

Language and culture are inexorably linked. [Sapir-Whorf hypothesis]
Approximately 55% of oral communication is cultural, while only 45% is linguistic.

HIDDEN ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION (PARALANGUAGE)

1. BODY LANGUAGE: gestures, eye contact, touch (scientific study of KINESICS).

Aggressive, bored, closed, deceptive, defensive, emotional, evaluating, open, power, ready, relaxed, romantic, submissive.

There is an argument that a second-language learner cannot be bi-gestural. However, does anyone teach gesture in their English or language classes?

2. Tone and Character of Voice (INTONATION): command, irritation, surprise, question. Try saying "I'm here" with high, low, quick, slow, rising, and falling intonation!

3. PHYSICAL DISTANCE varies drastically from culture to culture from 8" to 23".

Eng "stand-off-ish" (too far)

Eng "invading my space" (too close)

Every culture has a comfort zone. Since there is no 13th commandment, "Thou shalt stand 21 inches away from thy interlocuter," it must be recognized and taught for each culture.

4. CULTURAL USE OF SPACE (e.g., office layout, courtroom layout, home layout)

In an American office supervisor has a separate room, in Japan supervisor is at the head table in the same room.

5. CULTURAL SENSE OF TIME (e.g., on-time, late, early, African time, Philippine time).

6. Communicating with CLOTHING (besides protection from the elements, there are uniforms, e.g., judge, sailor, doctor, priest/minister, nurse, nun, beauty queen). What body parts can be revealed?

7. Communicating with MAKE UP (lipstick, eye shadow, rouge, tattoos, decorative scarring or scarification, circumcision or subincision).

8. GENDER DIFFERENCES in language, e.g., INTONATION in many cultures; MALE VS FEMALE SPEECH in Atayal (Formosa/Taiwan) **batu** 'stone' {female}, **ptux** {male}. An entire vocabulary exists along these lines.

9. SPEECH LEVELS (Japanese, Javanese): VERY HIGH (to royalty or top officials), HIGH (to one's parents, teachers, government officials), INTERMEDIATE (to one's friends or subordinates, younger siblings); LOW (to lowest caste, household servants, animals).

10. SPEECH STYLE: not just formal and informal!

Martin Joos (1962. *The Five Clocks*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

[F]our usage scales of native central English:

AGE	STYLE	BREADTH	RESPONSIBILITY
senile	frozen	genteel	best = "correct"
mature	formal	puristic	better
teenage	consultative	standard	good
child	casual	provincial	fair
baby	intimate	popular	bad

CULTURALLY OVERT ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE

1. Use of POLITICALLY-CORRECT LANGUAGE and appropriate lexical choices.

Dirty Old Man: sexually-focused chronologically-gifted individual.

Fat: horizontally challenged.

Short: vertically challenged.

Worst: least best

2. CONNOTATIONS from the SEMANTIC level are intimately tied to culture:

- scientific terms: have intercourse, urinate, feces
- basic or common terms: make love, pass water, stool
- vulgar or rude terms: f*ck, piss, shit

3. WORD FAMILIES are indicators of culture, e.g., the now-disputed Eskimo terms for snow.

LEXICON: RICE TERMINOLOGY IN AKLANON (Bisayan, Central Philippine)

- **No** GENERIC term for rice.
- **bínhi?** 'rice seed, rice seedling' (**lísu** 'seed(s) of other plants')
- **pá:Eay** 'paddy rice (plant growing in the paddy; **tanóm** any growing plant)
- **bugás** 'milled or polished rice' (uncooked)
- **humáy** 'cooked rice' (**Eahá?** 'any other cooked food')
- **daEá:wat** 'buy rice' (**bakáE** 'buy (anything else)')
- **kilís** 'wash rice' (**hú:gas** 'wash (anything else)')
- **tug?un** 'cook rice' (**Ea:ha?** 'cook (anything else)')
- **?upáh** 'rice husk'
- **dagámih** 'rice straw, rice hay'

4. DISCOURSE PARTICLES or Markers. English: uh-huh, I hear you, you know what I'm saying.

Philippine languages have twenty or more discourse particles that orient speech to time, attitude, etc.

MISUNDERSTANDING – Chomsky and his followers debunked the Sapir-Whorf model because they postulated that all languages had a universal grammar. But Sapir-Whorf was not about grammar alone, it was about the entire lexicon of a linguistic and cultural community. Furthermore, while all languages have verbs, they do not reflect tense in the same way, e.g., English has THREE basic tenses: past – present – future + progressive and perfect aspects, Hopi DOES NOT DISTINGUISH TENSE at all, and Kinyarwanda (Rwanda) and Kirundi (Rundi) have SEVEN tenses: immediate, recent past, preterit past, future, conditional, persistive (still), and inceptive (already, yet).

THE TEN FOREIGN WORDS THAT WERE VOTED HARDEST TO TRANSLATE

1 **ilunga** [Tshiluba word for a person who is ready to forgive any abuse for the first time; to tolerate it a second time; but never a third time. Note: Tshiluba is a Bantu language spoken in south-eastern Congo, and Zaire]

2 **shlimazl** [Yiddish for a chronically unlucky person]

3 **radioukacz** [Polish for a person who worked as a telegraphist for the resistance movements on the Soviet side of the Iron Curtain]

4 **naa** [Japanese word only used in the Kansai area of Japan, to emphasise statements or agree with someone]

5 **altahmam** [Arabic for a kind of deep sadness]

6 **gezellig** [Dutch for cosy]

7 **saudade** [Portuguese for a certain type of longing]

8 **selathirupavar** [Tamil for a certain type of truancy]

9 **pochemuchka** [Russian for a person who asks a lot of questions]

10 **klloshar** [Albanian for loser]

• THE NINE ENGLISH WORDS THAT WERE VOTED HARDEST TO TRANSLATE

1 *plenipotentiary*, 2 *gobbledegook*, 3 *serendipity*, 4 *poppycok*, 5 *googly* [in cricket, an off-breaking ball with an apparent leg-break action on the part of the bowler], 6 *Spam*, 7 *whimsy*, 8 *bumf* [Printed matter, such as pamphlets, forms, or memorandums, especially of an official nature and deemed of little interest or importance; obvious or blatant propaganda], 9 *chuffed* [be very pleased, proud or happy with yourself {British}]