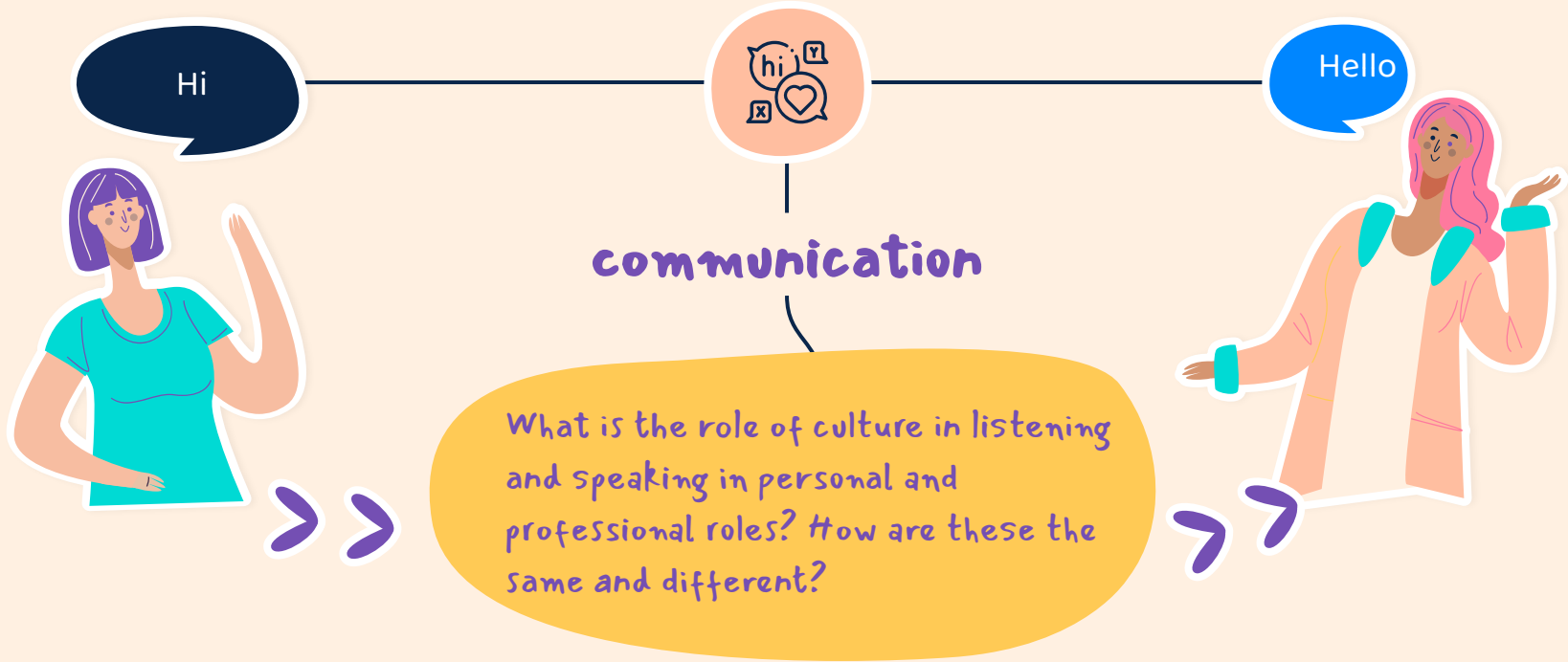


The Role of Culture in Communication, Unit 2

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Guiding Question



What is Culture?

- Culture has many different definitions and can mean different things to different people.

Our definition will be: “a group of people who through a process of learning are able to share perceptions of the world which influences their beliefs, values, norms, and rules, which eventually affect behavior.”

- Our culture is the one that we are born/raised in
- Different aspects of the culture that you belong to influence your perception of the world and dictate how you view communication and interaction.



Remember that culture is not individual, rather it is something possessed by a group of individuals with shared values, beliefs, cultural norms, and rules.

Co-Cultures and Microcultures

Cocultures and microcultures further influence communication/interactions because they are more specific separations of “types of people” within a larger group.

Co-cultures

- Smaller distinctions within a dominant culture
- Regional, economic, social, religious, ethnic, and other cultural groups
- Helps people to find a personal identity, and feel like they are apart of something more specialized than the dominant culture they are a part of, for example, the US.

- These are the smallest form of cultures. They are specific local groups or groups within an organization.
- These groups could share inside jokes, mascots, specific traditions, stories and more.
- Related to geographical location

Microcultures

Similarities and differences between personal and professional communication

Differences

Personal Setting

- More open
- More indirect
- Mistakes are more accepted
- More intimate
- Involves higher levels of trust
- Based on shared experiences
- For enjoyment

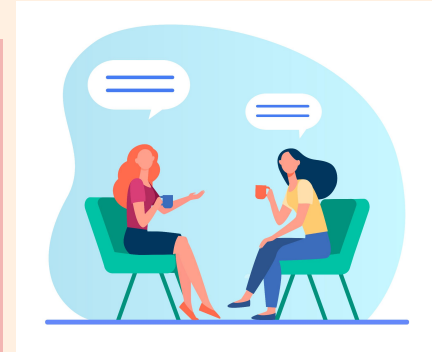
Similarities

- Mindfulness is ideal
- Connections are being made
- Still affected by cultural diversity

Differences

Professional Setting

- More formal
- More practiced/thought out
- More strategic
- More competitive
- With a goal in mind



Culture in a Personal Setting



Different cultures act differently when communicating with people in a personal setting. Because there is no universal template for communication, cultures have varied approaches to personal communication and familiarity between people. A personal setting dictates the nature of the communicators. One might assume that a personal setting might influence more casual communication, but that is not necessarily true.



