Contradiction
- Social life is a knot of contradictions and ceaseless interplay between contradictory/opposing tendencies.
- Example of three core Relational Dialectics, which persons in a relationship may have to manage:
  - **Autonomy --- Connectedness**: All humans have need for autonomy & independence. Conversely, they wish to attach themselves to others through relationships, in which decisions are made on a group level. Tension arises here when attachment to the group infringes on the individual member’s need for self-government.
  - **Openness --- Closedness**: By the sharing of information, a relationship can grow closer & stronger. However, need for self-disclosure conflicts with need for privacy felt by each individual in the relationship. When these needs are at odds with one another, a relational tension is created over how much disclosure is desirable.
  - **Novelty --- Predictability**: For a relationship to be maintainable there is a need for structure and stability. At the same time, a relationship in which nothing out of the ordinary takes place cannot stay dynamic. The struggle to avoid monotony while maintaining order is the basis for this tension.

Other Main Concepts
- According to Baxter, Relational Dialectics are opposing emotional forces (tensions) or feelings normal to all relationships.
- We understand that **contradiction** (Concept 1) is about independent opposing forces. The presence of these opposing forces creates/leads to change
  - **2 Change** and pattern is central object of study within a relationship. As oppose to one way or reciprocal causation, dialectics say they simply both exist in the relationship. Goal is to capture changing patterns through time.
  - **3 Praxis** – each individual is both an actor and an object of his/her own actions
    - a. You act (making communicative choices) and simultaneously,
    - b. You react (to your partner’s responses to your communicative choice)
  - **4 Totality** – NOT synonymous with “completeness;” instead, a way to express the interdependent nature of the world.
    - Contradictions don’t occur in isolation; rather, relationships contain numerous contradictions (which are jointly owned by the parties in the relationship).
- No matter the stage of the relationship, dialectical tensions always exist. Sometimes in the foreground and other times in the background. At all times, the stages and the dialectical tensions co-exist.

Negotiating through Dialectical Tension
- There are 4 primary ways which partners deal with the tension generated by opposing needs
  - 1. Neutralization – negotiate a balance between two poles of dialectic; compromise toward equilibrium
  - 2. Selection – give priority to one of the needs in a dialectic (perhaps this happens in cycles or seasons)
  - 3. Separation – Assign dialectical need to certain spheres (open about most topics, but respect privacy in 1 or 2 areas; have rigid daily schedules and patterns of socializing but be very spontaneous on vacations).
  - 4. Reframing – Redefine contradictory needs as not in opposition (“Our predictability isn’t in conflict with novelty; instead, our routines make novelty interesting and novelty makes routines comforting.”)
Background Information & Historical Foundations of Theory

“Each of us arrived at a relational-dialectics view of communication in relationships by encountering anomalies that existing theory and research did not position us to understand” -- Baxter & Montgomery, 1996

- Early work in compatibility positioned that differences can be positive (Winch, 1958)
- Byrne and Lambeth (1971) suggested that difference need not be damaging to a relationship
- Represent view that is “destructive of neat systems & ordered structures, & …has no solid boundaries” (Murphy, 1971).
- Social penetration theorist (Altman & Taylor, 1973) shifts his perspective and explores the dialectical perspective on openness in relationships (Altman, 1981). (shift from dualist thinking to dialectical way of thinking)
- Mikhail Bakhtin contrasts dialogic and monologic view of literature, language, & thought: Communication informs and is continually informed by previous communication. Things we say always exist in response to things said before and in anticipation of things said in response. We don’t speak in a vacuum. As a result, communication is dynamic, relational and engaged in a process of endlessly re-describing the world…. Contradictions do not sit “out there” as objective forces that drive communicative choices between partners, but instead are constituted in “verbal-ideological” forces (Bakhtin, 1981).
- Empirical findings do not explicitly support linear association between similarity/satisfaction (Bochner, 1991; Duck, 1994)
- Positivity and negativity are opposite qualities, but are both necessary and inevitable in relationships. While parties may strive for total positivity, negativity is inevitable and can be catalyst for change and adaptability (e.g., Gottman, 1994).
- Unlike traditional views (focus on relationships as connection, certainty, and openness), introduction to a focus on dialectical tension of contradictory discourses (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996).
- Selves and relationships constituted in jointly enacted communication events (Goldsmith & Baxter, 1996).
- Communication is the interpenetration of united-yet-competing values, orientations, perspectives, or ideas (Holquist, 1981)
- Similarity and difference comprise a central contradiction of relating (VanLear, 1998).
- While dialectical tensions are universal in human relationships, they are more obvious in some types of relationships than others. Work settings (desire to support a friend may conflict with work obligations to be impartial; org. hierarchy; work and private life)... See Bridge & Baxter, 1992; Rawlins, 1992
- Unlike Conville’s view (similarity and difference function cyclically, with similarity a characteristic seen during stable periods and difference a characteristic seen during crisis or turbulent periods), Baxter & West (2003) argue that at any given point in time, the snapshot of a relationship contains both similarities & differences, sometimes lodged in the same phenomenon.

Critique & Opportunities for future research

- Much of the prevailing work has been Baxter’s (which is great), but only one of her studies has involved actual partner talk (Baxter & West, 2003). How can relational dialectics build a firmer empirical base by incorporating talk between parties?
- Research has focused on dyadic “two voices.” Can we research multiple voices, with many discourses competing at once?
- Bakhtin mentions past things said, anticipation of things said, etc; however, Baxter studies one-time, retrospective self-report. How can future studies account for discourse through time and actually study dialogue shifts and transformations?

References

Relational Dialectics Theory (Montgomery & Baxter, 1996)

In order to understand Relational Dialectics Theory, we must first understand specifically what encompasses the term ‘discourse.’ Therefore, discourses are “systems of meaning that are uttered whenever we make intelligible utterances aloud with others or in our heads when we hold internal conversations” (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008, p.349). Now, taking the term discourse and coupling it with Relational Dialectics Theory, it is assumed that this theory “emerges from the interplay of competing discourses” (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008, p. 349).

This theory also poses the primary assumption that, “Dialogue is simultaneously unity and difference” (Baxter, 2004, p. 182). Therefore, these assumptions insinuate the concept of creating meaning within ourselves and others when we communicate, however, it also shows how the meanings within our conversations may be interpreted, understood, and of course misunderstood. Hence, the creation and interpretations we find in our communicative messages may create strains in our communicative acts that can be termed as ‘dialectical tensions.’

So, if we assume the stance that all of our discourse, whether in external conversations or internally within ourselves, has competing properties, then we can take Relational Dialectics theory and look at what the competing discourses are in our conversations, and then analyze how this may have an effect on various aspects of our lives. Numerous examples of this can be seen in the daily communicative acts we participate in. However, dialectical tensions within our discourses can most likely be seen in interpersonal communication due to the close nature of interpersonal relationships. To promote a greater understanding of what this theory assumes, a well known proverb in which dialectical tensions can be seen in has been provided below.

“Opposites attract, but Birds of a feather flock together” (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 3).

The Three Relational Dialectics:

In order to understand relational dialectics theory, one must also be aware of the assumption that there are three different types of relational dialectics. These consist of connectedness and separateness, certainty and uncertainty, and openness and closedness.

Connectedness and Separateness

Most individuals naturally desire to have a close bond in the interpersonal relationships we are a part of. However, it is also assumed that no relationship can be enduring without the individuals involved within it also having their time alone to themselves. Individuals who are only defined by a specific relationship they are a part of can result in the loss of individual identity.

Certainty and Uncertainty

Individuals desire a sense of assurance and predictability in the interpersonal relationships they are a part of. However, they also desire having a variety in their interactions that come from having spontaneity and mystery within their relationships as well. Much research has shown that relationships which become bland and monotonous are not desirable.

Openness and Closedness

In close interpersonal relationships, individuals may often feel a pressure to reveal personal information. This assumption can be supported if one looks at the postulations within social penetration theory, which is another theory used often within the study of communication. This tension may also spawn a natural desire to keep an amount of personal privacy from other individuals. The struggle in this sense, illustrates the essence of relational dialectics.

Strengths of Relational Dialectics Theory
This theory is very useful in communicative events illustrating sudden changes within human communication behaviors. Communication between individuals is in constant fluctuation and in studying interpersonal relationships, it is essential to understand this phenomenon.

