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Hinner, Michael B.

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Communication science: An integral part of business and business studies?

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FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
FAKULTÄT FÜR WIRTSCHAFTSWISSENSCHAFTEN

Michael B. Hinner

Communication Science: An Integral Part of Business and Business Studies?

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Address for correspondence:

Prof. Dr. Michael B. Hinner
Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg
Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften
Lehrstuhl für Englische Fachsprache
der Wirtschaftswissenschaften und der technischen Wissenschaften
Lessingstraße 45, D-09596 Freiberg
Phone: ++49 / 3731 / 39 27 50
Fax: ++49 / 3731 / 39 40 30
E-mail: hinner@bwl.tu-freiberg.de

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Abstract

Communication is at the center of any business transaction. Unfortunately until recently, communication has rarely been assigned its proper relevance in traditional business studies at German universities. This paper attempts to demonstrate why communication science can and should be an integral part of all business studies. Without understanding the pertinent communication principles, it will not be possible to fully understand specific business relationships. With understanding, more effective and efficient use of communication in business relationships will become possible. This paper, therefore, briefly outlines the role of communication in some areas of business and then proceeds to sketch a succinct communication model to illustrate how communication affects business relationships. The paper ends with a concrete example, namely that of the TU Bergakademie Freiberg, of how communication science may be integrated as a distinct subject into the curriculum of business studies.

JEL-classification: A12, A2 M14, Z13
Keywords: Business Communication, Intercultural Communication, Communication Process, Business English Curriculum

Zusammenfassung

"Kommunikationswissenschaft. Ein integraler Bestandteil der Wirtschaft und der Wirtschaftswissenschaften"

Kommunikation stand schon immer im Mittelpunkt jeder Wirtschafts- und Geschäftsbeziehung. Leider wurde der Kommunikation bis vor kurzem jedoch keine eigenständige Rolle in wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Curricula an deutschen Universitäten zugesprochen. Dieses Arbeitspapier versucht darzulegen, warum Kommunikationswissenschaft ein integraler Teil aller wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Curricula sein sollte. Denn ohne ein wahres Verständnis der relevanten Prinzipien der Kommunikation ist es nicht möglich, viele Wirtschafts- und Geschäftsbeziehungen tiefgreifend zu verstehen. Demzufolge beschreibt dieses Arbeitspapier in knappen Zügen die Bedeutung der Kommunikation für einige Bereiche der Wirtschaft, um dann im Rahmen einer kurzen Beschreibung des Kommunikationsmodells darzulegen, wie die Kommunikation diese Beziehungen beeinflusst. Anhand des Beispiels der Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften an der TU Bergakademie Freiberg wird abschließend erläutert, wie die Kommunikationswissenschaft in ein wirtschaftswissenschaftliches Curriculum integriert werden kann.

JEL-Klassifikation: A12, A 2, M14, Z13
Schlagworte: Wirtschaftskommunikation, Interkulturelle Kommunikation, Kommunikationsprozess, Wirtschaftsenglisch Curriculum,

Communication Science: An Integral Part of Business and Business Studies?

Without communication, it would be difficult - if not impossible - to conduct *any* business. In fact, communication occurs at all levels and all forms of business at all times. This is due to the fact that all human beings need to communicate in order to interact with each other. Indeed, communication is what makes us what we are; thus, being responsible for the creation of societal and corporate culture. No matter how fundamental or universal communication may be, just as many skills need to be refined and adapted to specific business situations, so too must communication be refined and adapted to specific business situations in order to be most effective and successful. Merely using one's innate communicating abilities, however, is often insufficient to be truly effective or successful. Only a thorough analysis and understanding of the communication process as well as the adoption of proper communication techniques can and will result in more effective and efficient communication and, thus, bring about successful business. Hence, communication science needs to be an integral part of business studies since communication is so vital to business.

In fact, all other variables being equal, effective communication skills can be decisive in today's world of business. "Schon ein unbedachtes Wort reicht aus, um sein Image zu verspielen" (Vieser 102). Hilmar Kopper, Head of Deutsche Bank, "prägte mit nur einem Wort [i.e. peanuts] das Bild des arroganten Bankers;" this despite the fact that Kopper's assessment of the Schneider affair was actually financially valid (Vieser 102). In a global setting, ignoring intercultural communications can be equally devastating, though, with much wider consequences. Vieser cites the example of Heinrich Lübke, West German President, who greeted Liberians with the following words during his official state visit in 1962: "Meine Damen und Herren, liebe Neger" (102). As one can imagine, the faux pas created quite a political stir at the time (Vieser 102). These two examples clearly demonstrate how miscommunication can cause misunderstandings which result in mistakes which tend to translate into business losses.

Today there is more access to communicated messages than ever before in human history. Modern telecommunications offers instant global access in real time. While in the past a problematic communiqué tended to stay within the local community, in today's global village

a message reaches the entire world instantly. Hence, the consequences of miscommunication are much broader and far-reaching today than ever before. All the more reason why communication needs to be used effectively and efficiently.

What role does communication play in business today? According to Mogilka, "Aktionäre und Kunden erwarten vom Management heute mehr Kommunikation" (Vieser 102) because communication not only assists business, but also increases and improves business relations. Good and effective communication can increase profits whereas poor and faulty communication can lower them. Even the best product will remain unsold if the product's marketing, i.e. communication, campaign fails. "The key point to remember is that everything begins with *fulfilling target market needs and wants* and *not* just with 'how do we sell our product.' Therefore, we must begin with the communications process" (Hiebing and Cooper, 205). Thus, illustrating how vital good communication is to fostering external relationships with customers.

Obviously, the same is true for internal relationships. The best intentions are useless if not properly communicated. A recent study by Wolf analyzed the coordination and integration of engineers and marketing experts in British and German firms. Wolf's study revealed that most internal conflicts within these business entities are due to poor and/or bad communication, i.e. 64.3% of those surveyed listed poor communications as the main reason for internal conflict (Dissertation Defense). And the *Schweriner Volkszeitung* notes that a recent study revealed that many employees in Germany complained about poor communications between staff and supervisors. "Als wichtigsten Grund für den Frust derart vieler Mitarbeiter [i.e. 15%] fanden die Wissenschaftler schlechtes Management heraus. Arbeitnehmer geben unter anderem an, dass sie nicht wissen, was von ihnen erwartet wird"(1). Thus, clearly demonstrating how poor internal communication can influence the internal efficiency of businesses.

And no supply chain will function properly with faulty communication. A manufacturer has to communicate the desired needs to the suppliers so that the right part can be delivered to the right location at the right time. Delivery delays or the unnecessary oversupply of spare parts result in increased costs. According to Bowersox and Closs, increased operational coordination through system integration is the key in modern logistics. In order to achieve those goals, efficient and successful communication is needed to route orders and track delivery

status (Bowersox and Closs, 165 – 166). Therefore, attesting to the need of good communication in creating an effective cooperation between business entities.

That is why effective communication skills are so central to many fields of business such as marketing and sales, human resource management, and logistics to name just a few. The central role of communication in business may, therefore, be illustrated as follows:

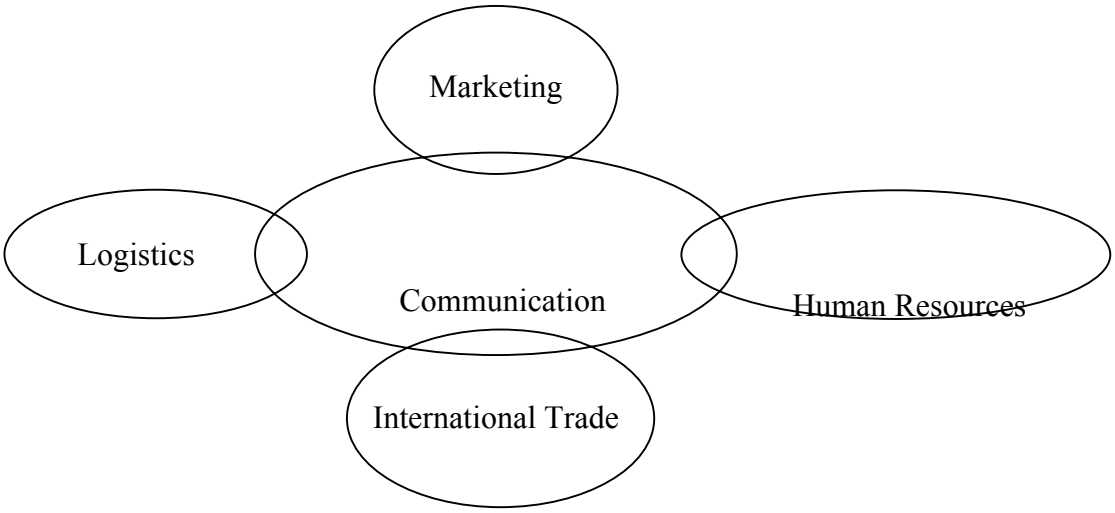

Fig. 1. The Central Role of Communication in Business. Based on author's lecture notes.

For if one cannot properly translate and communicate one's intended message to one's target audience, then even the best products will remain unsold, the best ideas unnoticed, and the best deals unmad.e Effective communication is, therefore, vital to any professional career, crucial to any transaction, and at the core of all successful business relationships – whether at the local or global level.

Studies in the USA have shown that good communication skills are often critical for job advancement (Pauley et al 5). According to Sager, Head of LifeStyle, International Production Services, communication is one of the most important business skills in today's global economy (Interview). Because many American businesses have recognized the importance of effective communications, most US corporations have created communications departments in order to improve their overall internal and external communication (*German American*

Trade 35). This also explains why annual meetings list corporate communications as a distinct agenda item, e.g. the Annual Report of the German American Chamber of Commerce of March 20, 2002. The importance assigned to communication in American business is also demonstrated by the fact that the current edition of *Books in Print* lists more than four hundred entries in the "Business Communication" section and notes that there are additional sections to consult (2119 – 2122).

But it is not just in America that the importance of communication in business has been understood. *Focus Money* recently devoted an article entitled "Macht der Worte" to the topic which clearly indicates that communication is also being given greater importance in Germany today (Vieser 102). In fact, recent job postings in business studies at some German universities, e.g. Münster and TU Berlin, have included communications as a field of instruction and research for the vacancies in question (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Deutscher Hochschulverband). It, therefore, comes as no surprise that the *Sächsische Hochschulentwicklungskommission* (Saxon Commission on Postsecondary Educational Development) recently noted and recommended in its report that "mit der Internationalisierung wachsen die Anforderungen an die sprachliche und kulturelle Komptenz der Absolventen wirtschaftswissenschaftlicher Studiengänge"(5.4.2.2).

Consequently, communication science and intercultural communications are indeed an integral part of business studies. Since business studies are generally designed to prepare students for the world of business, it is necessary for business studies curricula to reflect the needs of the world of business. And that is why business studies curricula have always reflected changes within the world of business. Hence, the introduction of computer science courses to business curricula because the use of computers in the world of business made this adoption necessary. In an age of information overload, instant global access and broadcast, it has become necessary to learn how to communicate effectively and efficiently; thus, necessitating the introduction of communication science and intercultural communications to the curricula of business studies. In light of the fact that virtually all aspects of business have been examined closely to improve the overall performance, it is surprising that something as fundamental and universal as communication has generally been given little credence in many German business studies curricula up to now.

