COMPASS PSYCHOLOGY

FAMILIA

Cross Cultural Communication in Intercultural Relationships

Väestöliitto / Perheaikaa

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Intercultural relationships

(Lainiala & Säävälä , 2013)

- 3% of Finnish marital population in an intercultural marriage
- Increasing trend – 10% of marriages in 2009-2010 were between a native language speaker and foreign language speaker
- Higher prevalence of divorce
  - Between two Finns: 1.3/100 marriages
  - Between a Finnish man and foreign woman 3.5/100 marriages
  - Between a Finnish woman and foreign man 4.7/100 marriages
- Linked to the idea of heterogamy
  - Different values and cultures between the partners
  - Lack of support and acceptance from social network

Potential Trouble Spots (Romano, 2008)

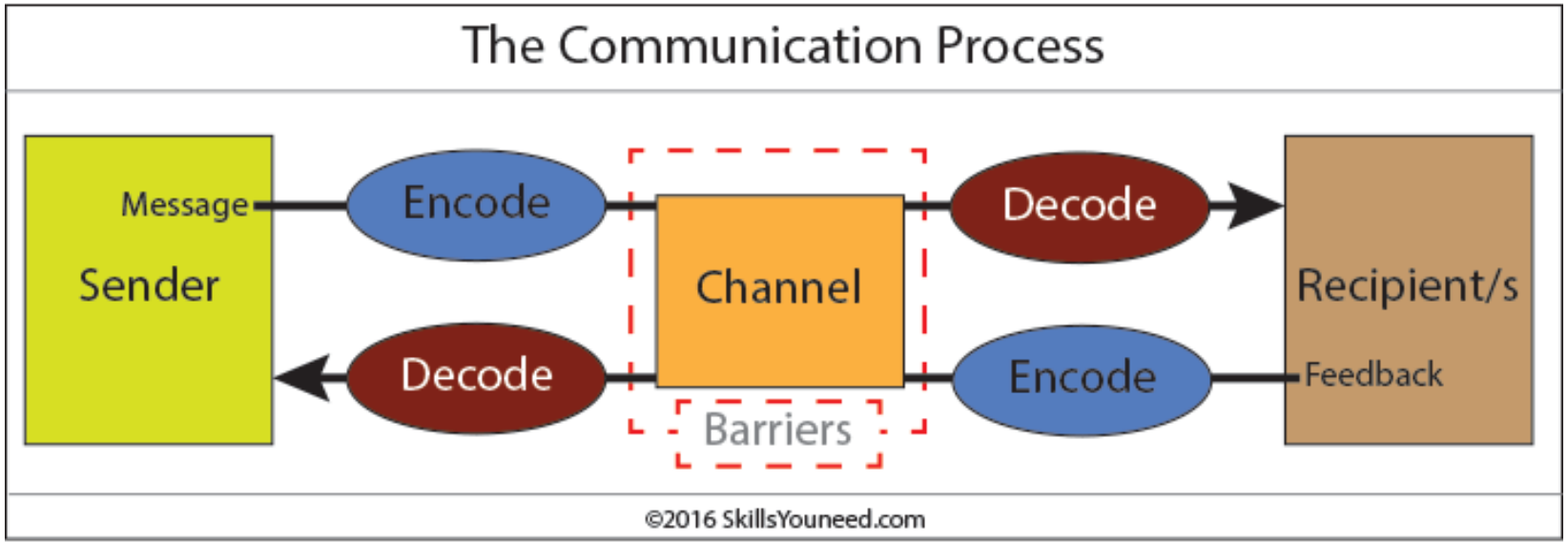
1. Values
2. Food and drink
3. Sex
4. Male-Female Roles
5. Time
6. Place of Residence
7. Politics
8. Friends
9. Finances
10. In-Laws
11. Social Class
12. Religion
13. Raising Children
14. Language and Communication
15. Responding to Stress and Conflict
16. Illness and Suffering
17. Ethnocentrism
18. The Expatriate Spouse
19. Coping with Death or Divorce

Factors for Success (Romano, 2008)

- Commitment to the relationship
- Sensitivity to each other's needs
- A liking for the other's culture
- Flexibility
- Solid, positive self-image
- Love as the main marital motive
- Common goals
- Spirit of adventure
- Ability to communicate

What is communication?

Tree



Tree

Speaking different languages

- One partner speaks mother tongue/other doesn't
- Both speak a second language

➡ Frequent misunderstandings
➡ Lack of depth /connection
➡ Strain

Different languages - What helps?

