

# Cross Cultural Communication

**Venkata Murali Palla**

Sr. Assistant Professor of English,  
Department of BS&H

Dadi Institute of Engineering & Technology  
Anakapalle, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India

**Abstract-** *Cross-cultural communication describes the ability to successfully form, foster, and improve relationships with members of a culture different from one's own. It involves a skill component that may best be learned and mastered through instruction and practice. Speaking a foreign language or riding a bicycle. Diverse backgrounds have different interpretations of languages, signs and other forms of communication. Many non-English speakers can feel unnoticed and unappreciated in the workplace because they have difficulty conveying what they want to say in their non-native language. Individual cultures have their own way of reaching an agreement and coming to an executive decision. Diversity in the workplace breeds different attitudes towards hierarchy.*

**Keywords-** Cross Cultural Communication- Peoples interests- Positive Relationships- dynamism- Purposeful- perceptions- Manners- Problems and Challenges

## Cross-Cultural Communication

The phrase cross-cultural communication describes the ability to successfully form, foster, and improve relationships with members of a culture different from one's own. It is based on knowledge of many factors, such as the other culture's values, perceptions, manners, social structure, and decision-making practices, and an understanding of how members of the group communicate--verbally, non-verbally, in person, in writing, and in various business and social contexts, to name but a few.

“The reasonable person adapts himself to the world, while the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to him”. Culture is the "lens" through which you view the world. It is central to what you see, how you make sense of what you see, how you express yourself. Like speaking a foreign language or riding a bicycle, cross-cultural communication involves a skill component that may best be learned and mastered through instruction and practice: simply reading about it is not enough. A balanced cross-cultural training program provides participants with the knowledge, understanding, and skills they need to communicate and cooperate effectively across cultural barriers. Training

programs may be conducted either independently of or in tandem with foreign language training.

## Problems and Challenges in Cross Cultural Communication

Employees with diverse backgrounds have different interpretations of languages, signs and other forms of communication. This affects how they converse, make decisions and approach conflict. It is easy to overlook the communication challenges that we often take for granted. The four challenges in Cross Cultural Communication are:

1. Direct versus indirect communication.
2. Trouble with accents and fluency.
3. Different attitudes toward hierarchy and authority.
4. Conflicting norms for decision making.
5. Direct versus Indirect Communication

Communication style in western cultures is direct and the meaning is seemingly obvious. Other cultures tend to be more discrete in the way they present their message. As a result, communication between a Westerner and a non-Westerner can result in confusion within the workplace. This can occur during face-to-face interactions and when communication is virtual. For example, in a Western culture, the question might be, “Is option A or option B more effective?” Whereas in a non-Western culture, employees may have to imply or suggest a particular option without stating it directly. Oftentimes, in a Western culture, during a board meeting, when someone nods, we tend to think they agree with the statement. However, in other cultures, a nod doesn't necessarily mean mutual agreement, rather, just an acknowledgement.

## Trouble with Accents and Fluency

A more obvious challenge within an organizationally diverse workplace is the language barrier among employees, including accents and fluency. Although English is the standard language internationally for business, many non-English speakers can feel unnoticed and unappreciated in the workplace because they have difficulty conveying what they want to say

in their non-native language. This can sometimes cause frustration and interpersonal conflict. They may become less engaged and motivated as a team player, and become an impediment to the collaborative learning process as a whole. An organization can be negatively affected and fail to see an increase in their return on investment.

### **Different Attitudes toward Hierarchy and Authority**

In any organization, teamwork is essential to success and profitability. However, in some cultures, employees are treated different based on their rank within the organization. For example, multicultural employees have different ways of presenting an idea to the manager or CEO. In some organizations, employees must present to higher-level team members and up the corporate ladder before reaching the executive level. Other organizations have relatively flat hierarchical structures where employees and leaders work as a unified team. A lack of cultural awareness can result in a disconnected workforce and leave some employees feeling left out and unrecognized.

### **Conflicting Norms for Decision Making**

Individual cultures have their own way of reaching an agreement and coming to an executive decision. Cultures differ on how long the decision making process takes, what steps must be in place beforehand and how much effort should be put in. Unlike other cultures that tend to withhold information until they have performed analyses and comparisons before reaching a decision, Americans tend to be very quick at deciding. They tend to negotiate by making compromises and trade-offs; however, the French will agree on a set of basic principles to guide them throughout the negotiation process. While diversity in the workplace breeds different attitudes towards hierarchy, it is also important to be aware of the conflicting norms for decision making.

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