However, before discussing how communication science and intercultural communications can be integrated into business curricula, it is necessary to briefly explain what is meant by communication and intercultural communications so that it is clear as to what these terms refer to. Since communication is so universal, a clear understanding of how communication functions becomes not only desirable, but also necessary. For without a clear understanding of the communication principles, it will not be possible to undertake steps to improve the communication process. The subsequent, brief description of the communication process illustrates which general aspects and factors are involved in the communication process and which aspects and factors need to be studied and analyzed in greater detail to fully understand the communication process in order to explain why what is happening the way it is happening is happening so as to improve it.

Communication is the process of conveying ideas, information, feelings, and desires encoded in symbols from one person to another (Jandt 27ff). These symbols can be verbal, nonverbal, musical, mathematical, etc. (Gudykunst and Kim 6). "Language is a set of symbols and the rules for combining those symbols that are used and understood by a large community of people" (Samovar et al 122). While spoken language is the most common form of communication, it should be noted that some people communicate quite successfully without uttering a single word. "Children who are unable to use their vocal organs to produce speech sounds also can learn a language with no particular difficulty. They are able to understand language perfectly and can learn to communicate through writing as well as anyone else can" (Langacker 14). And anyone who has seen a mime perform, realizes that no spoken words are needed to communicate successfully. Thus, demonstrating that communication is possible without speaking.

If a person uses the wrong word, gesture, or number, that person will be misunderstood by the other person, or community engaged in the communication act. A person, therefore, needs to have internalized the rules pertaining to the use of the right symbols while interacting with other people in specific situations in order to communicate successfully and effectively with them. For example, one would have to learn that raising one finger can mean the number "one" and not "two" which would require the raising of two fingers. However, which finger is raised to indicate the number one can vary from one culture to another. Thus, many Germans raise the right thumb to indicate the number one whereas most Americans would

raise the right index finger. "If we want to communicate in another language, it is important for us to know not only the symbols . . . of that language, but also the rules for using those symbols" (Samovar et al 123).

Communication, according to Gudykunst and Kim is, thus, not instinctive or automatic behavior, but is acquired and learned (4). And it is this process of learning which provides the link between communication and culture because

> culture is the *shared* [emphasis added] system of symbolic knowledge and patterns of behavior derived from speech communication that human individuals carry to provide predictable internal and external psychological stability so as to prevent chaos among human individuals. Humankind learns cultural codes for social life, role expectations, common definitions of situations, and social norms in order to provide predictability and survival of the human species. Human language (spoken and written) is the symbolic glue for human culture (Aldridge 15).

The communication process, therefore, involves at least two persons and must consider their culture. One of these individuals is called the "sender," and the other is called the "receiver." The sender is the person who initiates the communication process because that person wishes to convey a specific message to the receiver. In order to successfully convey that message, the sender would need to encode the intended message in the right medium using symbols with which the receiver is also familiar. Symbols, as noted above, can be words, numbers, musical notes, or pictograms – all of which are culture bound (Samovar et al 44). The medium of the communication process refers to the instrument used to convey the message from the sender to the receiver such as with a spoken language, a written note, or a music CD. The receiver has to be able to decode the symbols of the message in the desired manner so that the intended message is successfully conveyed from the sender to the receiver, and the desired response is carried out by the receiver. If, however, the receiver does not understand the medium, for example the spoken or written language, used by the sender to encode the message, or assigns a different meaning to the encoded symbols, then the message might be misunderstood. This could cause miscommunication which could result in mistakes.

The following diagram illustrates the communication process in its most fundamental mode according to Pauley and Riordan (6):

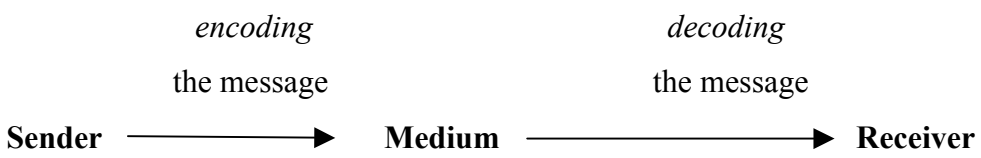

Fig. 2. The Communication Process, adapted from Steven E. Pauley and Daniel G. Riordan, *Technical Report Writing Today*, Fourth Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1990) 6.

The above communication process may be illustrated by the following example: Bob says to Bill: "Please open the green door in this room when John arrives." If Bill opens the green door in the room when John arrives, then the communication act is successful. "Ideally, the intended message, the actual message, and the interpreted message should be the same" (Zimmer and Camp 3). However, no communication is ever 100 % because human beings cannot read minds. "Although messages can be transmitted from one person to another, meanings cannot. . . . In other words, the meaning of the message one person encodes is never exactly the same as the meaning another person decodes" (Gudykunst and Kim 7). The illustration below demonstrates this divergence in meaning:

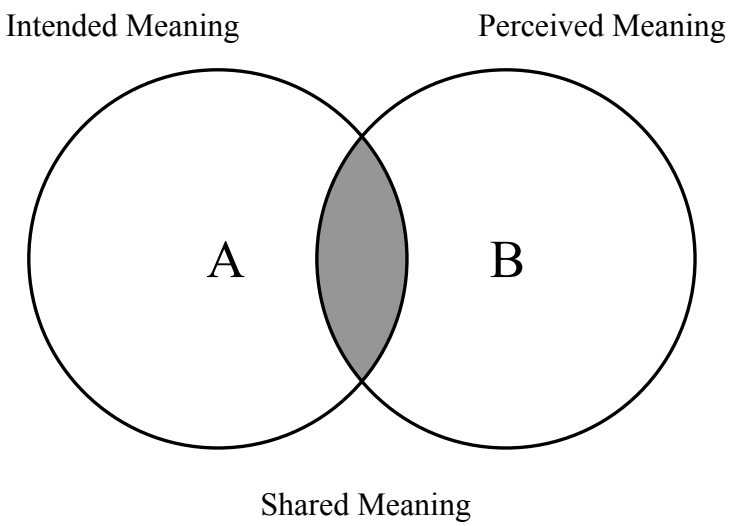

Fig. 3. Divergence in Meaning. Based on Wilbur Schram, *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955); rpt. in George E. Belch and Michael A. Belch, *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*, Fourth Edition (San Francisco: McGraw-Hill, 1998) 140.

It often depends on how much shared meaning is actually needed for a desired response. For some responses, the convergence of shared meaning has to be greater than for others. Thus, knowing what one individual associates with a "good time" will require greater convergence than asking for a red apple. The first example requires a greater understanding of an intangible aspect that an individual will have internalized due to a particular set of unique and individual circumstances whereas the second example merely requires a tangible understanding of what an apple is. But what happens if the receiver associates "apple" with "computer?" What if the receiver does not understand Standard American English? What if the receiver is deaf? Or colorblind?

Coming back to Bob's request addressed at Bill, what if the room in question has three identical green doors? Which one should Bill open? Or if Bill does not know John and, therefore, does not recognize him when he enters the room? And finally, what if Bill is in no mood to open the green door when John arrives? These questions demonstrate that even a relatively short sentence asking for a simple physical action bears potential for communication breakdown. One can imagine if the intended message were to be more detailed, abstract, and culturally embedded in meaning, it would be more likely to be misunderstood. Thus, the degree of identical meaning transmitted from the sender to the receiver is dependent on various factors and variables which can influence the intended and perceived meaning. Consequently, the degree of shared meaning will vary.

Obviously, the closer the sender and receiver are to one another, the closer the intended and perceived meaning will be. Thus, family members will usually find closer meaning than individuals hailing from different cultures. This is due to the fact that two family members from the same culture share more values than two unrelated individuals coming from two different cultures. The more familiar the sender and receiver are, the more likely is their ability to anticipate, or second guess, the initial intention and the subsequent perception associated with a message. However, if the sender or receiver attempt to familiarize themselves with the communication partner, then a greater level of convergence is also possible. By understanding the other, it is possible to adjust and formulate a message that will probably have greater convergence in meaning. This concept may be illustrated as follows:

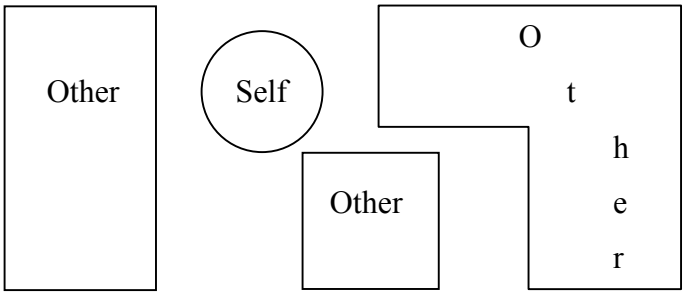

Fig. 4. Convergence in Meaning I. Based on author's lecture notes.

In the above example, differences between the sender and receivers are so distinct that agreement would not be possible. But if the sender were to adjust the message in such a way that it would be possible to reach understanding, or some degree of convergence, then it would be much easier to transmit the intended meaning to the receiver. That is why each message needs to be adjusted and adapted to the receiver so that each particular receiver can easily understand the intended message. Thus, it becomes clear that no message can be used universally without change, but needs to be adapted to each new receiver. For example:

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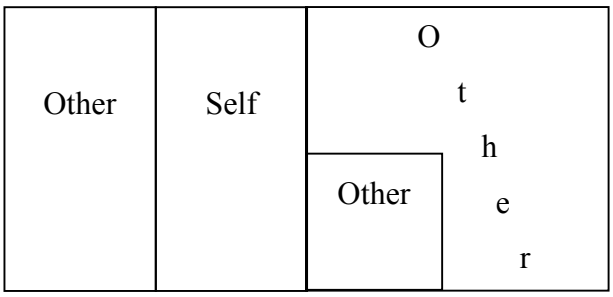

Fig. 5. Convergence in Meaning II. Based on author's lecture notes.

But other factors are also involved in the communication process such as the environment in which the communication occurs as well as the purpose or the medium of the intended message. Any one of these factors can influence the intended and perceived meaning of the message. That is why the entire communication process needs to be examined closely to see what factors are involved in this process and how those factors influence the communication process.

By closely examining the sender, it will become apparent that the "personality" factors can be decisive as to how and why someone encodes a particular message with a specific set of symbols. In other words, the background of the sender could determine how and why someone says what someone says in the manner that someone says it. Assuming that all other factors of the communication process remain identical, the different "personality" factors of, for example, ten senders could influence the outcome of the communication process, possibly dramatically.

The individual personality is often a final determiner in the encoding process. A sender who is incapable of differentiating between red and green will not be able to single out the one green door in a room containing nine other doors which are red and, thus, use that unique aspect of a particular door, i.e. its green color, in a room having ten otherwise identical doors to facilitate the identification of a particular green door which is to be opened. Each human being is a unique individual. Humans are not identical, and, therefore, behave differently from one another. Even identical twins have a different personality. After reviewing the lives of Chang and Eng, genetically identical Siamese twins, Ehrlich notes that "Chang and Eng demonstrated conclusively that genetic identity does not necessarily produce identical natures, even when combined with substantially identical environments – in this case inches apart, with no sign that their mother or others treated them differently as they grew up" (10). These individual differences have to be taken into consideration when attempting to communicate with others.

