

# Accounting for Culture in a Model of Interpersonal Communication Competence

Jiro Takai

## *Abstract*

Interpersonal competence research to date have generally followed certain patterns, which have ignored some serious problems in conceptualization. Two of these problems are: 1) assuming that competent behaviors are universal across cultures; and 2) slighting the context, both relational and situational, in which competent behaviors are practiced. This paper proposes an original model of interpersonal competence which incorporates the variable of culture, and one which is devised from a relational perspective. Tenets of the model, as well as its rationale and theorems are elaborated upon.

*Key words:* interpersonal competence, culture, relational context, relational competence

Interpersonal communication competence has traditionally been approached from the perspective of individual traits and skills. Skills entail certain rules, standards and norms toward appropriate behavior, and consequently, there is the danger of over-generalizing across situations and interaction partners. In other words, behavioral rules are mere guidelines, and it is possible that in certain contexts, i.e. with certain relational partners, behavioral patterns which differ from the norm, yet function appropriately and effectively within the specific relationship can be seen. Furthermore, rules are bound by culture, implying that what is competent behavior in one culture may not necessarily be so in another (Collier, 1989). For instance, in the United States, laying claim to certain behavioral skills as constituting interpersonal communication competence, based on the dominant Euro-American co-cultural group, may not be doing justice to the behavioral norms of the various ethnic groups which compose the American culture (Collier, Hecht & Ribeau, 1984). The purpose of this paper is to propose a model of competence which accounts for the influence of culture, as well as for the specific characteristics of the relational context, and the individuals which compose it. A brief overview of competence research, with respect to the various models and approaches, and to the implication of culture in the conceptualization of competence, will be presented, along with an argument toward the importance of

accounting for relational context. Finally, the components of the proposed model will be elaborated on, discussing its theoretical basis and originality.

### Overview of Research

Interpersonal communication competence research saw its hey days in the '80s, but recent trends have shown reconceptualization of the matter in forms other than what they used to be called. Over the years, it has been conceptualized from various perspectives, taking on labels such as, interpersonal competence (Bochner & Kelly, 1974; Burhmester, Furman, Wittenberg & Reis, 1988; L'Abate, 1990; Spitzberg, 1990; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989), communicative competence (Edelsky, 1976; Pavitt & Haight, 1985; Wiemann, 1977; Wiemann & Backlund, 1980), communicative adaptability (Duran, 1983, 1992; Duran & Kelly, 1988), communicative effectiveness (Gudykunst, 1993), communicative resourcefulness (Ting-Toomey, 1993), conversational appropriateness/effectiveness (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984), interaction involvement (Cegala, Savage, Brunner & Conrad, 1982), strategic competence (Kim, 1993), strategic self-presentation (Arkin & Shepherd, 1990), and relational competence (Hansson, 1986; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Spitzberg & Hecht, 1984; Wiemann & Bradac, 1989; Wiemann, Takai, Ota & Wiemann, 1997), amongst other nomenclature. As apparent from the above list, the concept is one which poses a challenge to define.

It seems that every researcher in this area has her/his own definition of competence, and Spitzberg (1989) refers to them as, "unwieldy collection of terminologies" (p. 242). Indeed, in their overview of research, Spitzberg and Cupach (1989) counted 136 distinct conceptual labels attached to facets of competence. One of the most recent definitions, and thus, reflective of the evolution of research in this area, is O'Hair, Friedrich, Wiemann, and Wiemann's (1995) definition of: "the ability of two or more people jointly to create and maintain a mutually satisfying relationship by constructing appropriate and effective messages" (p. 32). This definition seems to grasp the essence on which the various perspectives of competence have observed, while adding new dimensions, which will later be discussed.

In their review, Wiemann, Takai, Ota and Wiemann (1997), categorized the research into four distinct models: dispositional, process oriented, relational system, and message focus. By far, the dispositional model is the most common approach, locating competence within the individual, and focusing on traits and general abilities of that individual. Wiemann (1977) refers to it as the social skills approach, reflecting on the fact that these studies deal with the individual's ability to perform skills. The process oriented model elaborates on the processes by which competence emerges, such as uncertainty reduction (Gudykunst, 1993),

facework (Ting-Toomey, 1993), and identity negotiation (Cupach & Imahori, 1993). The relational system model focuses on the relationship, and the processes by which relational satisfaction is brought about as the outcome. For example, Wiemann et al. (1997) speak of *competent relationships* rather than *competent individuals* in their relational model. Finally, the message focus model centers upon the nature of the messages exchanged in interaction, and prescribes the kind of message, as well as its most appropriate delivery style. Kim's (1993) notion of interactive constraints exemplifies this type of model.