**Weaknesses of Relational Dialectics Theory**

Although this study can be extremely useful in understanding the different relational and communicative patterns between individuals, it essentially works best in studying specific instances of relational dialectics, therefore making it hard to generalize any assumptions about dialectical tensions within many communication acts.

Furthermore, each assumption of dialectical tensions is ultimately the opinion of the researcher conducting a study using this theory, therefore the information provided on communicative behaviors in this sense is extremely subjective and may not be agreed upon in many instances.

**Philosophical Tradition** – Socio-cultural Tradition – For more information on this theory, please see the attached references.

**Concepts/Constructs** – Concepts and constructs include the need for conflicting statements to be looked at within one set of discourses that are taking place in a defined conversation between messages senders and receivers.

**Underlying Assumptions** – Underlying assumptions presume that there is a ceaseless interplay of opposing discourses in our everyday language.

**Boundary Conditions** – The specific boundary conditions that must be met include the fact that only statements using conflicting language within them are able to be looked at using Relational Dialectics Theory.
Social Exchange Theory

Explanation of Theory:
The Communication Theory of Social Exchange is a theory based on the exchange of rewards and costs to quantify the values of outcomes from different situations for an individual. People strive to minimize costs and maximize rewards and then base the likeliness of developing a relationship with someone on the perceived possible outcomes. When these outcomes are perceived to be greater, we disclose more and develop a closer relationship with that person.

Primary Article:

Metatheoretical Assumptions:
This is a humanistic theory because it has intuitive credibility, it makes sense and is relative to actual communication practice. It has a systematic approach and is timely. There are multiple truths. It also has heuristic value because it is easily applicable to situations.

Critique:
This is a scientific theory. It has explanatory power in that it predicts individuals minimize costs and maximize rewards within their relationships. This theory has predictive power in that it predicts that when outcomes are perceived to be greater individuals self disclose more. It also simple and capable of being proved false. The theoretical propositions with the theory are consistent with each other. This theory generates new hypotheses therefore expanding the range of potential knowledge and also organizes existing knowledge.

Ideas and Implications:
The viability of social exchange rests on the assumption that human beings recognize each other's life situations, notice each other's needs, and in some ways are likely to engage in reciprocity - a condition in which a response is correlated to the worth of the original message. In other words, humans act with other humans in full recognition that their acts will be noticed and in some way reciprocated (i.e., that they will receive a return on their communicative investment).

Example:
A rookie NFL football player thinks that the benefits of signing with an independent agent would outweigh the costs of signing with a big firm. He thought that the personal attention he would get would benefit him more than being a little fish in a big pond with a large agency. As time went on, much to the rookie's surprise, he wasn't getting any offers. This caused him to reevaluate his relationship with his agent and ultimately threaten to leave him for a big firm. The rookie eventually chose to continue with the independent agent. In the end, the rookie signed for millions of dollars with his favorite team and became a hero.

Relevant Research:

References:
Social Exchange Theory: (George Caspar Homans, 1958)

Overview

Social Exchange theory falls under the symbolic interaction perspective. The theory predicts, explains and describes when and why people reveal certain information about themselves to others. Social Exchange theory argues the major force in interpersonal relationships is the satisfaction of both people’s self interest. Theorists say self interest is not necessarily a bad thing and that is can actually enhance relationships (Homans, 1958).

According to the theory human interaction is like an economic transaction, in that you seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs. You will reveal information about yourself when the cost-rewards ratio is acceptable to you. As long as rewards continue to outweigh costs a couple will become increasingly intimate by sharing more and more personal information. The constructs of this theory include discloser, relational expectations, and perceived rewards or costs in the relationship (Foss & Littlejohn, 2008).

The underlying assumptions include that humans weigh out rewards versus costs when developing a relationship. The boundary conditions for this theory are that at least two people must be having some type of interaction.

Social Exchange also ties in closely with social penetration theory.

Analysis and Critique

- Theory grounded in multiple disciplines; extensions have made it applicable to variety of interaction/IP contexts.
- Strength/Weakness to how theories of social exchange are organized and developed. 1 limitation presented is that we should not begin concepts with “exchange”, but with a theory of “choice” (applied more widely (Heath, 1976)).
- Roloff (1981) -- social exchange theories are better established in formalized manner than most comm. theories.
- Social exchange theories applicable in regards to policy implications; utilized in our everyday experiences as well.

Strengths:

Social Exchange Theory can be used to study interactions across a broad spectrum from romantic relationships to working relationships in organizations. First explained by Homans in 1958, it remains a relevant theory that continues to generate new research.

Weaknesses:

- One weakness of this theory is that it looks at human interaction simply as a rational process, focusing on an economic formula. Critics argue that because Social Exchange focuses on the reward to cost balance it doesn't account for other reasons behind certain exchanges. Some also challenge whether humans really take the time to think about rewards and costs when having an exchange or forming a relationship (Turner & West, 2007).
- ambiguity b/w rewards & costs, determining value of rewards & “fair exchange” of resources (Roloff, 1981).
Social Exchange and Investment Model

“Social exchange is not a singular theory but a family of theories that proposes that individuals place varying values on aspects of relationships and make decisions about relationships based on those values” (Miller, 2005, p. 170).

Historical Foundations and Review of Key Researchers and Theories

George C. Homans: Operant Psychology Approach (1958), Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms
- Based on the principles of operant conditioning in that people tend to repeat behaviors that are rewarded and cease to exhibit behaviors that are punished
- Founded on five propositions: success (people tend to repeat actions based on receiving rewards), stimulus (past stimuli tend to affect responses to present stimuli in terms of reward based actions), value (the more value a person places on an action, the more they will perform that action), deprivation-satiation (there is a point where a person no longer needs a given resource), aggression/approval (anger will result in unintended punishments or lack of expected rewards, which will lead to a positive association with aggressive behaviors based on valuable results)
- Controversial because of approach and reliance on the stimulus of B. F. Skinner’s research in behavioral psychology

- Based in social psychology, this theory has been updated and extended since its origination in 1959
- This approach is based upon two primary concepts: gaming principles and drive reduction and the primary assumption is that “people seek reinforcements”
- “Social exchange involves processes by which two people provide mutual resources that reduce drives or fulfill each other’s needs” (Roloff, 1981, p. 45).
- The evaluation of a relationship is based on the comparison of one’s outcomes within two standards—comparison level and comparison level for alternatives (comparison level represents what a person feels are relationship rewards and costs, which can determine satisfaction and comparison level for alternatives is the lowest amount of rewards one is willing to accept based on awards from alternative relationships or being alone)
- When people interact, they enact behavioral sequences (series of verbal actions in order to achieve a goal) and a behavioral set is the person’s intent to achieve that goal

Peter M. Blau: Economic Approach (1964), Exchange and Power in Everyday Life
- Based in an economics framework and believes that from this perspective we can derive testable approaches to understanding and hypothesizing about social exchange
- Humans estimate potential gains, compare it with alternatives, and choose the path that results in the greatest profits

- Behavior is guided by motivations in which people are willing to engage in certain behaviors when a large number of resources fall outside an optimal range (between low levels of need versus high levels of saturation of the resource)
- Based on two propositions: 1) every interpersonal behavior is about giving or taking away one or more resources and 2) behaviors that manifest from closely allied resources tend to occur more often than those that involve less related resources

Elaine Walster, Leonard Berscheid, & William Walster: Equity Theory (1976), Equity: Theory and Research
- Based on the idea that an equitable relationship involves the perception that relative gains of two individuals in an exchange are equal
- Examines how equal the distributions of profit are within a relationship

- Model extends existing theory to focus on two elements: satisfaction and commitment in relation to investments in interpersonal relationships

Overview of Theory and Primary Concepts
- We evaluate relationships based on an economic approach to the rewards and costs represented in past, present, and future relationships.
- Assessments of outcomes are made regarding a particular relationship deriving from both the rewards received in the relationship, as well as all associated costs.
- A relationship high in rewards and low in costs would result in high outcomes, whereas a relationship low in rewards and high in costs would result in low outcomes.
- According to social exchange this process of evaluation is not so simple in that we determine decisions based on comparing current relationships to past relationships and also to possible relationships in the future.