In addition to individual differences, other factors of one's background can influence one's behavior. For example, the family environment one hails from. William Doherty, director of marriage and family therapy at the University of Minnesota, states that children "learn more from our [i.e. the parents'] actions than from what we merely say about our values" (Sowienski 120). In other words, children internalize specific values through observing their parents', as well as their older siblings', behavior day in and day out over many years; especially during the child's formative years. That is, years that are crucial for the development of one's personality. The importance of the family environment is also demonstrated by that fact that adopted children, i.e. children who are genetically unrelated to their adoptive parents and siblings, adopt the behavior and values of their adoptive family. Thus, demonstrating how the family environment can influence and affect one's behavior.

Even one's social class, level of education, and profession can, to some degree, also influence one's behavior; and thus, one's communication (Gallois and Callan 93). PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) notes in the evaluation of its study of German schools that "soziale Herkunft die Sprache . . . prägt" (Reith 4). Often, specific values are associated with a specific social class (Ehrlich 238). This is so because according to Ehrlich, "we are all creatures of our social backgrounds as much as of our biological backgrounds" (231). Similarly, the level of one's education can shape one's value system. For example, a nuclear physicist might have specific reasons for banning nuclear power since the physicist knows not only the principles of nuclear fission, but also the consequences of nuclear fission. Something an uneducated person might not know and, thus, might not be concerned about. Likewise, the opinion of a theologian on embryonic stem cell research might be quite different from that of a genetic biologist researching organ cultivation. And finally, one's social class, level of education, and/or profession can determine the dialect, slang, or colloquialism one uses as Shaw's *Pygmalion* so eloquently dramatized.

Lastly, it should be remembered that culture also influences the behavior of people. It should be apparent that if problems can already occur in the communication process between two individuals of the same culture, then the problem is compounded in the communication process between two individuals coming from two different cultures. This so because different cultures have evolved a different set of attitudes, values, norms, and behaviors (Ehrlich 308 – 309, Gudykunst and Kim 4, Kramsch 3 – 6). Thus, the color white is associated with purity in most Western societies, but with mourning in most Far Eastern societies (*Herder* 214 – 215). Therefore, demonstrating how the same color white can communicate totally different messages in different cultures. Even though people around the globe inhabit the same planet, the world is not identical in all particulars. While the Amazon region is filled with many trees, the Sahara is mostly devoid of trees. And these environmental factors seem to play an important role in determining the type of culture a society evolved. "The Inuit, for example, could not invent farming because there were no plants suitable for domestication in their environment and the growing season was too short" (Ehrlich 228). But culture is also influenced by other, arbitrary factors. Hence, one part of the world expresses mourning with the color black while another part of the world expresses it with white.

All four factors affecting the sender's personality are interrelated and influence one another to some degree:

> People who identify themselves as members of a social group . . . acquire common ways of viewing the world through their interaction with other members of the same group. These views are reinforced through institutions like the family, the school, the workplace, the church, the government, and other sites of socialization throughout their lives. Common attitudes, beliefs, and values are reflected in the way members of the group use language – for example, what they choose to say or not to say and how they say it (Kramsch 6).

The four basic factors influencing an individual's personality and behavior may be illustrated as follows:

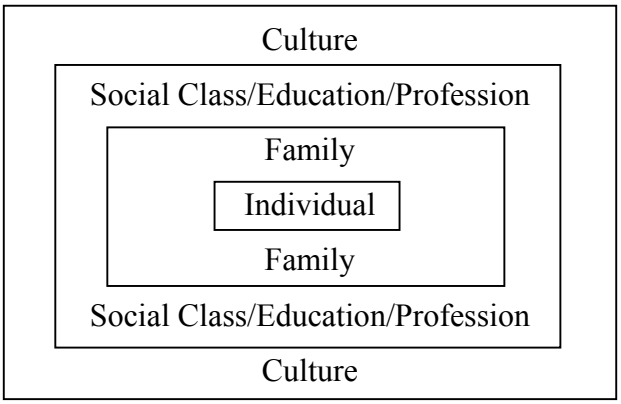

Fig. 6. The Four Basic Factors Influencing an Individual's Personality and Behavior. Based on Claire Kramsch, *Language and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 6.

At the core is the individual to illustrate that even family members have individual and unique personalities. However, members of the same family or members of the same profession will probably share greater similarities if they come from the same culture than members of the same profession coming from different cultures. This diagram also explains why a particular individual of a specific culture could behave differently than another member of that same culture who has a different family and class background.

These personality factors of the sender can, therefore, have a direct impact on the type of message the sender chooses to transmit. These personality factors could determine if a particular type of message is contemplated, let alone transmitted. For example, a native of the Amazon would probably not consider asking a neighbor if it would be possible to borrow a pair of cross country skis because that native might not even know what snow is. In contrast, a native of Alaska might ask to borrow the neighbor's skis. Clearly, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs applies here, too. Thus, someone who is thirsty in a sub-Saharan developing country will probably wish to formulate a different message than a stockbroker who is thirsty while lounging poolside aboard a cruise ship. That is also why someone coming from a high tech society will need words to describe all the high tech devices used in that society whereas someone coming from a low tech culture will probably value words that describe the natural environment in detail.

The diagram below illustrates that the personal background of the sender can influence the communication process at the very source. As noted above, if the sender cannot differentiate between red and green, it could have an impact on how that particular sender formulates a message concerning two otherwise identical doors; one of which is painted green and one is red. Or the sender could be more or less polite due to personal disposition or family upbringing. Or the message could be fraught with grammatical errors because the sender never got a formal education. Or the sender might not be able to speak Standard American English because that person grew up in Mongolia. All of this demonstrates that the personal background of the sender is an important factor in the communication process which needs to be analyzed and considered in communication.

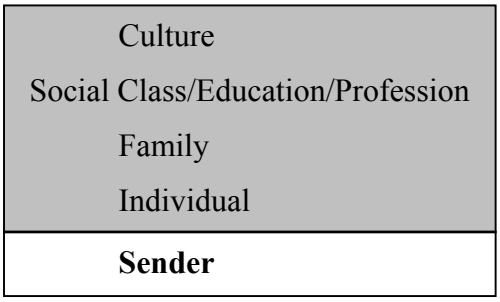

Fig. 7. The Communication Process I. Based on author's lecture notes.

Another important factor influencing the communication process is the sender's purpose, i.e. what the sender wishes to accomplish with the message. A sender might wish to persuade someone to buy a toaster. In order to accomplish this persuasion, the sender would need to use a particular set of encoded symbols and possibly a specific medium. These variables would be different if that same person were to instruct the potential buyer in the use of that toaster. The language and medium that is chosen to describe a toaster in an advertisement is quite different from that used to describe the same toaster in a product description or a set of instructions on how to use the toaster. Instructions on how to use the toaster might even require the inclusion of warnings and the mention of warranties. It should be noted that the purpose can and will be influenced by the cultural environment. Thus, greater care is taken in formulating warnings for products used in or exported to the USA than in many other countries.

Purpose

Culture Social Class/Education/Profession Family Individual
Sender

Fig. 8. The Communication Process II. Based on author's lecture notes.

The sender would also need to consider the location or environment of the communication. A particular environment would have a specific impact on how one communicates. Thus, the same message transmitted in a theater would have quite a different impact on an audience than if it were transmitted in a courtroom to the same people. And the statement "I killed the sheriff" would probably have different consequences for the actor of a play than it would for a defendant in a real life murder trial. It should, however, be noted that culture will also determine the type of signal the environment broadcasts. For example, in some cultures it is considered quite normal to conduct serious business negotiations on the golf course. In other cultures, one would never conduct any business deals outside the company boardroom. Hence, attempting to negotiate a business deal on the golf course could result in a communi-Cation breakdown.

But the environment can also determine what medium one would need to use if one wishes to send an identical message to different environments. For example, the environment can determine if one needs to speak with or without a microphone because one would need to use a microphone if one were to hold the same speech in a large convention hall or in a small office. In other words, the environment could determine the type of medium one would have to use if one wishes to reach all of the receivers which in turn could be based on the purpose and the personality factors of the sender. For example, if someone has never used a microphone before, that person might have some reluctance in speaking into a microphone. Or it could determine whether one uses traditional postal services or an electronic mail service to delivery a message to a pen pal in another country.

ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

Culture Social Class/Education/Profession Family Individual
Sender

Fig. 9. The Communication Process III. Based on author's lecture notes.

Obviously, the personality factors, purpose, and environment in which one is communicating all play a decisive role in determining which symbols one uses to encode the intended message. Symbols can refer, for example, to a language, musical notes, mathematical numbers, or pictures. If, for example, the sender is a Bostonian Brahmin, then that person would probably use proper Standard American English to encode a speech to be delivered on the subject of community pride at a political fundraiser. However, that same individual would be using different symbols at work in an ad agency for a television commercial designed to persuade teenagers to buy a computer game. This is so because the language of advertising is often ungrammatical and non-standard. And if that same Brahmin were to record a piano recital on paper, that person would be using musical notes to encode that composition. Clearly, the choice of symbols depends on the message.

A problem could also arise if the sender inadvertently encodes a message in British English which is intended for a receiver in New York. It should be noted that often the encoding is based on the sender's background. Thus, the sender would use, for example, British English because that is the version of English the sender was taught in school. Since Standard British English and Standard American English are generally very similar, there is usually not a problem in communicating messages. But sometimes, though, a different meaning is assigned to the same word in British and American English. Thus, *pavement* refers to "the path at the side of the road for people to walk on" in British English (*Longman* 1036) while in American English, the term refers to the "hard surface of a road" (*Longman* 1036). One could imagine the confusion this different meaning assigned to the term *pavement* in British and American English could cause in an international tender action calling for the renewal of all pavements in community X. Another difficulty in encoding messages resides in the fact that some concepts only exist in one particular culture and, thus, would be useless if translated. For example, the attempt to translate the German term *Gymnasium* as *high school* when speaking in American English could be problematic. And the translation of the same German term as *gym*(*-nasium*) in American English poses an even greater problem. "Language is much more than a symbol and rule system that allows us to communicate with another person – language also shapes the process by which people become introduced to the order of the physical and social environment" (Samovar et al 123).

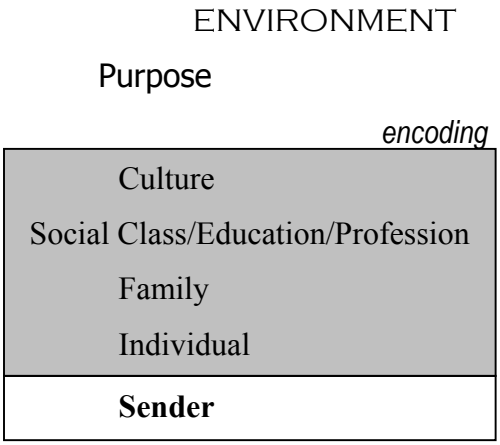

Fig. 10. The Communication Process IV. Based on author's lecture notes.

The choice of medium often depends on the personal background of the sender as well as on the purpose of the message and the environment in which it is to be used. Thus, one would only be able to use an email if one had access to the internet and knew how to properly encode and transmit an email on a computer. Likewise, if one were to apply for an internship at a computer software company in California, one would probably use an email with an attached electronic resume. But one would use a traditional hardcopy paper application for an internship at a Wall Street law firm.

