Overview of David Victor’s LESCANT Model: International Business Communication

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LESCANT

- Language
- Environment
- Social Organization
- Context
- Authority
- Non-verbal
- Time
Language

1. Linguistic Ethnocentrism
   - Historical Reasons (e.g., Greek, French)
   - Social Reasons (e.g., English)
   - Political Reasons (e.g., Basque, Catalan, Gaelic)
   - Religious Reasons (e.g., Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Armenian, Russian)
   - Multiple Factors (e.g., comfort level = best)
2. Insider-Outsider Relationship

- *Lingua franca*
- Shibboleth
3. Alliances in Linguistically Determined Group Dynamics

- French in Canada
- Quechua in Peru
- Catalan in Spain
4. Suggestions

- Avoid idiomatic speech, slang, and colloquialisms
- Speak slowly
- Keep vocabulary simple
- Rephrase frequently
- Use written support
- Become familiar with cognates
- Be wary of false cognates
- Summarize
Environment

1. Physical Traits
   • Size (e.g., Japanese pharmaceutical data)
   • Workplace (e.g., safety vs. full employment)
   • Surroundings (e.g., beds, chairs, lights, desks, offices, cubicles, phones)
Environment, cont.

2. Physical Characteristics

• Climate (e.g., A little dizzy in Peru)
• Topography (e.g., Hawaii, you can’t get there from here)
• Population Size (e.g., US, why go international?)
• Population Density and Space Usage (e.g., Japan parking & baby powder)
• Availability of Natural Resources (e.g., “there’s plenty more where that came from”)
Environment, cont.

3. Perception of Technology

- Control (e.g., U.S. Why does Phoenix exist?)
- Subjugation (e.g., Muslim countries and will of Allah)
- Harmony (e.g., members view themselves as part of their environment)
Social Organization

1. Kinship & Family
   • Nuclear vs. Extended Family
   • Nepotism
Social Organization, cont.

2. Education System

• Literacy (e.g., Gerber baby food in Africa)
• Accessibility (e.g., Mexico TEC system)
• Networks (e.g., France, grandes écoles)
Social Organization, cont.

3. Class System
   - Achievement vs. Aristocracies
4. Gender Roles

- Collegial Interaction, Attempt to Ignore Gender Stereotypes
- Collegial Interaction, Attempt to Cultivate Gender Stereotypes
- Non-collegial or Absent Interaction
5. Individualism & Collectivism

- Epcot Center U.S. Pavilion: Individualism, Self-reliance, Independence, Freedom
- Japan: “The nail that stands up will be hammered down.”
Social Organization, cont.

6. Religion

- Theological Values (e.g., protestant work ethic)
- Day-to-Day Behavior (e.g., alcohol, prayers, etc.)
- Group Membership
Social Organization, cont.

7. Occupational Institutions

- Mechanistic Attitude (e.g., amount and quality of labor)
- Humanistic Attitude (e.g., membership in a sort of family)
8. Mobility & Geography Attachment

- High Mobility (e.g., U.S. job opportunities)
- Static Mobility
- Phasic Mobility
9. Recreational Institutions

- Free Time (e.g., Japan = 6 hours, U.S. = 24 hours, U.K. = 41 hours)
- Vacations
- Sports
1. High Context vs. Low Context

- Emphasis on Personal Relationships
- Belief in Explicit Communication, Laws, Contracts
  - Written words
  - Adherence to law
  - Governance of interpersonal behavior
  - Agreements based on promises
  - Agreements based on written word
1. High Context vs. Low Context
   • Reliance on Verbal Communication
     – Reliance on words to communicate
     – Reliance on nonverbal communication
     – View of silence
     – Attention to detail
     – Attention to intent
     – Direct/Indirect communication approach
     – Literalness
   • Uncertainty Avoidance Variations
Context, cont.

1. High Context vs. Low Context

• Face-Saving
  – Act of preserving one’s prestige or outward dignity
  – Politeness Strategy
  – Indirectness = civility
  – Low verbal self-disclosure
  – High tolerance to vagueness
Authority

1. Authority Defined
   - Power = Substantive Action
   - Leadership Style = Symbolic Action
Authority, cont.

2. Power

- Independent of the person holding it (i.e., transferable)
- Resting in individual rather than in the office held (i.e., non-transferable)
- Decision Making vs. Status
- Use of titles
Authority, cont.

3. Power Distance

- Extent to which boss and subordinate can influence one another
4. Leadership Style

• What leaders do vs. how they are perceived (e.g., Mark Cuban)
5. Suggestions

- Pay attention to how others react to shows of power
- For High Power Distance cultures, give clear orders
- For High Power Distance cultures, do not demand participative feedback
- For Low Power Distance cultures, expect desire to hear opinions of subordinates
- For Low Power Distance cultures, participation in decision making does not diminish power
1. Active Non-Verbal Communication

- Kinesics (Personal Idiosyncrasies, Situational, Gender, Cultural)
  - Emblems (e.g., OK sign, Khrushchev’s Victory sign)
  - Affect Display (e.g., show of emotion)
  - Regulators (e.g., nodding in Japan vs. U.S.)
  - Adaptors (e.g., scratching, squirming, smiling)
Non-verbal, cont.

2. Appearance
   - Dress and Adornment
Non-verbal, cont.

3. Oculesics

• Eye contact (e.g., attentiveness vs. respect)
• Mutual gaze (e.g., Briton blinking)
• Squinting, winking, fluttering eyelids, eyebrow movement
Non-verbal, cont.

4. Haptics

- Functional/Professional
- Social/Polite
- Friendship/Warmth
- Love/Intimacy
- Sexual Arousal
5. Proxemics

- Public
- Social-consultative
- Casual-personal
- Intimate

Non-verbal, cont.
6. Paralanguage

- Voice quality
- Vocalization
- Vocal Qualifiers (e.g., lower voice = respect (Saudi),
  = calm strength to uncertainty (U.S))
Non-verbal, cont.

7. Passive Non-Verbal Communication
   • Color
   • Numerals and counting indicators
   • Nonkinesic emblems
   • Olfactory communication
Time

1. Individual Reality of Time (e.g., Time flies when you are having fun.)
2. Monochronic

- Interpersonal relations are subordinate to schedule
- Schedule coordinates activity
- One task handled at a time
- Breaks and personal time are sacrosanct
- Time is inflexible
- Work time separate from personal time
- Time measured by output (activity per hour)
3. Polychronic Time

- Preset schedule is subordinate to interpersonal relations
- Interpersonal relations coordinate activity
- Many tasks handled simultaneously
- Breaks subordinate to personal ties
- Time is flexible, fluid
- Work time not clearly separate from personal time
- Activities integrated into a whole
Reference