Assumptions include:
- Consistent terms among all social exchange theories include: resources (love, status, services, goods, information, and money), rewards (personal attraction, social acceptance, social approval, instrumental services, respect/prestige, and
compliance/power), costs (investment costs, direct costs, and opportunity costs), and self-interest (the tendency to seek preferred resources from others)

- People tend to engage and interact in communication with specific people in specific circumstances to advance their own self-interest (though this assumption does not imply that people pursue interests in exploitation of others)
- People desire relationships that provide them with valuable and satisfactory outcomes (which can include mutually beneficial experiences for their relational partners; therefore, resulting in “reward dependability” with others)
- “Social exchange involves the voluntary transference of resources by one person to another in order to receive a resource…Communication allows determination of another’s bargaining aspirations, alteration of those aspirations, and provision to the other person of information about our own bargaining goals” (Roloff, 1981, pp. 26 & 30).

### Social Exchange Situations

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<tr>
<th>Situation A</th>
<th>Situation B</th>
<th>Situation C</th>
<th>Situation D</th>
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<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>CLALT</td>
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### Examples of Research Employing Social Exchange


- Examined effects of anticipated length of relationship, sex of discloser, & sex of partner on disclosure intimacy.
- They apply the concept of disclosure intimacy as a relational investment, specifically looking at length of relationship, status of partner, and anticipated level of partner intimacy as possible costs or rewards.
- Results: There was a contrast between female and male intimacy behaviors in relation to long terms relationships; the levels were highest among females for all groups, whereas men based on the same conditions were the lowest. Also, the relationships among the three cost/reward variables were not equally influential as predicted. Females made higher intimacy investments than males in terms of anticipated length of relationships.
- Critique: The review of literature regarding three potential cost/reward variables was very brief, which resulted in questions of support for established hypotheses based on existing literature. Also, in the methods section there was a statement in the brief participants’ paragraph that said, “both the experimenter and the students were unaware of the purposes of this study,” but this was never explained. It was not clear how and why the “experimenter” was not aware, which led to some ambiguity of the procedures.


- This study examined experiences of two volunteer groups during production of community theater musicals through the inquiry of five research questions and two hypotheses that looked at differences and similarities in group experiences in terms of satisfaction, tasks, communication, and rewards and costs.
- The framework of Social Exchange Theory was used to examine costs and benefits in the participation of volunteers, as well as how activities were chosen based on these analyses.
- Results: The researchers found that the best predictors of positive reactions to experiences were related to peer support and opportunities for social interactions.
- Critique: This particular study extended the application of SET to a new context and new inquires regarding costs and benefits of social groups such as non-profit and community organizations. In addition, this study implemented both quantitative methods, as well as content analysis to employ SET which is also an exploratory approach to applying this framework. The small sample size makes generalizability to other group populations a challenge, but as an exploratory study it fostered new research questions and approaches using SET.
Social Network Theory

Historical Foundations

- Birthed out of social psychology and sociology. Based on graph theory (mathematical)
- Fields that use this theory include: sociology, anthropology, sociolinguists, geography, social psychology, communication, information science, organizational studies, economics, and biology.
- Study of social networks is a field onto itself
- Key historical pieces:
  - Barnes was the first to study social networks
  - DeSoto (1960) Learning social structure
  - Milgram (1967) 6 degrees of separation

Key Researchers and Theorists

- “Network Researchers”
  - Burt, R., Krackhardt, D., Kilduff, M., Mehra, A., Balkundi, P., Tsai, W.
- “Communication Scholars” who use Social Network Theory
  - Contractor, N., Monge, P., Corman, S., Barnett, G., Palazzolo, E., Smith, R., Stohl, C., Poole, S.

KEY CONCEPTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Egocentric Networks</th>
<th>Social network around ego, including ego’s direct ties and the ties among ego’s direct ties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Network (preferred)</td>
<td>Complete set of ties among all actors in the network (usually reports only symmetric ties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong &amp; Weak Ties (Granovetter, 1973)</td>
<td>Strong: integrated &amp; developed, reinforce beliefs, provide support, assumption of reciprocity Can dampen exposure to new ideas and drain your resources Weak: share information, tips, advice, provide access to new ideas, links to many different people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrality (central position in the network)</td>
<td>Degree: Having many ties to other actors Indegree/prestige~ how many people report you as a friend Outdegree/reach~ how many people you report as a friend Closeness: being able to reach many others Betweenness: connecting actors who have no direct connections to one another Eigenvector: having connections to centrally located actors (Kilduff &amp; Tsai, 2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structural Holes</td>
<td>Burt (1992) ---- A gap between two actors (A &amp; B) that may be bridged by another actor (C) who would then control the flow of information between the two actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship, Communication, Advice Networks</td>
<td>Who do you consider your friends? Who do you go to for advice? Who do you talk to on a daily basis?</td>
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Method

- Roster method is the most popular
- Best used in networks of 150 or less (Erickson, Nosanchuk, & Lee, 1981)
- UCINET (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002)

Key Literature/Research
Emergent Communication Networks (Monge & Eisenberg, Handbook of Org)
Centering Resonance Analysis (Corman)
Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count or LIWC (Pennebaker)
Participation (Marshall & Stohl)
Small World (Watts)
Structural Holes (Burt)
Strong & Weak Ties (Granovetter)
Social Capital (Burt)
Self-Monitoring (Kilduff & Day)

Analysis/Critique

- Too methodological and not theoretical
- Borrows too much for psychology and sociology for their theories
- Lack of understanding of networks vs. communication channels
- A real problem with network analysis in the past has been the inability to test hypotheses statistically, because the data are by their very nature autocorrelated, violating assumptions of independence (random sampling) built-in to most classical statistical tests. With the advent of permutation tests, however, this is much less of a problem now.

Key References

**Explanation of Theory:**
The social penetration theory states that as relationships develop, communication moves from relatively shallow, nonintimate levels to deeper, more personal ones.

**Theorists:** Altman and Taylor

**Date:** 1973

**Primary Article:**

**Individual Interpretations:**
The more time we spend with others, the more likely we are to self-disclose more intimate thought and details of our life.

**Metatheoretical Assumptions:**
Epistemologically, this theory makes the statement that if self disclosure is high, then the relationship will develop. This "if-then" statement makes this a scientific theory. It does allow for free-will because people can choose whether or not to self disclose (time and manner). Axiologically, this theory says that this behavior will take place regardless of values.

**Critique:**
This is a scientific theory that makes predictions about relationship development based on levels of self disclosure. Based on a sort of cost-reward model, this theory argues that for a relationship to develop, both parties must self disclose. In judging this theory, it is able to make predictions depending on levels of self-disclosure. It explains what happens in relationships and this theory has some falsifiability. Its logic is not necessarily logical in that the authors propose a linear model, but this may not be the best way to explain the theory. It has spawned much of the work in interpersonal context because of the fundamental principles it lays down about interpersonal relationships.

**Ideas and Implications:**
Altman and Taylor compared people to a multilayered onion. They believe each opinion, belief, prejudice, and obsession is layered around and within the individual. As people get to know each other, the layers "shed away" to reveal the core of the person. These layers have both breadth and depth. Breadth is the array or variety of topics that have been incorporated into individuals' lives. Depth is the amount of information available on each topic. On the outermost shell are highly visible levels of information such dress and speech. Inside are increasingly private details about the lives, feelings, and thoughts of the participants. As the relationship develops, the partners share more aspects of the self, providing breadth as well as depth, through an exchange of information, feelings and activities. According to Altman and Taylor, relationships are sustained when they are relatively rewarding and discontinued when they are relatively costly. This theory seems to pertain to real world experiences, however, Altman and Taylor abandoned several main factors that influence self disclosure. Gender, race, and ethnic background could greatly influence findings and may contribute to the rate at which the onion is "shed."

**Example:**
Pete and John have been friends since they were freshman. Their friendship was like most guys in that it consisted of hanging out and making fun of each other and others. Several months ago Pete began dating Jen. The relationship was exactly what Pete wanted and he soon found himself falling in love with her. Because Pete and John were such good friends, there were many times that he wished he could confide in John but hesitated in doing so because they hadn't really talked about feelings before. If he admits these feelings, he's opening himself for some heavy handed kidding or emotional blackmail. In addition, once that wedge has been penetrated deeply, it will have cut a passage through which it can return again and again with little resistance. Future privacy may be difficult. Realizing both of these factors, Pete may be extra cautious about exposing his true feelings. Perhaps he'll fence off this part of his life for the whole school term. According to the social penetration theory, a permanent guard will limit the closeness these two young men can achieve.