The medium that was chosen for a particular set of reasons will also influence the message content and encoding. One would, therefore, have to adapt the same message to different media. That is why an advertisement for the same product in a print medium, such as a popular magazine, would need to be changed for television. Even though television is also a visual medium, it can transmit motion and sound; something a hardcopy magazine ad cannot do. Or if one were to transfer a company brochure to the internet, the particular aspects of that medium would also need to be heeded. Hence, a website would have to be quick to download, and easy to navigate.

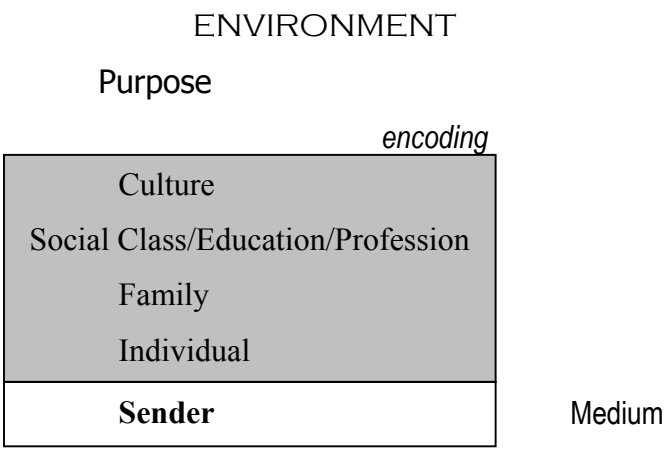

Fig. 11. The Communication Process V. Based on author's lecture notes.

It is also important to consider interference in the communication process. If there is too much interference or distortion during the transmission, the message might never arrive. The message could also be transformed, arrive partially, or be rerouted to another destination. Careful examination of the transmission and reception environment could reduce the risk of

interference and distortion. For example, a background noise, such as a loud jet taking off, could act as interference during a conversation. Under such circumstances, one would have to either stop talking and wait until the jet is gone, or talk louder and hope that the receiver can hear the message. Otherwise, one would have to write a note and hope that the receiver can read it. It could also happen that a prepared slide show cannot be shown because the hall where the slides are to be shown does not have a slide projector, or worse, does not have any electricity.

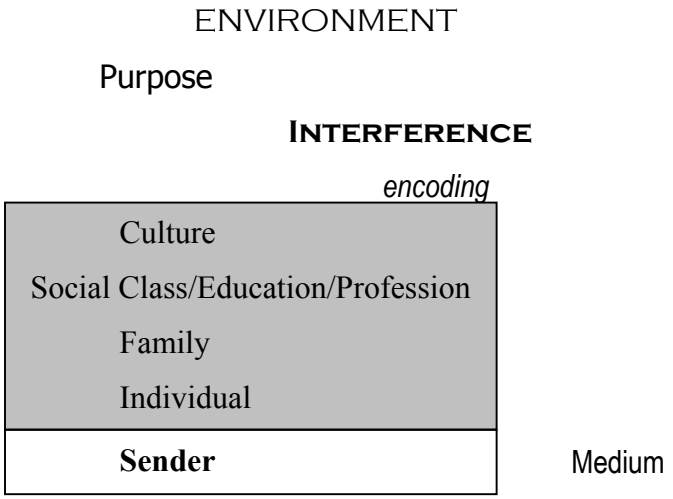

Fig. 12. The Communication Process VI. Based on author's lecture notes.

Careful study and analysis of all the factors involved in the communication act should minimize the risk of miscommunication. Since the communication process also involves a recipient, the sender should anticipate who the receiver is and how and why that particular receiver might react so as to encode the message accordingly in the appropriate medium. The variables that can influence the communication process on the receiver side are as complex and diversified as on the sender side. Thus, the receiver will also be influenced by the same personality factors that influence the sender. In other words, one should be aware that one is dealing with an individual who was raised in a particular family, grew up in a particular social class, received a particular education, performs a particular profession, and lives in a particular culture. Indeed, a difference at any one of the four levels between the sender and receiver could influence the communication process. Hence, explaining why some individuals in the same profession and enjoying the same leisure time pursuits, but having grown up in different families and different cultures, will respond differently to the same message. This also

explains why some ad campaigns or some on-the-job incentives are successful around the globe, and why others work only in some parts of the world or with some individuals. That is why it is crucial to analyze not only the sender and the encoding process, but also the receiver and all aspects of decoding to determine which message and medium might be suitable for a particular receiver under specific circumstance. And one should not neglect the possibility of interference and counter it.

It is, therefore, necessary to analyze the receiver and determine what profile emerges. The receiver could be an expert or a non-expert of the subject matter to be discussed. Knowledge of this fairly general characteristic could already be crucial in determining how one will communicate with the receiver. For example, if one were to demonstrate a computer to a group of experts, it would not be necessary to explain what a mouse or a CPU is. A person familiar with computers would probably know what the terms refer to. In contrast, an audience of people who have never had contact with a computer would first need to be instructed as to what a mouse is and does.

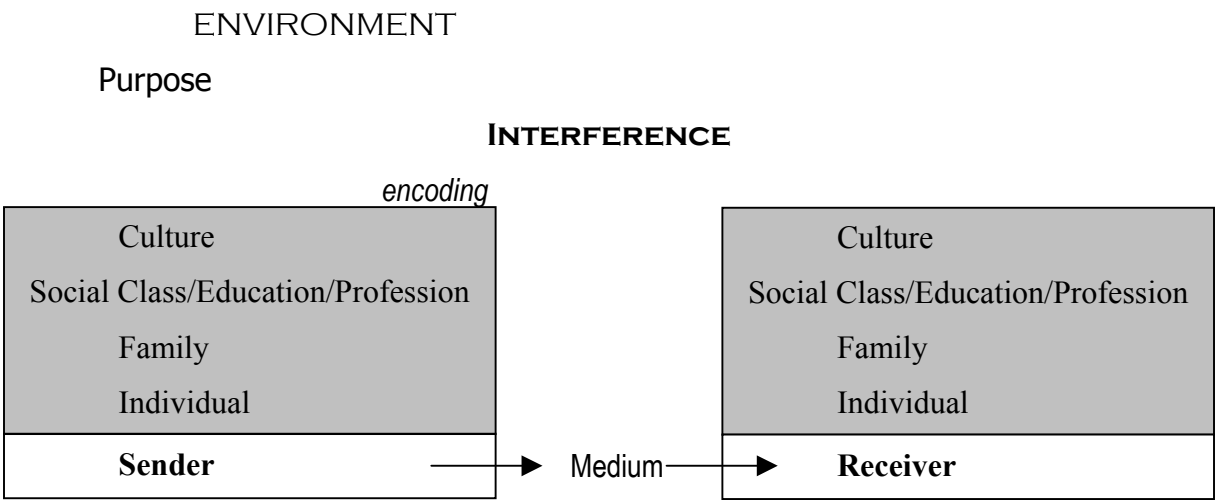

Fig. 13. The Communication Process VII. Based on author's lecture notes.

As noted above, the receiver's personal background will influence that person's response to an identical message because each receiver is a unique individual. Just as the individual sender's profile influences the encoding process, so the receiver's profile influences the decoding process and response. As with the sender, the individual personality, the family background, the social class, level of education, and profession as well as the culture all

influence the behavior of the receiver. For example, if the receiver cannot differentiate between red and green, then that person would have difficulties in opening a green door in room full of otherwise identical red doors. Had the sender known that the receivers cannot differentiate between red and green, then the sender could have encoded a different message to allow the desired act to be carried out successfully. And if the sender knows that white is the color of mourning in a particular culture, then the sender would not use white to accompany a happy message. Thus, clearly demonstrating how important it is to be aware of who one's audience is so that there is the greatest possible degree of convergence in meaning in the intended message between the sender and receiver.

In order to achieve a successful transmission, it is necessary to understand which factors could influence the decoding process. According to Gudykunst and Kim, decoding involves a three step process: Description, Interpretation, and Evaluation (195 – 196). Description refers to what the receiver actually sees, hears, or reads. Interpretation is what the receiver assumes to see, hear, or read. And Evaluation is the receiver's judgement of what is assumed to be seen, heard, or read. This three step process of decoding is influenced, of course, directly by the personality factors of the receiver's personal background.

Problems may occur already at the first phase of decoding, i.e. description, since different people see different things. For example, a colorblind person may not see the green door the sender is able to single out from the other three doors which happen to be red. Or a native of the Amazon might not see the subtle changes in pack ice that a native of Greenland sees. In fact, "members of the Berinmo Tribe in Papua New Guinea . . . categorize colors differently from the way Westerners do, and they *see* them differently" (Ehrlich 149). So it should become clear that even at this first, and most concrete step in the decoding process, differences due to the personal background of the receiver can influence what one actually sees. That is why a forest expert will see more than just trees in a forest. That expert will see specific trees; trees that are healthy and trees that are sick as well as traces of animals among the trees. All of these subtle differences and clues the non expert will probably not see. But description can also refer to the reception of auditory and visual signals. Even the best speech is useless if the receiver does not understand Standard American English, or is deaf. The same is true for a visual message if the recipient is blind.

Another interesting aspect of description is perception. In some cultures, it is possible to depict depth on a two-dimensional surface through the use of perspective. By depicting objects smaller that are meant to be farther away form the viewer, it is possible to create the illusion of three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional canvas or computer screen. However, some cultures are unfamiliar with perspective. For such a culture, all pictures are merely two-dimensional depictions. Thus, size does not indicate a farther distance, but rather assigns importance (Ehrlich 133). For example, Ancient Egyptian art is generally two-dimensional. Because pharaoh is important in ancient Egyptian society, he is always portrayed as being larger than his subjects. The ancient Egyptian artist did not intend to show pharaoh being physically closer to the viewer than the other people who are depicted smaller. In a three-dimensional depiction, such as in a painting by Leonardo da Vinci, the person closest physically to the viewer is depicted larger than a person farthest from the viewer on the canvas. This technique is called perspective and became widely used in Renaissance paintings (*Das große Lexikon der Malerei* 667 – 670 and 782). Thus, illustrating how people from different cultures and different times can have a different perception of what they see.

During the second phase of decoding, i.e. interpretation, there is a much greater chance of individual differences even among siblings. This occurs, for example, when two individuals watch a soccer match between two rival teams. If both individuals were supporters of a different side, then each person will have seen the foul of a particular team differently. Usually after the game, the fan of the perpetrator's side tends not to recall any wrong doing on part of the perpetrator while the other person will see the penalty as a just consequence to the overly physical and rough play resulting in a foul.