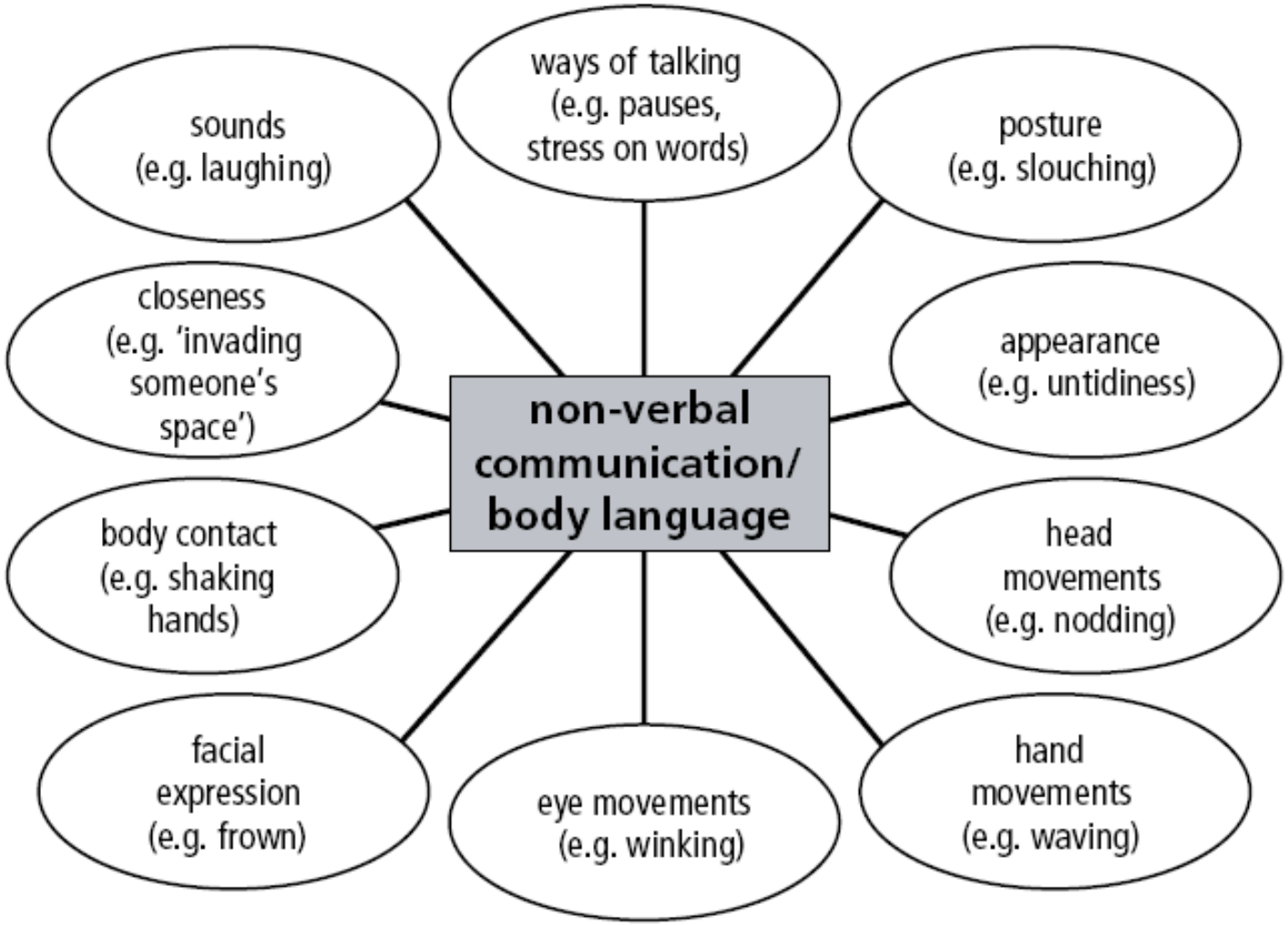
- Time /effort
- Listen carefully, be patient
- Don’t laugh!
- Be constructive
- Both learn the other person’s language
- Take turns to struggle

Speaking the same language??