**Relevant Research:**

**Location in Eight (8) Primary Communication Theory Textbooks:**
Social Penetration Theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973)

Overview of Social Penetration Theory

Often times, when a relationship begins to develop, it is customary for the individuals within the relationship to undergo a process of self-disclosure. Self disclosure is “sharing information with others that they would not normally know or discover. Self-disclosure involves risk and vulnerability on the part of the person sharing the information” (Borcher, 1999). The reason that self disclosure is labeled as risky is due to the fact that often times, individuals undergo a sense of uncertainty and susceptibility in revealing personal information that has the possibility of being judged in a negative way by the receiver. Hence the reason that face-to-face communication must evolve in stages when an initial relationship develops.

There are four different stages that social penetration theory encompasses. These include the orientation, exploratory affective exchange, affective exchange, and stable exchange.

Orientation Stage: Within the orientation stage, individuals exchange very little amounts of information and they are very cautious in their interactions.

Exploratory Affective Stage: Next, in the exploratory affective stage, individuals become somewhat more friendly and relaxed with their communication styles.

Affective Exchange: In the third stage, the affective exchange, there is a high amount of open communication between individuals and typically these relationships consist of close friends or even romantic partners.

Stable Stage: The final stage, the stable stage, simply consists of continued expressions of open and personal types of interaction.

Also important to note, is the fact that due to current communicative exchanges involving a high amount of computer mediated contexts in which communication occurs, this area of communication should be addressed in regard to Social Penetration Theory as well. Online communication seems to follow a different set of rules. Due to the fact that much of online communication between people occurs on an anonymous level, individuals are allowed the freedom of foregoing the interpersonal ‘rules’ of self disclosure. Rather than slowly disclosing personal thoughts, emotions, and feelings to others, anonymous individuals online are able to disclose personal information immediately and without the consequence of having their identity revealed.

Furthermore, this theory assumes the stance that the decision making process of how much information an individual chooses to self disclose is ultimately rooted in an analysis of the costs and rewards that an individual may acquire when choosing to share personal information.

An example of Social Penetration theory can be seen when one thinks of a hypothetical situation such as meeting someone for the first time. When two individuals meet for the first time, it is the cultural expectation that only impersonal information will be exchanged. This could include information such as names, occupations, age of the conversation participants, as well as various other impersonal information. However, if both members participating in the dialogic exchange decide that they would like to continue or further the relationship; with the continuation of message exchanges, the more personal the information exchanged will become.

Strengths of Social Penetration Theory

One of the strengths within this theory is the fact that it can be used to look at both face to face interpersonal interactions as well as online interactions among individuals. Another strength involves the usefulness of this
theory in looking at and assessing the risk within an interpersonal relationship depending upon the type of relationship as well as the current level of self disclosure and intimacy within it.

**Weaknesses of Social Penetration Theory**

The weaknesses of this theory include the fact that other factors having the ability to affect self disclosure are not assessed. Cultural and demographic characteristics such as gender, race, age, and more, may ultimately have an effect on how one chooses to disclose information.

Furthermore, it also may be difficult to generalize information that is assessed using this theory due to the fact that the specific experiences, values, and beliefs of an individual may also have an effect on the manner in which he or she chooses to disclose information.

**Philosophical Tradition** – Symbolic Interaction

**Concepts/Constructs** – Level of information disclosure and length of time participants have known each other can be very useful concepts to measure when conducting research using this theory. The amount of perceived rewards and costs by members in the relationship may also be assessed. This couples closely with Social Exchange Theory. For more information on Social Exchange Theory, please see the content heading: Social Exchange Theory

**Underlying Assumptions** – Underlying assumptions for this theory include the idea that relationships are normally sustained when they are perceived to be rewarding. Furthermore, conversely, relationships are normally discontinued if the relationship costs outweigh the rewards. Hence, the amount of self disclosure will increase in correlation to how high the rewards are perceived to be within the relationship.

**Boundary Conditions** – Boundary conditions for this theory include the fact that social penetration is looked at as a dialectical and cyclical process. Furthermore, it involved the management of dialectical tensions between individuals. This couples closely with Relational Dialectics theory. For more information on Relational Dialectics, please see the content heading: Relational Dialectics Theory.
Stages of Relationship Development

Explanation of Theory: an explanation put into stages that identifies and develops understanding about the communication experiences that interpersonal communicators experience in terms of changes in intimacy levels.


Metatheoretical Assumptions:

Ontological Assumptions: In terms of reality, the Relational Development Model is more of a scientific theory because it corresponds to the idea that there is one reality which is followed in a precise pattern by progressing through the steps.

Epistemological Assumptions: This model is humanistic in the sense of researcher and research relationship. What the researchers discovered is based on what they were interested in studying.

Axiological Assumptions: model is about neutrally between humanistic and scientific because it can be considered unbiased in that there are certain stages, but the decision of which stage a couple is in is completely based on biases and opinions.

Critique: Is a more vague theory, partly because it is a model rather than a theory. I believe that the model is more humanistic than scientific, however. Although it presumes that interpersonal relationships will progress through these stages at one time or another, the model is more descriptive in nature because it explains what has already happened better than it predicts exactly what will occur in the future. It is also quite intuitively credible because it is practicable and usable. Another reason this model appears to be more humanistic is in the vagueness of the stage identification.

Ideas and Implications: The relational stages model is useful to apply in all situations in which interpersonal communication occurs. It is relevant for romantic as well as platonic or same-gender relationships. The model also helps couples understand why there are discrepancies in what each partner is wanting from the relationship. When a person wants to move up a stage in his or her relationship, it probably means that he or she wants to increase positive feelings derived from being with the other person. When one partner wants to move down a stage, it usually means he or she wants to decrease certain negative feelings that come from being involved with the other.

Example: The following is a tangible example of the model of relationship development created by Knapp.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Representative Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coming</td>
<td>Initiating</td>
<td>&quot;Hi, how ya doin'?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Together</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Fine, you?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimenting</td>
<td>&quot;Oh, so you like to ski...so do I.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;You do?! Great. Where do you go?&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intensifying</td>
<td>&quot;I...I think I love you.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I love you too.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrating</td>
<td>&quot;I feel so much a part of you.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Yeah, we are like one person. What happens to you happens to me.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bonding</td>
<td>&quot;I want to be with you always&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Let's get married.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Differentiating</td>
<td>&quot;I just don't like big social gatherings.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Sometimes I just don't understand you.</td>
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<td>This is one area where I am not like you at all.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Circumscribing</td>
<td>&quot;Did you have a good time on your trip?&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;What time will dinner be ready?&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stagnating</td>
<td>&quot;What's there to talk about?&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Right, I know what you're going to say and you know what I'm going to say.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding</td>
<td>&quot;I'm so busy, I don't know if I'll be able to see you.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;If I'm not around when you try, you'll understand.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terminating</td>
<td>&quot;I'm leaving you...and don't bother calling me.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Don't worry.&quot;</td>
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</table>
Supportive Communication

DEFINITION

- **Supportive Communication** - verbal and nonverbal behavior produced with the intention of providing assistance to others perceived as needing that aid; supporting others is a fundamental form of human interaction

EXAMPLES

- 9/11 Tragedy highlights phenomenon and its impact on human well-being
- Supportive interaction is ever-present throughout human life, beginning early (caregivers soothe distressed newborns) and extends to final moments

RELEVANCE

- Pragmatic – health and well being of individuals
  - Psychological adjustment and perceptions of self efficacy; Improves coping with upsetting events;
  - Enhances task performance amidst stressful events and conditions; Improves resistance to recovery from disease and reduces mortality
- Theoretical – venue for exploring fundamental communication processes
  - Message production; Message reception; Conversational interaction
- Virtuous – highest expressions of human spirit; better acquaint with the nature and practice of virtue in everyday life

FOUNDATION

- Recent focus on supportive communication owes much to the older and broader tradition of social support.