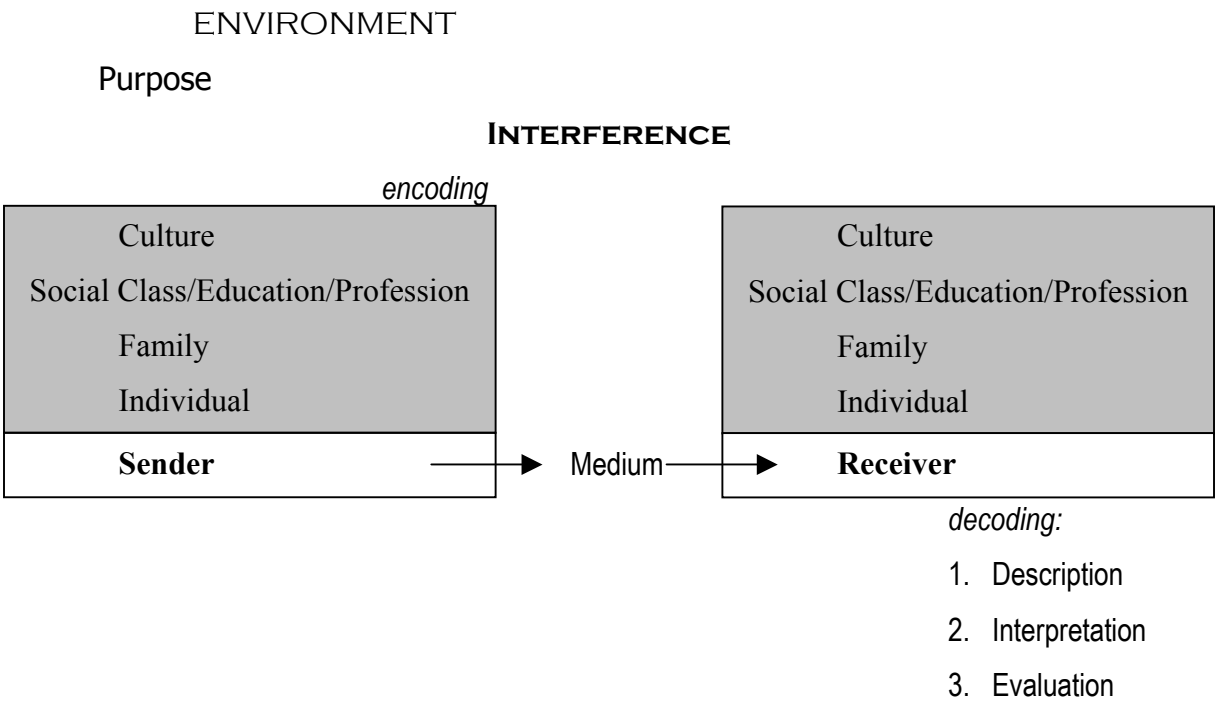

Fig. 14. The Communication Process VIII. Based on author's lecture notes.

During the third phase of decoding, i.e. evaluation, personal subjectivity plays a prominent role. Here, the personality factors of the receiver's personal background often determine how one evaluates an event or a situation. For example, different people have different views and judgements on what is considered success. For some, success is measured by how much money they have in the bank while for others, success is measured by the number of healthy children they have. "If we are unable to distinguish among these three cognitive processes, it is likely we will skip the descriptive phase and jump immediately to either interpretation or evaluation when confronted with different patterns of behavior" (Gudykunst and Kim 196). And judgement is often decisive for how one reacts to what one has seen, read, or heard.

The environment can influence not only the encoding of a message, but also the decoding of a message. This is so because the description process of an identical message is directly influenced by the environment. If the same message is received in a formal setting, it will receive a different interpretation and evaluation than if it were delivered in an informal setting. Consider, for example, the following message "those are three strikes and now you're out" being exchanged between the same two individuals, the owner of a company and an employee of that company, during a game of softball at a company picnic or during a job evaluation in the company boardroom. Clearly, the second setting will have different consequences for same employee than the first.

The particular environmental factors surrounding the decoding of a message could also be grounded in the receiver's personal profile. Thus, it might be legitimate and acceptable to discuss serious business at home, on the golf course, or in a back alley, depending on the social or cultural background of the sender and receiver. While it might be acceptable to strike a binding deal in a back alley for a member of a street gang, it might not be acceptable for members of another social class. And while one culture treats the golf course as it would the boardroom, another might not. Or a particular culture would assign a specific mode of behavior for a particular environment which would then require the use of a particular encoded message to convey the intended meaning in that environment, but a different mode of behavior in a different environment; even though, the meaning would not change.

It should be noted that the environment can also influence the type of medium one would expect to receive a transmitted message in. For example, one may expect the use of memos for an informal transmission, but never for a formal application. And the environment can also determine how one evaluates a particular message. For example, one would expect a formal, and grammatically correct style with the appropriate legal terminology when reading a contract specifying the sale of a perfume. However, that same reader would expect an entirely different language style when reading a magazine ad for the same perfume.

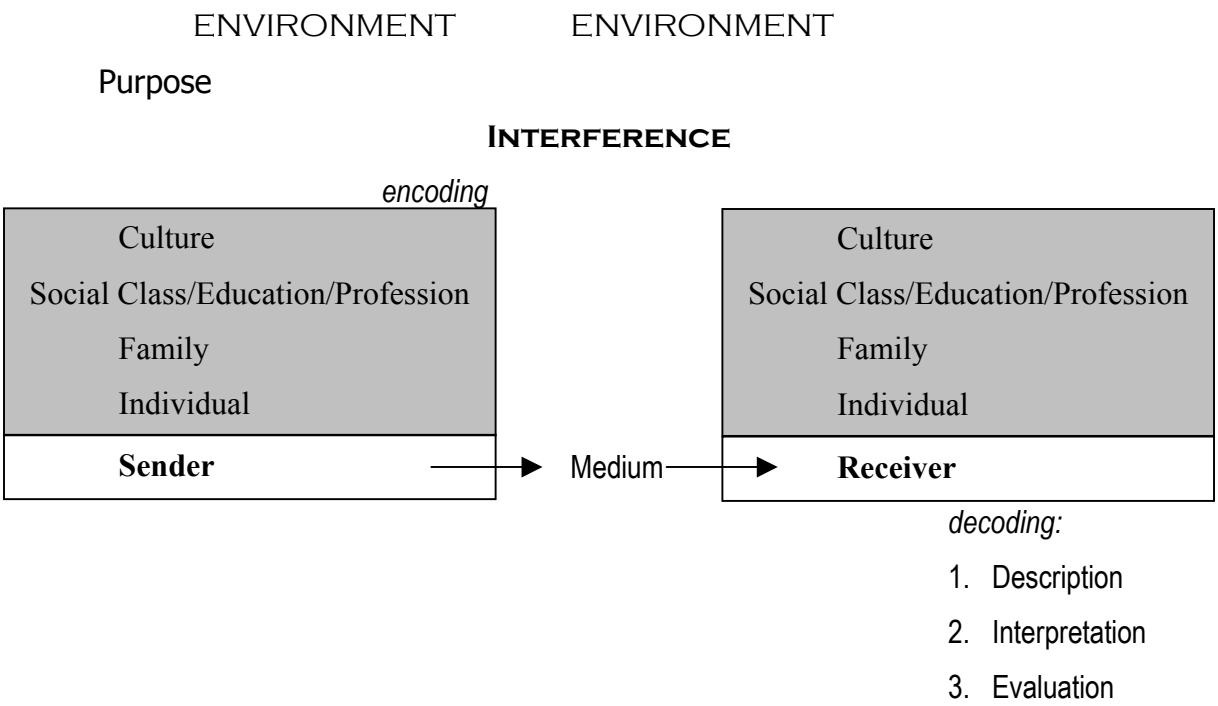

Fig. 15. The Communication Process IX. Based on author's lecture notes.

Clearly, interference can also occur on the receiver side and influence the decoding process which is why the message needs to be received without interference and distortion at all costs. Interference can be background noise, or too many messages arriving at the same time. Interference can also be due to the fact that the receiver is too far away from the sender to clearly hear every word being said. Or maybe, the receiver might simply not have access to the required technology to receive the message which could be an email. Or the audience might be distracted and, therefore, not listen to a speech that is being delivered and transmitted without any interference by the sender to the receiver. This could happen, for example, if one were to give out a set of handouts during a speech. Inevitably, the audience will probably focus more on reading the handouts than on listening to the speaker. Thus, it might be better to wait until the end of the presentation before giving the handouts to the audience (Simmons 69 – 70). These are just some examples of interference; there are many more.

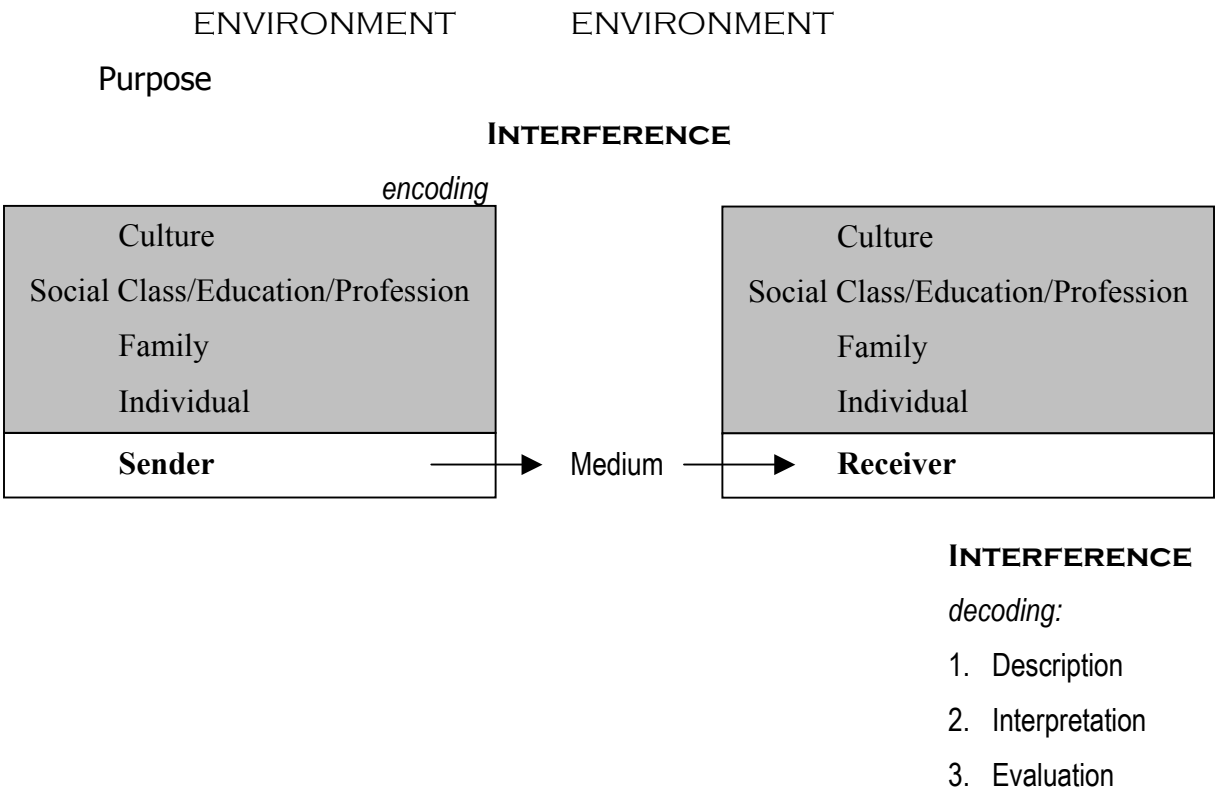

Fig. 16. The Communication Process X. Based on author's lecture notes.

After decoding the message, the desired response is also crucial. Even the best message which ideally reaches the receiver without any interference is useless without the desired action being taken by the receiver. The response to the successfully decoded message can be positive, i.e. Bill opens the green door when John arrives, negative, i.e. Bill opens a red door or leaves the room before John arrives, or neutral, i.e. Bill does nothing. This can be one of the more difficult parts of the communication process because here the sender usually has no direct influence on the receiver to force the desired response. In a free market situation, the consumer would have to be convinced that buying the advertised product is a desirable, necessary, and useful action. However, in another situation, it might be easier to elicit the desired action from the receiver due to the circumstances of the sender-receiver relationship. For example, the sender might be the receiver's employer and the message is work related. It might, therefore, be advantageous to the employee's further career at the company to follow the orders of the boss. The response to the decoded message may be illustrated as follows:

Decoding:

- Description
- Interpretation
- Evaluation
  - Response:
    - Positive Opinion = Desired (Re)Action
    - No Opinion = No (Re)Action
    - Negative Opinion = No (Re)Action,
      = Hostile (Re)Action

Fig. 17. The Communication Process XI. Based on author's lecture notes.

