Did I Just Say That?  
That’s not what I meant!

BCLA Preconference Workshop  
April 20, 2006  
Sylvia Crooks, Sheryl Adam
Session Outline

- Introductions
- Cocktail Party
- Theories of Communication
  
  ***Coffee Break***

- Problems and exercises
- Culture of Libraries
- Practical Approaches
Session Un-Outline

• How to talk to people from place X.

• Public service to people of religion Y.

• What to expect from children from Z.
WARNING!

If you hear a generalization, please interpret it to be short for

“well, not all people from X do this, but a significant number do, and practically everyone from X understands this and could do it if they had to, wanted to, whatever . . .”
Where do you fit?

Different Variables
Conversational speech, measured in decibels
Conversational speech, measured in decibels
“My, those people are loud!”

“My, those people mumble! You can barely hear them. It’s exhausting to try to have a conversation with them.”
What is CULTURE?

• learned (not innate)

• is a system
What is CULTURE?

• associated with race and ethnicity

• ... and also age, gender, socioeconomic status, national origin, recency of immigration, sexual orientation, and disability
What is CULTURE?

• Behaviour that is shared and transmitted by members.

• The “man-made part of the environment” - symbols, ideas, traditions, institutions.
What is CULTURE?

• **Ways of DOING**
  Food, dress, rituals, body language . . .

• **Ways of THINKING**
  Attitudes, communication styles, perceptions, assumptions . . .

• **Ways of BEING**
  Beliefs, values, world view . . .
What is CULTURE?
Above the surface . . .

- Food, clothing, rituals, language, literature, dancing, singing . . .
Below the surface . . .

- Future or past orientation
- Why work?
- Allocation of physical space
- How to be clean
- How to be a good friend/ brother/ daughter/ etc.
Below the surface . . .

. . . all the really important things!
# of people

Any variable
Any value

# of people
There are many different ways of analyzing how cultures are different.
Power Distance

Small: Austria, New Zealand, Israel

Large: Mexico, India, the Philippines
Individualism/Collectivism

Allegiance to self, focussed on \( \mathbb{I} \)

Privacy, independence, self-reliance

Allegiance to group, focussed on \( \mathbf{We} \)

Group support and obligation, loyalty to group, organization or institution
Franz Trompenaars
Universalist/Particularist
Rules before relationships

Relationships before rules
There is only one truth or reality, that which has been agreed to.

There are several perspectives on reality, relative to each participant.
# of people

Any variable
Individualist/Collectivist

People ideally achieve alone, and assume personal responsibility

People ideally achieve in groups, and the group assumes responsibility
Individualist/Collectivist

Take vacations in pairs, or even alone.

Take vacations in organized groups, or with extended family.
Neutral/Affective

Don’t reveal what they are thinking or feeling

Reveal thoughts and feelings verbally and non-verbally
Specific/Diffuse

Direct, to the point, purposeful

Indirect, oblique, subtle
Specific/Diffuse

Direct, to the point, purposeful
Blunt, pushy and rude!

Indirect, oblique, subtle
Indecisive, apparently indifferent, and basically incomprehensible!
## High Context/Low Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implicit</th>
<th>Explicit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manner of delivery</td>
<td>(Cut to the chase!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining silent</td>
<td>(Passive aggressive!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative status of speakers</td>
<td>Mr. Big couldn’t be here today . . .</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Polysynchronous/Monosynchronous

The original multi-taskers.

One thing at a time!
Some examples . . .
At the Circulation Desk . . .
At the Cafeteria
# people

Any value
# of people

Any value
An Accent? Always!
Learning a new language means

- new sounds: to hear and to say

- new uses for elements of L1

- turning off rules of L1
Listen Carefully:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>pʰat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>shoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>jug (djug)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>!kom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>boot?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learn this new R sound:

Retroflex R

Curl your tongue back on the top of your mouth.

If it’s easier, make a trilling sound, but be sure to keep your tongue in the retroflex shape.
Overharvesting is a danger to any oyster bed, and Dr. Mirhady predicts that the beds nearest Vancouver will be reduced to less than 10% of their current population by the end of the decade.
Say this:

- sing
- running
- ngai
New Uses for Elements of First Language

- (mā) "mother" □ high level- □ (“Well …”)
- (mA) "hemp" □ high rising- □ (“Me???”)
- (mā) "horse" □ low falling-rising- □
- (mA) "scold" □ high falling- □ (“Now!”)
- (ma) question particle □ neutral
**Stress - Makes a Difference!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Syllable-timed</td>
<td>Stress-timed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>Word-tones</td>
<td>Intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllable-timed</td>
<td>Stress-timed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>next Saturday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>next Saturday</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Time for a break!