Overview of Social Support

- Earliest work, 1879: Marriage statistically argued to be a health-promoting institution
- Recent work, 1970’s: several books published on topic of social support and well being
  - Caplan (1974) emphasizes relationships that constitute support network
    - Marriage, parenthood, intimate ties, friends, religious, etc.
  - Cobb (1976) social support as information “leading the subject to believe that he is cared for and loved…”
  - Moss (1973) as: “the subjective feeling of belonging, of being accepted or being loved, of being needed all for oneself and for what one can do”
  - Berkman & Syme’s (1979) illustrated two key characteristics of social support
    - Social Support operationalized as social integration – “extent to which individuals belong to different groups” (marital groups, church, friends)
    - Methodological strength of sampling, design, and statistical controls
      - Longitudinal studies assessing whether social support at one time predicts well being in future – provides strong empirical evidence
- Psychological Perspective
  - Concern with the cognitive and emotional processes of individuals
    - Most research loosely tied to focus on “perceived availability of support”
      - Enacted Support – few actual studies, but purpose was to “observe helpers enacting supportive behaviors” and then assess coping and well-being of targets
      - Received Support – self-report measures; obtain participants’ perceptions of how much support behavior they received in recent past
      - Perceived Support – critical element is the perception of whether social support is available if needed
- What about a distinctive focus on social support as a communication process?
  - Burleson: “social support should be studied as communication because ultimately conveyed through messages directed by 1 individual to another in context of relationship that is created & sustained through interaction.”
Distinctive Features of Supportive Communication

- Centrality of the role allotted to communication
  - Conceptualizes social support as assistance people seek to convey to those they perceive as needing help
  - Social support not a by-product or outcome of interactions; instead, fundamentally communicative in character
  - Social support is the study of supportive communication
- Relatively direct connection between communication and well-being
  - Researchers examine behaviors enacted in pursuit of support objectives as reducing emotional upset and promoting the resolution of problems
- Focus on helpers’ intentional responses to targets’ perceived needs
  - How and why a provider attempts to proffer support and a recipient is helped or benefited by the attempt
- Research within typically exhibits a normative focus
  - Unlike sociological and psychological approach, does not assume that “more support is always better”
- Emphasis on interaction and relationship outcomes
  - Whether or not communication behaviors achieve “primary goals”
- In sum, communication perspective focuses on more or less explicit communicative efforts by one person to improve the well being of another who is perceived as in need or under stress

Supportive Messages

Specific lines of communicative behavior enacted by 1 party w/ intent to benefit/help another

Criteria for evaluating supportive messages

- Not everything said or done by a support provider is equally successful
  - Identify more and less effective message forms
  - Specify features that distinguish more effective forms from less effective
- Matching Models
  - To be effective, type of support offered must be relevant to particular stressor experienced by target
- Multiple-Objectives Framework
  - Distinction between proximal (immediate) and distal (long-term) objectives that are either instrumental or relational in character
  - Stressful events create multiple needs, so supportive messages are frequently multifunctional, seeking to service multiple goals

Methods for assessing the effectiveness of supportive messages

- Three analytical distinct tasks (generate sample of message to evaluate, evaluate these messages according to standard of effectiveness, describe features that differentiate more and less effective message forms)
- Naturalistic Paradigm
  - Most frequently used approach
  - Strength - logical validity (examines naturally occurring supportive communication in the context of real stressors and frequently preserves aspects of participants’ natural language categories for those acts
  - Limitation - despite prevalence, studies provide little precise knowledge about supportive message effectiveness
- Interaction Analysis Paradigm
  - Focuses on conversations between pairs of participants (spouses, friends) in a laboratory during which one discusses a current stressor and the other responds
  - Strength – realism and abundance of message data available
  - Limitation – coding procedures very similar to naturalistic paradigm
- Message Perception Paradigm
  - Researchers present participants with sets of supportive messages designed to instantiate features of theoretical interest and participants evaluate the messages on certain criteria
o Strength – allows researcher to isolate, control, and observe effect of specific message features such as “person centeredness”
  o Limitation – external validity; obvious difference between actually experiencing a supportive message when upset and making judgments about messages directed at hypothetical others

- Experimental Paradigm
  o Researchers induce stress or upset in participants, who are then exposed to supportive messages generated by the researcher or confederate
  o Strength – combines strengths of interaction analysis and message evaluation; however, few studies have been conducted...
  o Limitation – character of experimental situation may limit generalizability of results; ethical concerns? Real or artificially induced?

Research Findings

- Data generated by naturalistic and interaction analysis paradigms generally provided information about the “types” of supportive messages that people find more and less helpful when coping with stressors
- Data generated through experimental and message perception paradigms provide much more precise information about the effectiveness of specific features in messages intended to comfort or advise
- In general, helpers’ supportive intentions and emotional support are very important to those coping with stressful situation, whereas information support appears to be more of a double-edged sword.
- According to Applegate/Burleson, comforting messages can be scaled hierarchically for the extent they reflect a person-centered orientation
- Person centeredness refers to extent message behavior “reflect an awareness of and adaptation to the subjective, affective, and relational aspects of communicative contexts”
- Research dominated by politeness theory & message perception paradigm; future studies should examine beyond face-relevant messages

Why supportive messages work: some theoretical mechanisms

- Supportive Intentions
  o Convey to target the helper’s care, concern, interest, and involvement in the context of the current episode
- Facework or Politeness Strategies
  o Positive facework aims to protect target’s desire to be evaluated positively; includes verbal devices that express positive regard, admiration for the courage or effort shown, respect, etc.
- Informative Content of Supportive Messages
  o Many supportive messages contain declaratives (factual statements, observations, opinions) intended to enhance target’s awareness or understanding or directives (advice, suggestions, proposals) intended to enhance target’s undertaking courses of action to improve situation
- Person-Centered Quality of Supportive Messages
  o Acknowledgements of the target’s emotional and cognitive states, inquiries about problematic situation and the target’s affective reactions, expressions of compassion and understanding that encourage target to elaborate his or her feelings and perspective regarding situation
- Implications
  o Most of the successful messages can and do work well in combination with each other
  o Message features analyzed can contain both helpful and unhelpful elements that compete with, undermine, or interfere with each other
  o Different components of supportive messages may be relevant at different points in the support process
**Supportive Interaction**: conversational sequences focused on support seeking, provision, receipt, processing, and response

*Structure of Supportive Interactions*

**Typical order:**
- support activation by a target (can be intentional (asked for) or unintentional (observe/offer))
- support provision by helper (producing messages directed at assisting target)
- support receipt and accompanying reactions by target (target’s immediate behavioral replies to helper)
- responses to the target’s reactions by the helper (reference and respond to the reactions of the target)

**Discussion of typical order**
- The proposed is the ideal-typical
- Few studies have examined the full sequence of supportive interaction events, but instead focus on single event
- Each of the four support events has variable internal structure and may consist of brief bit of behavior all the way to complex behavior sequences
- Events identified in this analysis are open structures that can be filled appropriately by a variety of content
- Actions that take place in one event influence interpretations, experiences, and actions occurring in subsequent events
- Every phrase of support interactions is filled with perils, pitfalls, paradoxes, and predicaments for helpers/targets

*Factors Influencing Communication in Supportive Interactions*

- Producing sophisticated behavioral strategies can require considerable effort; hence both seekers and providers of support must possess the *motivation* to initiate and pursue what may prove to be challenging tasks
  - This motivation can be affected by a host of situational factors
- Studies have found that behavior by both helpers and their targets is influenced by numerous variables including:
  - Demographics (sex, age, social class)
  - Personality traits (attachment styles, trait empathy, gender orientations)
  - Cognitive variables (complexity, attribution processes)
  - Affective states (helper mood, target mood, emotional state)
  - Relationship factors (type of relationship, length of relationship)
  - Interactional contingencies (type of support activation behaviors)
  - Situational variables (problem severity, interactions setting)

**Conclusion**

- Limitations --- While we have an improved understanding of the features contributing to messages and interactions, we have only informed speculation to explain why these features work as they do
- Future research
  - Investigate emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social outcomes
  - Give special attention to the message reception process through which message characteristics have their effects
  - Focus on support seeking and the contingent responses targets and helpers make to one another over the course of their interactions
  - Address how supportive interactions shape, and are shaped by, the diverse relationship in which they occur
Symbolic Interaction (George Herbert Mead, 1934)

Overview

Symbolic interaction comes from the sociocultural perspective in that it relies on the creation of shared meaning through interactions with others. This theory focuses on the ways in which people form meaning and structure in society through interactions. People are motivated to act based on the meanings they assign to people, things, and events (Mead, 1934).