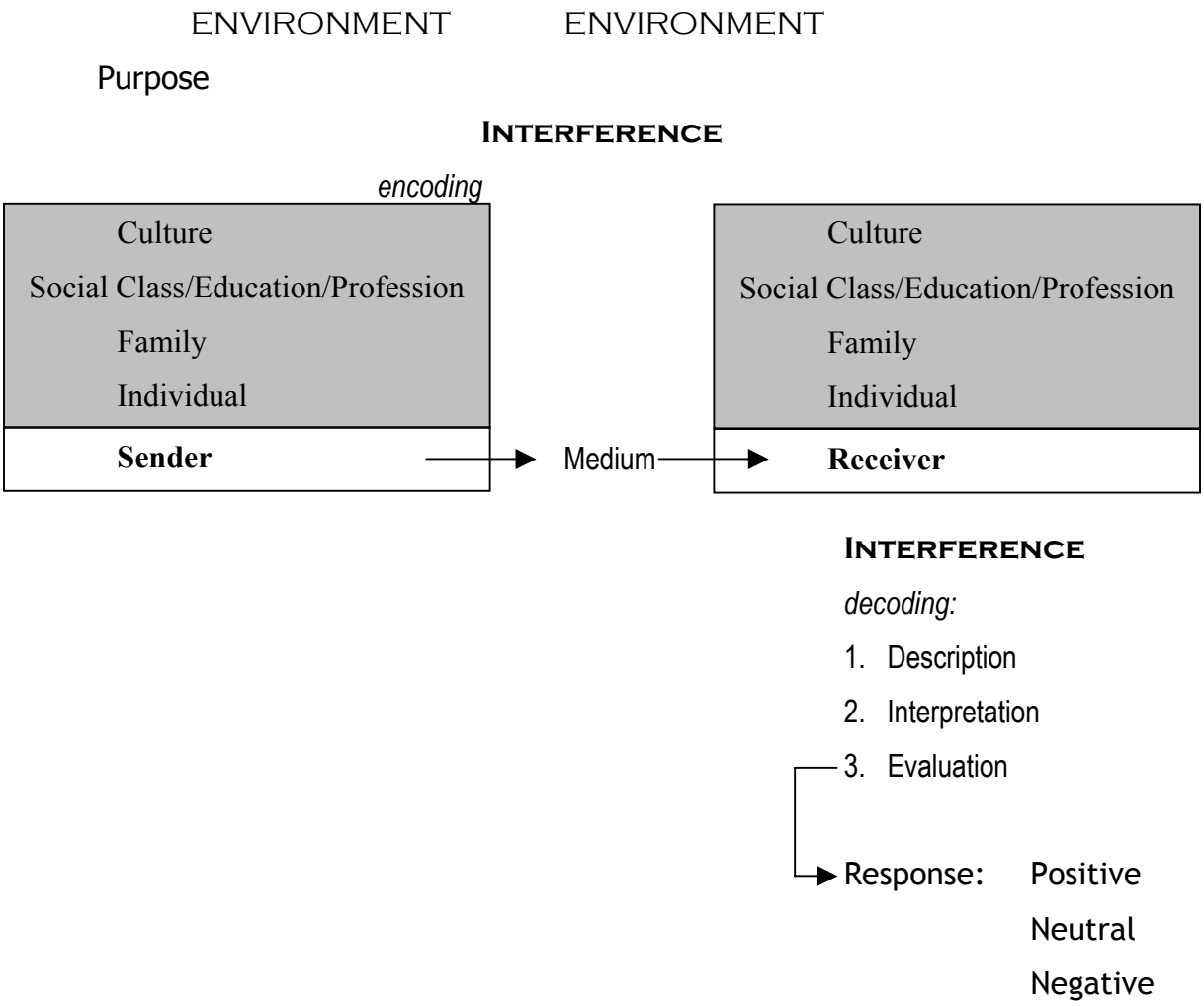

Fig. 18. The Communication Process XII. Based on author's lecture notes.

Clearly, only the first response is an example of successful communication. The last response could even be dangerous, and, therefore, should be avoided at all costs. An example of a hostile reaction is when, for example, a transmitted message, such as an advertisement, results in the government prohibiting the sale of one's product because the ad broke a specific law of the country in question. Thus, an ad promoting the sale of a particular brand of vodka in Saudi Arabia, which has a very strict ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol, would probably result in the ad being banned and in a fine for the company in question.

While it might be possible to force a specific response from the receiver under certain circumstances regardless of what the receiver actually wants, it is often not possible to order the receiver to respond with the desired action. In order to improve the chances for a desired

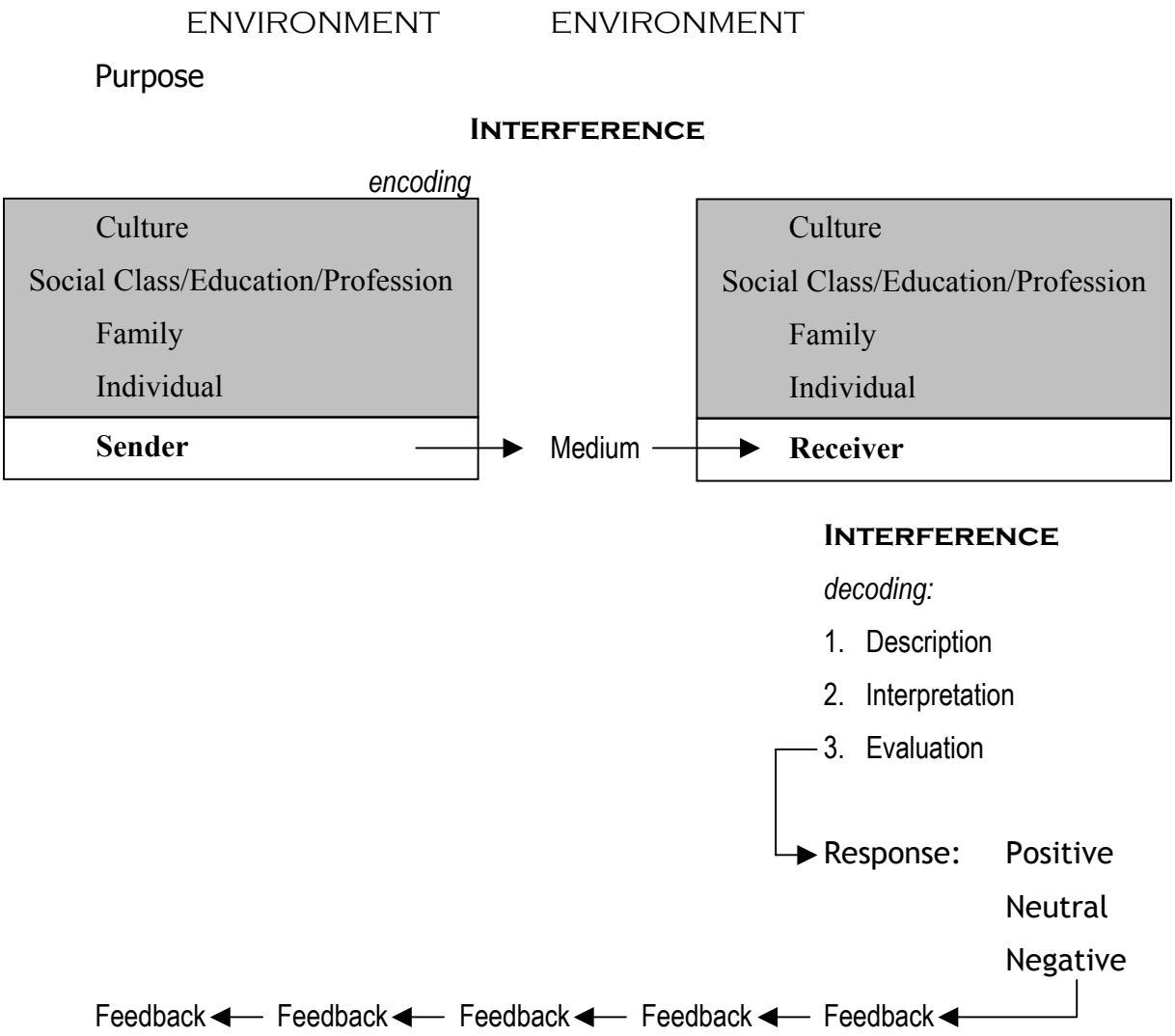

Fig. 19. The Communication Process XIII. Based on author's lecture notes.

response, proper analysis of the entire communication process would be helpful. In order to accomplish this tasks, feedback from the receiver is vital because feedback can allow the sender to uncover why something happened so that the desired response may be repeated, i.e. the consumer is convinced to repeat the purchase. Or why an undesired response occurred so that it might be circumvented.

However, merely receiving feedback is insufficient in and by itself. The feedback needs to be analyzed objectively, i.e. decoded. It is, therefore, necessary to interpret and evaluate the data so that it is clear why a particular response occurred. Once it is clear as to why a specific response occurred, it will be possible to take that information and adjust the original message, if necessary, to overcome a negative or neutral response. And it will become clear why the