Some cultures use non verbal communication cues and others use it less. (high context and low context cultures). When some cultures communicate interpersonally, they might be talking loudly and explicitly to get their point across, however others might be more reserved and rely on careful and polite body language to understand the message. Those low context cultures would have more independence in their lives and they would be more focused around individualism, where as high context cultures would be more group oriented and would be focused on social status, and traditions/the past.

Culture in a Professional Setting

Certain aspects of a culture, for example masculinity and femininity would influence individuals actions in a professional setting. Masculine cultures would be more focused on earnings, recognition, advancement, and challenge. Cultures that are geared towards masculinity are more focused on gender roles. Men and women are expected to act a certain way. In communication, females might be grouped in with their husbands.



Cultures who follow values of femininity are more likely to value their relationships at work, for example between their boss or coworkers. They might care about the quality of life more, and care less about gender roles. In a culture of femininity, men and women are both held to the same standards of being conscious of relationships in the workplace. Communication in a workplace in a feminine culture might be more understanding and compassionate.

Another way that culture plays a role in professionalism is through microcultures. Culture does not just have to pertain to geographic region, but can be specific between companies. The culture of the organization or professional setting can determine how efficient it is. In a professional environment, when there is a specific culture that the employees share, they are likely to feel connected with each other, and feel like they are working towards a common goal. They might have a self esteem surrounding this work culture and feel positively about contributing to its success. This type of culture in work environments can increase the productivity and profits of the company, due to the fact that if the employees feel positive about what they are doing, they will be more productive when generating venue and be more successful in advertising.

In a professional setting, in most cultures, there is a degree of formality. However, some cultures might go about expressing this differently than others. Some cultures, would err on the side of friendliness and try to get to know co workers, while other would be focused on succeeding, politeness and professionalism, individually and not have as close relationships with people they work with. This might relate to how much a person self discloses. For example, western cultures disclose more than eastern cultures.

Despite the different tendencies of different cultures and how they act in professional settings, listening is widely assumed to be something people take more seriously in professional settings than in personal settings. For example, if your boss is giving you instructions, compared to your friend ranting about how they bought the wrong bananas at the grocery store, you might take you boss more seriously. At work, if there is a person who's culture differs from you for example, you might be expected to be more attentive when listening because you know that this communication has higher stakes.



Intercultural communication



When understanding and interpreting things that you hear, in personal settings and in professional settings, you tend to comprehend things that are familiar or relevant to you. When we bring culture into the mix, it can affect how people are able to connect with each other. In any good relationship, people disclose information about themselves and listen to the other person disclosing information. When the information that the other person is telling you is hard for you to understand because, for example, they are discussing an aspect of their culture, you might not pay attention or not understand, creating a communication breakdown. Also, in any relationship, there are differences in the two people. When we consider differences in culture, we have seen that it might take time to learn the ins and outs of someone else's culture. If two people have different cultures there might be many parts of their lives that they both can't relate to. When communicating interpersonally, we should be mindful of cultural differences, and try not to be too ethnocentric towards our own culture.

When speaking, we should be mindful that the listener might not know what we mean if they belong to a different culture. Additionally, we should take into account the customs and norms of other cultures that we might not be used to. For example, imagine your friend celebrates Saint Patrick's day, and you celebrate Chinese new year. You will not participate or you may not agree with your friend when he celebrates Saint Patrick's day, so that means that communication between you and your friend will have a few barriers that you need to work around.

Cross cultural communication

Challenges	Problems	Solutions
Language barriers	Misunderstandings	Translation, simplify
Non-verbal differences	Misinterpretation	Learn, observe, clarify
Stereotyping	Bias, insensitivity	Embrace diversity, educate
High vs. low-Context	Confusion, miscommunication	Seek clarification, adapt
Cultural norms	Conflicts, misunderstandings	Learn, adapt, respect
Power dynamics	Barriers, inequality	Foster inclusion, equity



Reflection

This project helped me to get a better understanding of concepts like culture and how it relates to communication. I feel that in this presentation, I covered the necessary topics to understand how culture affects communication in a personal and in a professional setting. I found it interesting and challenging to dissect the guiding question because it is very open ended. In regular life, I do not think most of us realize how differently we communicate when we are talking in personal situations compared to professional. In the culture that we live in, we have specific norms and rules that dictate how we communicate, but it is interesting to sometimes examine how other cultures go about the same practices, but with different social roles, norms and rules. I think that I could improve my presentation by going over more specific examples and going into more details about these examples. It would probably be helpful to present a culture in my presentation and then discuss about the tendencies of that specific culture. I feel that I have a good grasp on the concepts, but I might benefit from discovering more in depth information about how culture plays a role in workplace speaking and listening. I also feel that I could have covered the topic of listening better in general. Overall, I am satisfied with the concepts that I presented, and I am glad I was able to research these concepts so I can use this knowledge for the future.

Thank you!!