Symbolic Interaction argues the world is made up of social objects that are named and have socially determined meanings. When people interact over time they come to shared meaning for certain terms and actions and thus come to understand events in particular ways. There are three main concepts in this theory: society, self and mind.

Society: Social Acts (which create meaning) involve an initial gesture from one individual, a response to that gesture from another and a result.

Self: Self image comes from interaction with others based on others perceptions. A person makes sense of the world and defines their “self” through social interactions. One’s self is a significant object and like all social objects it is defined through social interactions with others.

Mind: Your ability to use significant symbols to respond to yourself makes thinking possible. You define objects in terms of how you might react to them. Objects become what they are through our symbolic minding process (Foss & Littlejohn, 2008).

Constructs for this theory include creation of meaning, social norms, human interactions, and signs and symbols. An underlying assumption for this theory is that meaning and social reality are shaped from interactions with others and that some kind of shared meaning is reached. The boundary conditions for this theory are there must be numerous people communicating and interacting and thus assigning meaning to situations or objects.

Strengths:

Symbolic Interaction is a long standing and respected framework that looks at human communication in a broad context. It identifies and considers both the individual’s thoughts on how they fit into society and their social interactions in developing that self image. It can help us understand how meaning is created which can translate into the study of many other communication theories.

Weaknesses:

Some critics argue the theory is too broad and therefore difficult to apply in specific studies. Others argue that the theory focuses too much on the power of an individual to create their own reality and not enough on other forces that help construct that reality. (Turner & West, 2007).
SYMBOLIC INTERACTION THEORY

MAIN CONCEPTS

- Symbolic interactionist researchers investigate how people create meaning during social interaction, how they present and construct the self (or identity), and how they define situations of co-presence with others.
- One of the perspective's central ideas is that people act as they do because of how they define situations.
- Cooley (1902): Looking-glass self – a person views him or herself through others' perceptions in society and in turn gains identity. Identity, or self, is the result of the concept in which we learn to see ourselves as others do.
  o Symbolic interaction is the basis of the looking-glass self, because the use of symbols is dependent on humans' ability to first agree upon the meaning of the symbol, and second the ability to interpret the symbol.
- Mead (1934): Generalized other – the general notion that a person has of the norms or common expectations that others have about actions and thoughts within a particular society. Through understanding the generalized other, the individual understands what kind of behavior is expected or appropriate in different social settings.
- Kuhn (Iowa School): Wanted to make the concept of self more concrete and use quantitative research.
- Kuhn used the following terms to aid in the understanding of symbolic interactionism:
  o Objects: a thing, quality, event, or state of affairs; the reality for people is the totality of their social objects, which are always socially defined
  o Plan of action: a person’s total behavior toward a given object
  o Orientalational other: someone who has been influential in a person’s life (significant other)
- Blumer (1969): Three premises of symbolic interactionism:
  1. Humans act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.
  2. The meaning of such things is derived from the social interaction that one has with people.
  3. Meanings handled & modified through interpretive process used by person as they deal w/ that which they encounter
- Bryant and Miron (2007): Symbolic interactionism connects communication with social acts. They explain symbolic interactionism by describing how “social interaction involves communication, through which individuals work out their purposes, direct and modify another’s activities, and transform their environments…

REVIEW OF THE KEY LITERATURE/RESEARCH

Mead (1934): Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist
- Humans begin their understanding of the social world through “play” and “game.” “Play” comes first in the child's development. The child takes on the different roles he/she observes in “adult” society, and then plays them out to gain an understanding of the different social roles.

Mead (1938): The Philosophy of the Act

Blumer (1937): Social psychology article in Man and Society
- When/where the term ‘symbolic interactionism’ was coined

- “The term ‘symbolic interactionism’ is a somewhat barbaric neologism that I coined in an offhand way in a article written in MAN AND SOCIETY. The term somehow caught on and is now in general use” (p. 1).


Ulmer, J. T., & Wilson, M. S. (2003). The potential contributions of quantitative research to symbolic interactionism. Symbolic Interaction, 26, 531-552.
- Symbolic interactionism can use a variety of methods: statistical analysis of aggregate data on behavior, decisions, or events; survey research; historical and comparative analysis; conversation and discourse analysis; quasi-experimental methods; analysis of audio- and videotape recordings; and ethnography.

AN ANALYSIS/CRIQUE OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

(1) Many people have the sense that it can or should only be used in qualitative research. However, as found by Ulmer and Wilson (2003), this is not and should not be the case. The potential for symbolic interactionism to find a real home in the realm of quantitative research is great.
  a. Many people tend to view symbolic interactionism as anti-quantitative, but using quantitative methods would enable researchers to address research topics, and do the types of studies, that most people in the discipline do not associate with interactionism, but to which interactionism might significantly contribute.
(2) Meltzer et al. (1975): Symbolic interactionism “ignores or makes light of both the unconscious and emotive factors as they influence the interactive process” (p. 84).
(3) Meltzer et al. (1975): Symbolic interactionism has numerous methodological problems: i.e., its concepts are difficult to operationalize; it generates too few really testable hypotheses; its concepts and basic ideas too often have to be intuitively grasped rather than being readily apparent; and it has failed to clearly spell out its specific methodological procedures.
(4) Littlejohn (1999): Symbolic interactionism is non-empirical, because its concepts cannot be easily translated into observable units with so much emphasis being placed on the meaning people create from situations and interactions. This is perhaps why some believe it to be “more social philosophy than theory” (p. 171).

EMPLOYING SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM
- Examines aspects of strip club clientele: tipping techniques, pursuit of sexual experience, & concept of being a “regular”
- Research question and hypotheses unclear and not explicitly stated
- Qualitative study (observation, occasional questions asked to strippers)
- This study uses a blend of symbolic interactionism and exchange theory to examine the strip club
  - Author stated that this blend depends on treating social exchange as symbolic interaction
    - Desirability of a social exchange is symbolically defined through social interaction
    - In making the decision to dance, symbolic interaction is also involved
- Findings: Method of tipping depends on social and structural dynamics of the strip club; dancers’ interactions with patrons differ according to the behavior of the patrons in the club
- Authors did not really discuss how their findings significantly contribute to extant research or current theorizing

- Article discusses the relevance of symbolic interactionism for understanding labor processes
- Qualitative study (ethnography, observation, participating in what was being studied)
- Based upon the author’s clerking experiences in two toy stores, she proposes that interactions between clerks and customers reproduce social inequalities based on race, gender, and class
- This article focuses on the rituals of toy shopping: “The meanings of these rituals are not self-evident. It is only through a process of symbolic interaction among active, creative, knowledgeable participations that the meanings and consequences of these rituals emerge” (p. 459).
- Purposes of study/article:
  - To describe “rules” governing salesclerks in their interactions with customers
  - To describe “ropes,” the informal rules that employees devise and follow to ensure order and preserve their self-respect in their interactions with customers
  - To argue that both “rules” and “ropes” take into account race, gender, & class characteristics of clerk & customer
  - To discuss what happens when formal & informal rules are not followed & interactions break down into conflict
- Findings: Whether an interaction can be repaired depends on race, class, and gender. Because different groups have different resources to draw on to assert their will in the toy store, the resolution of any particular conflict is shaped by social inequality and the creative efforts of the people involved. Both clerks and customers drew on elaborate stereotypes in creating their working and shopping practices.
- Conclusion: “The theory of symbolic interactionism is useful for understanding race, class, and gender on the shopping floor… This is a hopeful approach to analyzing the reproduction of inequalities… Because they are symbolically created, they can be recreated to lessen the social inequalities that they currently reproduce” (p. 472).