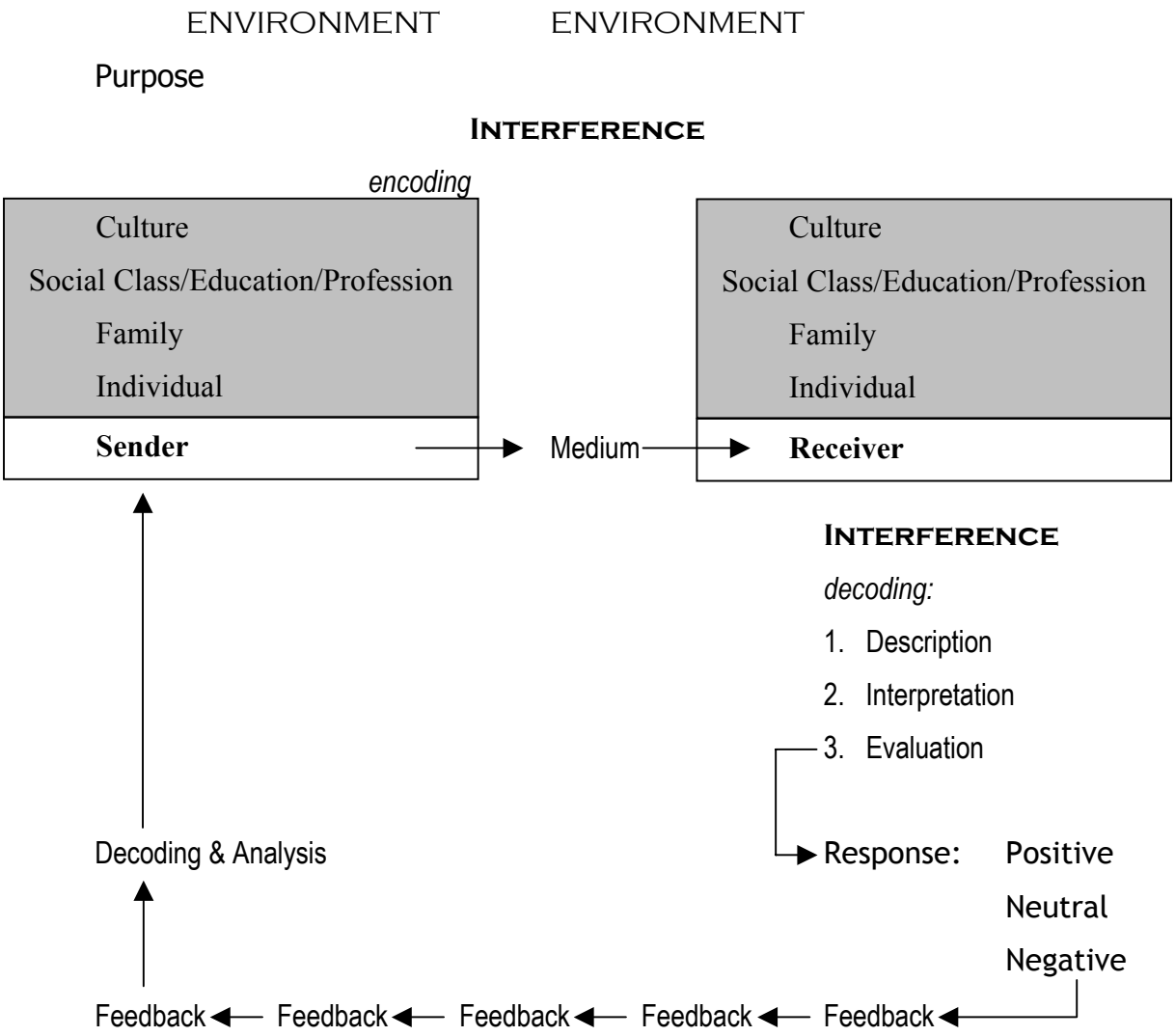

Fig. 20. The Communication Process XIV. Based on author's lecture notes.

response was positive so that a similar positive response can be repeated. It should, however, be evident that the analysis of the feedback needs to encompass the entire communication process; not just the receiver's response. In other words, how and why did the sender's background influence the message? Was the purpose properly considered when encoding the message in the appropriate symbols and conveyed in the proper medium? What role did interference play, and how might it be neutralized? How did the environment influence the message content and context? Was the receiver adequately analyzed? These and similar questions have to be answered completely in order to conduct an effective and useful analysis.

The above outline of the communication process shows that the sender and the receiver, though individuals, are both influenced by their background when it comes to encoding and decoding a message. If both individuals come from the same culture, it is quite apparent from the above outline how complex the entire communication process is. But it would not be necessary to familiarize oneself with another culture and all of its nuances. However, if the sender or receiver comes from a different culture, then the process is even more complicated since culture is very complex. While traditionally most business contacts have been between individuals of the same culture, the interdependence of today's commercial activities on a global scale has created a global village which makes contact between different cultures today much more common than at any previous time in human history. Whereas most people would be familiar with their own culture, they are usually not as familiar with other cultures; especially at a deeper, subsurface level. Consequently, it becomes necessary to familiarize oneself with other cultures if one wishes to communicate effectively across cultures in today's global economy.

Not surprisingly, culture and communication are interdependent. According to Hall, "culture is communication, and communication is culture" (Hall 94). In other words, communication is so vital to all aspects of human interaction because human interaction would not be possible without communication. And culture is, simply put, the sum total of human interaction Langacker 12ff, Fromkin and Rodman 210, Kramsch 1 ff). According to Geertz, "there is no such thing as human nature independent of culture" (Ehrlich 123). Thus, if individuals of a group wish to interact with each other, it becomes necessary for them to be able to communicate with one another.

Hence, any definition of culture always includes a reference to communication. For example, *Longman* defines culture as "the ideas, beliefs, and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a society" (334). Without communication, it would not be possible to share a common set of values, norms, and behavior with the other group members. And without human interaction there is no impetus to design any method of communication and, thus, no need for a shared culture. "It is through communication that culture is transmitted from one generation to another. . . . In other words, we communicate the way we do because we are raised in a particular culture and learn its language, rules and norms" (Gudykunst and Kim 4).

Even though people around the globe live in social groups and inhabit the same planet, the world is not identical in all particulars because "environmental factors are also crucial in developing our individual characteristics" (Ehrlich 122). That is why it is never possible to exchange identical labels, only equivalents. It would, thus, be a mistake to assume that words from different languages label the same inventory of items, processes, and qualities in the world and all one needs to do is to exchange one label for another (Kramsch 8 – 10). For "there is no natural connection between any symbol and its referent; the relationships are arbitrary and vary from culture to culture" (Gudykunst and Kim 6). Even words imitating sounds of nature, i.e. onomatopoetic words, can vary from one language to another. For example, "the crowing of a rooster is represented as ***cock-a-doodle-doo*** in English, as ***kikeriki*** in German, and as ***coquerico*** in French" (Langacker 25) despite the fact that roosters crow the same all over the world. One can imagine the difficulties one encounters when the object of communication is no longer physical, but abstract. "We have seen that culture influences language by way of symbols and rules as well as our perceptions of the universe. Equally important is the fact that meaning shifts from culture to culture" (Samovar et al 123).

It should be noted that a large portion of the communication process occurs at the sub-conscious level because this process has been internalized and become part of a person's behavioral pattern during their formative years. Because the behavioral aspects associated with communication have been reinforced through group feedback, these aspects have been relegated to automatic behavior and response in standard communication situations. However, when someone is confronted with the behavioral pattern of individuals from a different group, i.e. a different culture, problems can and do arise. Different groups can and will have internalized different behavioral patterns and perception models. Thus, Ehrlich concludes: "It seems to me that enough thought involves language that the different surface structures of languages cannot help but affect the way people view the world, just as experience and environment can alter visual perceptions" (Ehrlich 148). Consequently, successfully internalized patterns of decoding could no longer work in intercultural encounters since individuals will base their interpretation and evaluation on their internalized patterns. "The human nervous system is structured in such a way that the patterns that govern behavior and perception come into consciousness only when there is a deviation from the familiar. Intercultural encounters provide such situations of deviation from the familiar as individuals are faced with things that do not follow their hidden program" (Seeyle 13). This "hidden pro-

gram" is the behavioral pattern a person has internalized while growing up in a particular culture. "The actual ethics, morals, and norms of a society – the products of that ethical capacity – are overwhelmingly a result of cultural evolution within that society" (Ehrlich 308 – 309). Because attitudes, norms, and values are to a large degree culturally based, the proper interpretation and evaluation of any message communicated across cultures can easily result in miscommunication and misunderstandings. "If we know nothing about the strangers' culture, it is highly probable we will make inaccurate predictions and interpretations of their behavior" (Gudykunst and Kim 193). Even if one is aware of cultural differences when communicating, "to say that two people are engaged in intercultural communication is not to say that they understand each other" (Gudykunst and Kim 14) because their shared meaning could still diverge. The same might be said about *all* communication.

Cultural patterns are part of our personality and behavior. These patterns enable us to interact easily with members of our culture who share a similar image of reality. "Tasks for which our brains had to equip us include coping with members of our social group and taking maximum advantage of the benefits of group living. A chief way to reap those benefits must have been to gain access to knowledge possessed by other members of the social group" (Ehrlich 156). Therefore, one may assume that culture is not based on genes, but on group interaction. But this group interaction is in turn part of the evolutionary process because "in social animals . . . selection favors those that operate best within a group" (Ehrlich 310). New scientific evidence seems to support this theory. "Some 80% of the gene pool of modern Europe stems from ancestors who came to the Continent more than 11,000 years ago. The vast majority of Europeans, be they Italians or Swedes. . . can trace their ancestry to just seven female lineages and as few as 10 male ones" (Graff 54). In other words, a relatively small number of individuals is responsible for the large cultural diversity existing in Europe today. Hence, cultural differences cannot be simply explained by genetic differences.

This explanation is supported by genetic evidence. According to Ehrlich,

> genes cannot incorporate enough instructions into the brain's structure to program an appropriate reaction to every conceivable behavioral situation or even a very large number of them. . . . Clearly, the characteristics of the neural network can only be partially specified by genetic information; the environment and cultural evolution *must* play a very large, often dominant role in establishing the complex neural networks that modulate human behavior (124).

Indeed, "most speakers of Hungarian, a Finno-Ugric language surrounded by Indo-European tongues, don't appear genetically much different from their Slavic neighbors" (Graff 58). Yet their cultures are different. So culture is probably the product of human interaction within a specific, finite group. This explains why children of immigrants who are actively participating in the host country's culture are almost indistinguishable from their peers in behavior (Gudykunst and Kim 228 – 229). Indeed, the "adoption of a new language is often accompanied by the gradual adoption of a new culture [because] (l)anguage and culture are closely associated" (Langacker 17). Thus, it is possible to assert that group interaction and behavior create culture.

From the above discussion, it becomes clear that there is some link between culture, communication, and human behavior. If one were to focus on business, one would soon realize that business, by its very definition, also involves human behavior. According to *Webster's*, business essentially refers to "the buying and selling of goods and services; commerce" (100). And commerce includes in its meaning not only a reference to the buying and selling of goods, but also the relationship and communication between people (*Longman* 268). In other words, in order to conduct business, and commerce, it is necessary to interact and communicate with people. Thus, in order to be able to interact with others, it is necessary to communicate with others. And in order to communicate and interact successfully with others, it is necessary to consider human behavior. Thus, communication and culture, by definition, play an important role in business which involves the interaction of people and organizations created by people. Anthropologists have come to the same conclusion when they note that "social behavior, language, and toolmaking appear to be tightly related" (Ehrlich 154). Consequently, one can speak of business communication and intercultural communications if the business transactions are respectively national and international. The interrelationship of business and communication as outlined above, may, thus, be depicted in its most basic form as follows:

Business = Interaction of Individuals & Entities

Interaction of Individuals & Entities = Communication

Communication = Culture

One may, therefore, state that business is culture and communication. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that the term corporate culture has been coined because business is part of culture and, thus, dependent on communication to function properly.

Business communication occurs basically at the following three levels:

1. Within the business entity
2. With consumers
3. Between entities

Communication, as pointed out above, is a complex process which could easily result in miscommunication if a problem occurs at any stage of the communication process. And if the communication process includes participants of diverse background, then the actual encoding and decoding could diverge even more from the intended meaning. Consequently, miscommunication might occur. Such unintentional miscommunication could result in misunderstandings between corporate departments, as Wolf's study and many others (see Pettegrew and Logan 675ff. and Jablin and Krone 711ff.) document, or between businesses and consumers as, for example, Ward (651ff.), Hiebing and Cooper (6ff.), and others note. Interestingly, little research seems to have been conducted on the impact of faulty communication between entities except at the intercultural level. Yet, the consequences of miscommunication between entities of the same cultural realm could also result in business losses. For example, if the communication between a company and the government is faulty during a tender action, a problem might arise. Thus, if the government does not have clear guidelines for the tender action, interested companies might not know what is asked for, or how they are to submit a bid for the tender. Conversely, if a company submits a tender bid that is not clearly formulated and, thus, misunderstood by the government, then that company might not be awarded the contract in question. One can only imagine the losses due to faulty communication. Clearly, effective communication is vital at and between all three levels of business communication at all times. Communication, therefore, assumes a role similar to total quality control which also occurs at all levels at all times. Thus, every business should aim to achieve quality communication at all levels at all times in order to improve their business activities.