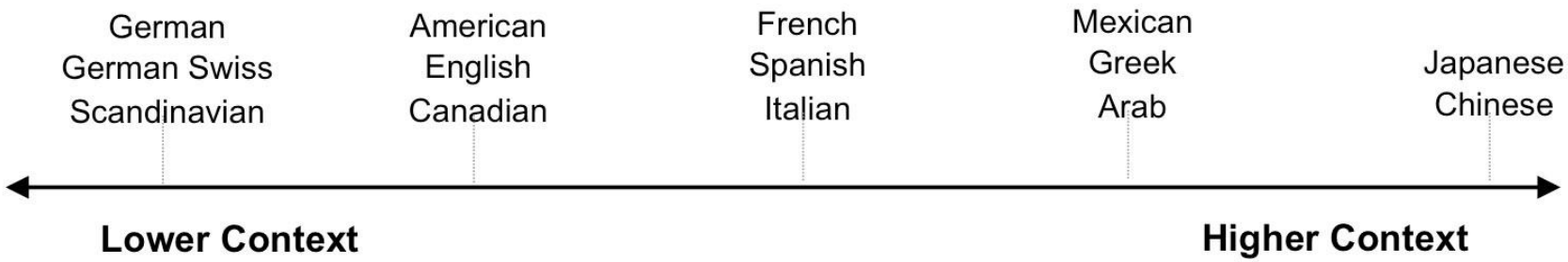
What the British say	What the British mean	What others understand
I hear what you say	I disagree and do not want to discuss it further	He accepts my point of view
With the greatest respect…	I think you are an idiot	He is listening to me
That's not bad	That's good	That's poor
That is a very brave proposal	You are insane	He thinks I have courage
Quite good	A bit disappointing	Quite good
I would suggest…	Do it or be prepared to justify yourself	Think about the idea, but do what you like
Oh, incidentally/ by the way	The primary purpose of our discussion is…	That is not very important
I was a bit disappointed that	I am annoyed that	It doesn't really matter
Very interesting	That is clearly nonsense	They are impressed
I'll bear it in mind	I've forgotten it already	They will probably do it

Source: http://todayilearned.co.uk/2012/12/04/what-the-british-say-vs-what-they-really-mean/

Non-verbal communication



High and Low Context Cultures (Hall, 1976)



Low Context

Communication:

- Specific
- Detailed
- Precise

Poorer at decoding:

- Unspoken message
- Body language

High Context

Communication:

- Less direct

Emphasis on:

- Human relations

More sensitivity to:

- Non-verbals
- Feelings of others

Source: https://www.workingvoices.com/intercultural-communication-high-context-cultures/

Effective communication

Source: http://www.phtc-online.org/catalog/cc2-chw/screens.cfm

Listening skills (Powell, 2009)

Attending skills	Following skills	Reflecting skills
Posture of involvement: Inclined towards speaker, open posture, appropriate distance	**Door openers:** Non-coercive invitations to talk, silence – attending	**Paraphrasing:** A concise response stating the essence of the content in the listener's words
Appropriate body motion: Synchronised, not distracting, not rigid and unmoving	**Minimal encouragers:** Mm hmmm, yes, right, nodding	**Reflecting feelings:** Mirroring the emotions they are communication e.g. it sounds as if you are angry, you look upset
Eye contact: Not staring, not avoiding	**Infrequent questions:** Open questions (e.g. how did that make you feel), only one at a time	**Reflecting meaning:** Linking the feelings to facts to provide meaning e.g. you feel angry because of x
Non-distracting environment: Remove physical barriers, no distractions	**Attentive silence:** Offers personal space to think, feel, express	**Summarising:** Brief restatement of the main themes and feelings expressed

Assertive communication (Powell, 2009)

Goal:	To communicate clearly
Message:	This is what I think and feel and how I see the situation. How about you? If our needs conflict, I am ready to explore our differences and I may be prepared to compromise.
Characteristics:	Firm relaxed voice, appropriate eye contact, open body stance 'I' statements, cooperative phrases Receptive listening

Verbal Behaviour

TYPE OF LANGUAGE	PASSIVE	ASSERTIVE	AGGRESSIVE
	Long rambling statements **Fill in words** 'Maybe', 'Er', 'Sort of' **Frequent justifications** 'I wouldn't normally say anything, only . . .' **Apologies** 'I'm terribly sorry to bother you . . .', 'Please excuse me, but . . .' **Unacknowledged choice** 'I should', 'I ought', 'I have to' **Qualifiers** 'It's only my opinion', 'I might be wrong' **Self-dismissal** 'It's not important', 'It really doesn't matter' **Self-putdowns** 'I'm useless . . . hopeless', 'You know me'	**'I' statements that are brief, clear and to the point** 'I like', 'I feel', 'I think', 'I prefer' **Distinction between fact and opinion** 'My experience is different'. **Suggestions without 'shoulds', 'oughts'.** 'How about', 'Would you like me to . . .?' **Constructive criticism without blame** 'I feel irritated when you interrupt me' **Seeking other's opinions** 'How does this fit in with your ideas?' **Willingness to explore other solutions** 'How can we get around this problem?'	**Excessive emphasis on 'I'** 'My view is . . .', 'I think' **Boastfulness** 'I haven't got problems like you' **Opinion expressed as fact** 'That's a useless way to do it', 'Nobody wants to behave like that' **Threatening questions** 'Haven't you finished it yet?' 'Why on earth did you do it like that?' **Threatening requests** 'You'd better do that', 'I want that done or else' **Heavy handed advice** 'You should', 'You ought', 'Why don't you?' **Blame** 'You made a mess of that' **Sarcasm** 'You must be joking', 'I don't suppose you managed to do that?'

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Any questions?

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References /Resources

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