References
- Ulmer, J. T., & Wilson, M. S. (2003). The potential contributions of quantitative research to symbolic interactionism. Symbolic Interaction, 26, 531-552.
(Family) Systems Theory

History
- Has its origin in biology and cybernetics
  - “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”
  - Each dyad is a system and part of greater systems simultaneously. Each level influences and is influenced by the higher levels. However, each level has properties that are not present in other levels (Koestler, 1978).
- Palo Alto Group linked systems characteristics to ongoing international systems, including family relationships (Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967)
- Interpersonal & group communication scholars adopted systems theory in order to distinguish groups from a collection of individuals. Group members are thought to be bound together as social system through communication (Mabry, 1999)
- Central to early development of family communication research (Galvin, Dickson & Morrow, 1996)

So, what is a system?—components that interrelates with one another to form a whole. When individuals come together to form relationship, result is larger and more complex than sum of the individuals or components. A social system is created.

Systems Theory: “there exist models, principles, and laws that apply to generalized systems or their subclasses, irrespective of their particular kind, the nature of their component elements, and the relationships or "forces" between them. It seems legitimate to ask for a theory, not of systems of a more or less special kind, but of universal principles applying to systems in general” (von Bertalanffy, 1968)

A logical theory because:
1. It presumes universal characteristics of all systems
2. It seeks prediction in its focus on patterns
3. It seeks explanation in its emphasis on the functions of system components.

Yerby, 1995 – family system, “like all living systems, incorporate[s] two types of characteristics: (1) a set of system elements, and (2) a set of processes that help the system function”

These elements are (Sabourin, 2006) the parts of the system:
- Interdependent components
  - A person can leave the system, but the role remains. If the biological father leaves, for example, that role may be filled by the mother, or oldest son.
- Inputs and outputs
  - Inputs are survival needs (food, clothing, shelter) and societal needs (the media, school and church).
  - Outputs are paid work, citizenship, and socialization of children
- Boundaries
  - Differentiate within the family, and between family/non-family members.
- Rules (Emerge from family interaction; Constrain interaction)
- Goals (Provide direction for energy)
- Feedback (Positive – deviation enhancing; Negative – deviation minimizing)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 Processes</th>
<th>4 Assumptions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nonsummativity – More than the sum of its parts</td>
<td>1. Systems elements are interconnected</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Stability – families seek it</td>
<td>2. Systems are only understood as wholes</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Change – must have growth and change</td>
<td>3. All systems affect themselves through environmental feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Equifinality – how family can achieve its goals, through number of ways and means</td>
<td>4. Systems are not reality</td>
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7 Characteristics (Galvin, Dickson, & Morrow, 1996)

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Interdependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- a change in one part of the system affects the entire system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Wholeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- interaction emerges from arrangements &amp; transactions only made by specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>arrangements (Distinctive communication patterns emerge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Patterns/Regularities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- system is committed to stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Interactive Complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- issues cause are affected, so it is useless to see what came first (circular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>causality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- permit interchange with surrounding environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Complex Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- alliance between dyads/triads, cultural norms, power between generations, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Equifinality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- final goal (state) may be accomplished in different ways from different start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some weaknesses (Galvin, Dickson & Morrow, 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Very abstract and global (so, it should be used in combination with more narrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>theories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Attention is given to repetitive patterns (not continual change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Gendered assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Does not acknowledge a victim (bad in abuse cases for treatment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>No acknowledgement of individual (health/psych patterns are not taken into account)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Language is static and contrived (so it doesn't apply as well to the modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>family with fluid roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Contemporary families and models are not moving as slowly as systems theory is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some strengths (Galvin, Dickson & Morrow, 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>--- Acknowledges that families are in a constant state of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>--- Parsimonious nature w/ characteristics (above) provide map for understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>everyday family behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>--- Components within theory work together for a common goal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Research in Families

- Watzlawick, et al., 1967 - most notably credited with first applying systems to familial contexts
- Kantor & Lehr, 1976 – a chief characteristic of social systems “is an almost continuous interchange not only within the system, but across the boundary between inner environment and the outer environment”
- Jennings & Wartella, 2004 – explored the impact of the external environment (ex: how technology affected the spousal, parental and sibling subsystems)
- Cox & Paley, 1997 – examined how the subsystems impact each other, and how parent-child relationship problems are often associated with marital distress.
- Many researchers utilize systems theory indirectly. Braithwaite, Olson, Golish, Soukup & Turman (2001) examined boundaries and boundary management to develop processes of blended families. In order to do so, they used a system theory perspective to look at boundaries in subsystems. While this was not the basis of their study, it solves the problem of the first limitation (systems theory needs to be used in combination with more narrow theories, because it is very global and abstract). This is the way that the field is shifting to accommodate the shifting family structures.

Important works

Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Explanation of Theory:
Initial interactions between strangers are characterized by information seeking in order to reduce uncertainty. Uncertainty is reduced as levels of self-disclosure, nonverbal warmth, and similarity increase.

Theorists: Berger and Calabrese

Date: 1975

Primary Article:

Metatheoretical Assumptions:
The truth set forth by this theory is that people attempt to “make sense” of interpersonal situations by reducing uncertainty through seeking information. While particular aspects of the encounter dictate how people react, the reactions are based on 8 axioms resulting in a list of 28 possible theorems. Because reactions are limited according to Berger, this theory’s ontology favors a deterministic perspective. Axiologically, this theory is value neutral because the reactions are dependent set factors and thus predetermined regardless of values.

Critique:
URT is a scientific theory that attempts to predict and explain initial interactions between people through the use of axioms that when combined with one another form theorems. People have questioned some of logic of the theorems derived from the combination of these axioms, therefore they argue that maybe the axioms themselves are faulty. The amount of research that this theory has generated is substantial so its heuristic provocativeness can not be questioned. The theory does have falsifiability, but its complexity can cause some confusion when one tries to apply it to a practical situation.

Example:
Upon meeting someone who sits next to you in a class, you begin to ask questions about that person in order to reduce uncertainty. Chances are high that they will reciprocate and seek to reduce uncertainty as well.

Relevant Research:

Location in Eight (8) Primary Communication Theory Textbooks:
Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Charles Berger & Richard Calabrese 1975)

Overview

Uncertainty Reduction Theory comes from the sociopsycological perspective. It addresses the basic process of how we gain knowledge about other people. According to the theory people have difficulty with uncertainty, they want to be able to predict behavior and therefore they are motivated to seek more information about people (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

The theory argues that Strangers, upon meeting, go through certain steps and checkpoints in order to reduce uncertainty about each other and form an idea of whether one likes or dislikes the other. As we communicate we are making plans to accomplish our goals. At highly uncertain moments we become more vigilant and rely more on data available in the situation. When we are less certain we lose confidence in our own plans and make contingency plans. The theory also says that higher levels of uncertainty create distance between people and that non-verbal expressiveness tends to help reduce uncertainty (Foss & Littlejohn, 2008).

Constructs include level of uncertainty, nature of the relationship and ways to reduce uncertainty. Underlying assumptions include that an individual will cognitively process the existence of uncertainty and take steps to reduce it. The boundary conditions for this theory are that there must be some kind of outside social situation triggering and internal cognitive process.

According to the theory we reduce uncertainty in three ways:

1. Passive strategies: observing the person.
2. Active strategies: asking others about the person or looking up info.
3. Interactive strategies: asking questions, self-disclosure.

Strengths:

Uncertainty Reduction theory predicts and explains elements of the initial interaction among people in a way that no other theory does. It has been used to study communication in a variety of situations from small group to mass communication.

Weaknesses:

Some critics argue the basis of the theory is flawed. Michael Sunnafrank (1986) argues that maximizing relational outcomes, not reducing uncertainty, is an individual’s primary concern in an initial encounter (Turner & West, 2007).
Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT)

History

- Lewin, a social psychologist, influences Festinger and Heider’s work
- 1949: Shannon & Weaver’s Information Theory claims that uncertainty exists when there is an equal probability of lots of different things happening.
- 1952: Heider claims that man seeks to make sense out of the events he perceives in his environment.
- 1954: Festinger develops Social Comparison Theory
- 1956: Festinger develops Cognitive Dissonance Theory
- 1958: Heider develops Attribution Theory
- 1975: Berger & Calabrese publish an article proposing URT, based on Heider, Festinger, & Shannon & Weaver’s work, in Human Communication Research.
- 1979: Berger publishes an article in Human Communication Research suggesting information seeking behaviors and uncertainty reduction motivators.
- 1999: Heath & Bryant develop uncertainty reduction model.