Applying audience analysis to intercultural communications, it should be clear that one cannot use the same identical message in different countries. Thus one would not use the same message to sell a particular product globally, but would need to adjust it to the local market. The difference, therefore, in the audience analysis of a domestic audience versus an international audience lies in the cultural difference. But culture would, nonetheless, be part of any audience analysis; regardless of whether it is *intra*cultural analysis or *inter*cultural analysis. The analysis principle would be the same, the only variable would be in the type of culture and/or subculture to be analyzed. Thus, the analyst would need to be thoroughly familiar with the other culture(s) in order to incorporate that variable, i.e. culture, into the analysis so that an effective message may be formulated in the appropriate medium.

It should be clear that the complexity and variables of the communication process need to be fully understood in order to minimize the risk of miscommunication so that misunderstandings can be prevented and mistakes reduced. Businesses cannot afford to leave communication to chance. That is why communication science needs to be an integral part of any business studies curriculum and why intercultural communications needs to be a part of any international business studies. As noted above, the *Sächsische Hochschulentwicklungskommission* probably recognized this need, too, because it noted that "mit der Internationalisierung wachsen die Anforderungen an die sprachliche und kulturelle Kompetenz der Absolventen wirtschaftswissenschaftlicher Studiengänge" (5.4.2.2.).

While communication does play an important role in some realms of business studies, such as marketing and human resources, it has often not been assigned a separate realm of business studies as, for example, law and computer science have been. Most programs in business studies have recognized that law and computer science are indeed important enough to business studies to warrant in-depth knowledge of those subjects. Thus, those subjects are an integral part of many business studies curricula today, and the instructors of those subjects need to be specialists in those fields in order to be eligible to teach those subjects without being expert in all other realms of business studies. Strangely enough, similar deference is rarely given to communication science. But the above, brief outline of the communication process should have made it clear, though, that communication is too important to leave to chance and too specialized to leave to non-specialists.

However, communication specialists often do not see their role in this light either. In fact, many Business English programs, for example, assume that instructors of Business English should also be teaching marketing or macroeconomics in English despite the fact that these language teachers have rarely received instructions in those fields. At the same time, these language instructors are not teaching the subjects they are experts in, i.e. communications and intercultural communications. Indeed, one encounters the absurd situation in which the Business English instructor are to pretend expertise in all realms of business administration *and* economics; something not even a professor of business law would attempt to expound. This became clear during the 22nd Meeting of the Arbeitskreis der Sprachenzentren, Sprachlehrinstitute und Fremdspracheninstitute (AKS) in Chemnitz earlier this year. Why is it not possible for language and communication specialists to teach the relevant aspects of communication science and intercultural communications which pertain to business as legal experts do for those realms of law that pertain to business studies in addition to subject specific language instruction? Surely, this would be in the interest of all parties.

As the discussion during 3rd Work Shop, "Fremdsprachen im Studiengang," at the 22nd Meeting of the AKS in Chemnitz on March 1, 2002, clearly demonstrated, many Business English teachers felt uncomfortable in their role as currently interpreted by many postsecondary institutions in Germany, i.e. Business English instructors teach Business in English. Yet the Business English instructors rarely majored in Business studies. Indeed, many instructors of Business English participating in the 3rd Work Shop mentioned that it was dissatisfying for them to transmit business and economic principles in their courses to their students because they have limited or no expertise in those fields. Some instructors stated that they were still attempting to improve their knowledge of business subjects in order to become "better" Business English teachers. Clearly, this is a misplaced focus especially in light of the fact that more and more business programs are converting their business lectures from German to English so that the traditional role of the Business English teacher is losing its unique role within business departments.

It would certainly make much more sense if language instructors were to focus on their core competencies which include communication principles and culture when instructing business students in English. In other words, language instructors should focus on teaching communication and intercultural communications principles to business students as a part of language

instruction because all language instruction revolves around communication and culture. For "it is impossible to separate our use of language from our culture" (Samovar et al 122). This is so because "language expresses cultural reality" (Kramsch 3). However, this does not mean that business students should become pseudo communication majors. But one does not expect business students to become lawyers or computer scientists after taking courses in those subjects as a part of their business studies either.

How then, could communication science be integrated into a business curriculum? By using a concrete example, i.e. the TU Bergakademie Freiberg, it might be possible to demonstrate how communication science could be integrated into an existing program of business studies at a German university. The *Diplomprüfungsordnung und Studienordnung* (Rules and Regulations for Studies and Exams) of the *Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften* (Department of Business Studies) at the TU Bergakademie Freiberg sets the parameter for the curriculum possibilities. Currently, Business English is a *Propädeutikum* (prerequisite) in the *Grundstudium* (introductory studies) and encompasses a total of four *Semesterwochenstunden* (credit hours). Business English is also one of the *Wahlpflichtfächer* (required electives), in the *Hauptstudium* (advanced studies). Students may choose Business English as one of their areas of specialization. A *Wahlpflichtfach* encompasses a total of eight to twelve *Semesterwochenstunden*. This translates into a total of four to six courses which must include three *Klausurenscheine* (exam certificates) to be based on the lectures as well as one *Seminarschein* (seminar certificate) based on the participation in a seminar. Students may opt to take either the three *Klausuren* or one *Klausur* and one *Seminar*. Regardless of which option the student chooses, the three *Klausuren* should form the basis for the *Diplomprüfung* (degree exams).

With the above constraints of the *Diplomprüfungsordnung und Studiensordnung*, the following possibility presents itself: In the *Hauptstudium,* the three *Klausurenscheine* are based on the following three courses:

- Business Communication Theory
- Principles of Intercultural Communications
- Cultural Studies of the United States of America

The *Seminarschein* applies the contents of the three lectures to create written and oral documents typically used in American business settings, e.g. a simulated business plan or report which is then presented professionally. The structure of the curriculum, thus, assumes a pyramid shape building on the more general principles and leading to a specific application. This may be illustrated as follows:

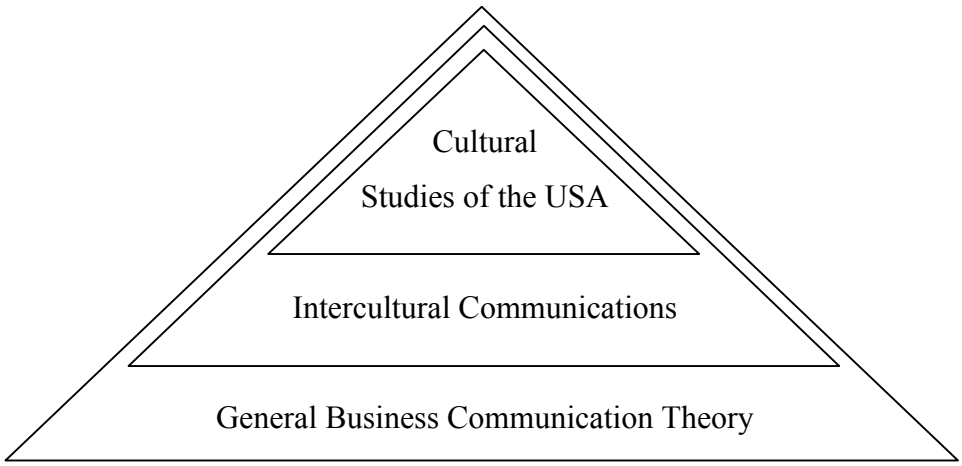

Fig. 21. The English Curriculum in the *Hauptstudium* at the TU Bergakademie Freiberg. Based on the author's website.

In other words, the courses of the *Hauptstudium* attempt to synthesize the principles of communications with intercultural communications and US cultural studies into a useful communication package so that the theoretical knowledge can be given a practical application in the seminar. By focusing on a particular culture, namely American culture, it is possible to demonstrate how to apply the general principles of business communication and intercultural communications in particular so that the course participants will be able to apply the same principles to other cultures. By starting with general business communication principles, it is possible to narrow the focus on the particulars of intercultural communications with which it will be possible to analyze a specific culture. This should be quite useful since most studies in intercultural communications tend to be, by their very nature, universal and fairly broad in their application. Thus, it will be possible to narrow the focus to a specific comparison between German and American cultures and to demonstrate how the general communication principles can be adapted to a particular cultural context.

One might ask why the focus is on the USA and not the UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, or Bermuda, for example. The answer is quite simple: If one were to attempt to do

everything within a limited amount of time, then one would end up being very superficial. Even a two credit hours course is going to limit the amount of information that can be conveyed on one particular culture within that period of time. There is, of course, a reason why the *Hauptstudium* uses the USA as its focal point when applying the general business communication and intercultural communications principles. The available resources at the TU Bergakademie Freiberg, in essence, have produced this focus by default. First of all, the Bergakademie is the smallest university in Saxony with a much smaller teaching staff than the other, larger universities in Leipzig, Dresden, and Chemnitz. Thus, the larger universities can offer many more hours of Business English instruction than Freiberg ever could.

Interestingly, the Bergakademie has a long and rich tradition that ties it to the USA since many alumni either went to the USA or came from there during the past two centuries. The Bergakademie has also many official partnerships with American universities, including a major US research school, i.e. S.U.N.Y. at Stony Brook; thus, allowing Freiberg students to pursue their business studies in the USA. Bergakademie students may participate in the CDS American internship program because the Bergakademie and CDS New York have signed a formal agreement to that effect. Ties have also been created to the German American Chamber of Commerce in New York as well as the US Austrian Chamber of Commerce. Likewise, close cooperation has been established with the US Consulate General in Leipzig which is putting its resources, including human resources, at the disposal of the Bergakademie. And an association with a New York law firm has resulted in an active exchange of information, including lectures on the German and American legal systems. The Bergakademie also works closely with the Atlantikbrücke which translates into a regular stream of guest speakers and visitors from the USA visiting the university and region. In addition, close contacts have also been established with the Wirtschaftsförderung Sachsen GmbH in Dresden and the IHK Chemnitz who have an economic interest in the USA. This comes as no surprise because the US market is one of the largest in the world, i.e. the US GDP equals 31.2% of the global GDP (*The Economist* 4). Finally, the USA are interesting to Saxony because Saxony has more direct American investments than Saxony Anhalt and Thuringia together (Lehne). These resources form a good foundation and reason why the USA should be the focus of the "Business English" curriculum at the Bergakademie. Other schools with other resources should use their resources accordingly when planning their communications curriculum.

It is hoped that it has become clear why communication science is an integral part of business, and why it needs to be an integral part of business studies. It should also be clear that communications experts are not macroeconomics experts and vice versa. Communication is a distinct and separate discipline within business studies similar to computer science and law and, therefore, needs to be treated accordingly. Consequently, a business studies curriculum needs to reflect this fact. Indeed, the *Sächsische Hochschulentwicklungskommission* recognized this fact, too; thus, calling for the integration of communication and interultural communications into existing business curricula. What such a curriculum could look like depends on the available resources of the university in question. The model that has been presented for the TU Bergakademie in Freiberg is only one such option working within the scope of the available resources. Other solutions are also possible and encouraged.

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