Key Researchers and Theorists
1. Charles R. Berger (Ph.D., Michigan State University)
2. Richard J. Calabrese (Ph.D., Northwestern University)

Main Concepts, Assumptions and Propositions
- Upon meeting, people have the need to reduce uncertainty and will follow a sequence of steps to reduce it over an unspecified period of time (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

Axioms (Berger & Calabrese, 1975)
1. Given the high level of uncertainty present at the onset of the entry phase, as the amount of verbal communication between strangers increases, the level of uncertainty for each interactant in the relationship will decrease. As uncertainty is further reduced, the amount of verbal communication will increase.
2. As nonverbal affiliative expressiveness increases, uncertainty levels will decrease in an initial interaction situation. In addition, decreases in uncertainty level will cause increases in nonverbal affiliative expressiveness.
3. High levels of uncertainty cause increases in information seeking behavior; uncertainty level declines, information seeking behavior decreases.
4. High levels of uncertainty in a relationship cause decreases in the intimacy level of communication content. Low levels of uncertainty produce high levels of intimacy.
5. High levels of uncertainty produce high levels of reciprocity. Low levels of uncertainty produce low reciprocity rates.
6. Similarity between persons reduces uncertainty, while dissimilarities produce increases in similarity.
7. Increases in uncertainty level produce decreases in liking; decreases in uncertainty level produce increases in liking.

Theorems (Berger & Calabrese, 1975)
1. Amount of verbal communication and nonverbal affiliative expressiveness are positively related.
2. Amount of communication and intimacy level of communication are positively related.
3. Amount of communication and information seeking behavior are inversely related.
4. Amount of communication and reciprocity rate are inversely related.
5. Amount of communication and liking are positively related.
6. Amount of communication and similarity are positively related.
7. Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and intimacy level of communication content are positively related.
8. Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and information seeking are inversely related.
9. Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and reciprocity rate are inversely related.
10. Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and liking are positively related.
11. Nonverbal affiliative expressiveness and similarity are positively related.
12. Intimacy level of communication content and information seeking are inversely related.
13. Intimacy level of communication content and reciprocity rate are inversely related.
14. Intimacy level of communication content and liking are positively related.
15. Intimacy of communication content and similarity are positively related.
16. Information seeking and reciprocity rate are positively related.
17. Information seeking and liking are negatively related.
18. Information seeking and similarity are negatively related.
19. Reciprocity and liking are negatively related.
20. Reciprocity rate and similarity are negatively related.
21. Similarity and liking are positively related.

**Uncertainty Reduction Motivators (Berger, 1979)**
1. Potential for costs or rewards
2. Expectancy violations
3. Possible future interaction

**Categories of Uncertainty (Berger & Bradac, 1982)**
1. Cognitive uncertainty – beliefs and attitudes
2. Behavioral uncertainty – situational behaviors

**Stages of Relational Development (Berger & Bradac, 1982)**

```
Entry Phase
* Occurs during the initial interaction.
* Information seeking is focused on demographic and transactional.
* e.g. Where did you grow up? What is your major?
* By the end of this stage, the participants will know whether or not the relationship will become more intimate.

Personal Phase
* Occurs after a few interactions.
* Information seeking is focused on values, beliefs and attitudes.
* e.g. Why do you believe that race is an issue in the United States? Why are you not on speaking terms with your family members?
* More disclosures leads to greater emotional involvement.

Exit Phase
* The interactants decide if the relationship will continue.
* If the interactants want to continue the relationship, future plans will be made.
* The interactants may decide not to pursue the relationship.
```

**Review of Key Literature**
- Ayres claims that URT applies to encounters, not relationships (1979).
- Parks and Adelman link shared networks with URT and argue that the best way to reduce uncertainty about one’s partner is to talk to the partner’s friends (1983).
- Gudykunst applies URT to the intercultural communication context and discovers that uncertainty is not the same across cultures. He develops his own theory, anxiety/uncertainty management, off on URT (1985).
- Planalp and Honeycutt find six causes for uncertainty producing arguments in relationships: competing relationships, unexplained loss of contact of closeness, sexual behavior, deception, change in personality/values, betraying confidence, and miscellaneous. The uncertainty increasing event causes changes in beliefs about the other, strong emotions, & dissolution of relationship (1985).
- Siegert and Stamp use URT to study conflict. They find that four things lead up to the first fight: uncertainty over commitment, jealousy, violations of expectations, and personality differences (1994).
- Afifi and Reichert use URT to study jealousy – uncertainty was important for understanding jealousy, understanding difference between experienced & expressed jealousy, & understanding why indirect communication in preferable during uncertainty (1996).
- Heath and Bryant develop the uncertainty reduction model (2000).

```
Entry phase in a relation
Information (demographic)
Communication guided by rules and norms

Personal phase in a relation
Information (attitudes, values and beliefs)
Communication more freely and less rules

Exit phase in a relation
Information (less to none)
Communication (planning future interaction plans, mostly avoiding communication)
```

- Goldsmith finds that people like a little bit of uncertainty and at times seek it (2001).

**Analysis/Critique**

**Strengths**
1. URT is practical and logical (Bradac, 2001).
2. URT is falsifiable, low in ambiguity, and high in logical transparency (Bradac, 2001).
3. URT explains the process of developing relationships (Bradac, 2001).

Weakenes

1. Due to the 7 axioms and 21 theorems, URT is very complex.
2. URT is narrow in scope. It is designed for initial interactions with strangers (Bradac, 2001).
4. Some researchers argue that the motivation behind communication is not to reduce uncertainty, but to maximize relational outcomes (Sunafrank, 1986).
5. Axiom three is challenged because researchers say that a want for information is a greater motivator than a lack of knowledge (Kellerman & Reynolds, 1990).
6. URT is not applicable to cultures high in uncertainty tolerance (Canary & Dainton, 2003).
7. URT does not account for situations where the participant(s) do not want to reduce uncertainty.

Description/Critique of Two Research Articles

Relationship uncertainty, partner interference, and intimacy within dating relationships (Solomon & Knobloch, 2001)

- The purpose of research was to test the relationship among moderate levels of intimacy, uncertainty, and partner interference.
- Data was obtained through surveys completed by college students in relationships.
- The study revealed that as intimacy increases uncertainty decreases, as intimacy increases partner influence increases, there is a curvilinear association between intimacy and partner interference such that the most interference occurs at a moderate level of intimacy, and that the positive association between partner influence and interference decreases and intimacy increases.
- URT was included in study, because uncertainty is present at all levels of relationship & is caused by various events & emotions.
- Strengths: strong support was provided generate the hypotheses. An attempt was made to expand the application of URT concerning romantic relationships. The researchers provided logical reasons for their results and why they were different from what was suggested in the hypotheses.
- Weaknesses: even though the effect size was small concerning two hypotheses, the researchers supported them without additional analyses. The researchers used potential for romantic involvement and one date with the expectation of a second in the future to define a dating relationship. Perhaps retroactive data would have been better to use.

“We never talk about that”: A comparison of cross-sex friendships and dating relationships on uncertainty and topic avoidance (Afifi & Burgoon, 1998)

- The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between uncertainty and topic avoidance, and look at how they apply to cross-sex friendships and dating relationships.
- Data was gathered through two sets of surveys and an interview administered to college couples consisting of cross-sex friendships and dating relationships.
- The study revealed that as uncertainty increases topic avoidance increases, cross-sex friends experience higher levels of uncertainty than dating couples, and cross-sex friends avoid discussing relational state more that dating couples. Cross-sex friends do not experience more global uncertainty or overall avoidance than dating couples.
- URT was included in the study, because research has suggested that there is a strong relationship between uncertainty and information.
- Strengths: the research expanded the body of work on cross-sex friendships. The researchers were thorough in their analyses. Qualitative research suggested that fear could result from the uncertainty of knowing and cause topic avoidance, though this particular idea was not empirically tested in the study.
- Weaknesses: partners completed a self-administered survey at home which could have resulted in the partner discussing the survey with the other partner, thus altering the data. The qualitative research consisted of the couples being interviewed together. Since topic avoidance was significant in the study, it is possible the participants were vague or not honest with the researchers.

Reference List