There are two essential components of competence which are included in one form or another in most conceptualizations, and these are the *effectiveness* and *appropriateness* dimensions (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Wiemann & Backlund, 1980). According to Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), effectiveness is defined as, "the achievement of interactant goals or objectives, or as the satisfaction of interactant needs, desires, or intentions" (p.102). Appropriateness, on the other hand, entails "tact or politeness and is defined as the avoidance of violating social or interpersonal norms, rules, or expectations" (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989, p. 7). Wiemann and Backlund (1980) elaborate on appropriateness, by defining it as the ability to meet the basic contextual requirements of the situation, which include verbal, relational, and environmental contexts. Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) contend that one must be both effective and appropriate in order to be interpersonally competent. For example, getting one's way by disadvantaging another might be effective, but it would not be appropriate. Conversely, one could be too nice to others, so as to habitually put her/himself at sacrifice.

The dimensions of effectiveness and appropriateness suggest that competence is composed of both cognitive and behavioral processes (Wiemann & Kelly, 1981). In other words, one must have the knowledge as to what is appropriate, the motivation to conform to such appropriateness, and the behavioral skills in order to act appropriately and effectively. To this effect, Spitzberg & Cupach's (1984) model of competence is based on the cognitive and behavioral components of motivation, knowledge and skills. While the aspects studied might differ, most models of interpersonal communication competence have included these components in some way, along with the effectiveness and appropriate dimensions.

### Culture and Competence

Although interpersonal communication competence has lost much of its attention amongst American researchers in recent years, interest is still strong in some other parts of the world, such as Japan. Albeit in the guise of related topics, social psychologists in Japan have been engaging in much research regarding interpersonal competence (Miyahara, 1994,

1995; Shibata, 1993; Takai & Ota, 1994; Wada, 1991), social skills (Aikawa, Sato, Sato & Takayama, 1993; Horike, 1988, 1994; Kayano, 1994; Kikuchi, 1988; Kikuchi & Horike, 1994; Ota, Kayano & Hirota, 1992), self-monitoring (Ishihara & Mizuno, 1992; Kurosawa, 1993; Mizuno & Hashimoto, 1992; Sekime, 1991), emotional expression (Daibo, 1991; Nakamura & Masutani, 1991; Ohsako & Takahashi, 1994), and impression management (Furuya & Yuda, 1988). The expansive list of studies is evidence that competence is increasingly attracting attention in a country which traditionally did not emphasize individual performance (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Competence, thus, is an important facet of social behavior in both Eastern and Western cultures.

Interpersonal communication competence has been generally accepted as a culturally sensitive construct. Cooley and Roach (1984) argue that competence is the outcome of normal development of an individual through socialization. Such socialization, naturally, is highly influenced by the culture in which one is socialized. They posit, "Communication behaviors that are the reflection of an individual's competence are culturally specific and, hence, bound by the culture in which they are acted out. As a result, behaviors that are the reflection of an individual's competence in one culture are not necessarily understood as competent in another. In addition, a representative observer can only assign the label "competent communicator" out of his or her own cultural experience" (p. 13). The implication of culture on competence is evident from the myriad of studies dealing with intercultural competence, or cross-cultural comparisons of communicative behavior. Many researchers have implicated culture in the conceptualization of interpersonal communication competence (Collier, 1989; Horike, 1988; Koester, Wiseman & Sanders, 1993; Martin, 1993; Miyahara, 1994; Ruben, 1989; Takai & Ota, 1994), and in related concepts, such as facework (Cocroft & Ting-Toomey, 1994; Cupach & Imahori, 1993; Imahori & Cupach, 1994; Matsumoto, 1988; Sueda & Wiseman, 1992; Ting-Toomey, 1988), communication styles (Barnlund, 1989; Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim & Heyman, 1996; Nomura & Barnlund, 1983; Steil & Hillman, 1993), equivocation (Tanaka & Bell, 1996), and self-monitoring (Gudykunst, Gao, Nishida, Bond, Leung, Wang & Barraclough, 1989; Gudykunst, Gao, Schmidt, Nishida, Bond, Leung, Wang & Barraclough, 1992; Gudykunst, Yang & Nishida, 1987; Gudykunst, Gao, Nishida, Nadamitsu & Sakai, 1992; Gudykunst, Gao & Franklyn-Stokes, 1996). As examples of such studies, Abe and Wiseman (1983) investigated intercultural effectiveness, and concluded that the concept for Americans differs from that for Japanese, even though the intercultural context was same. Collier, Hecht and Ribeau (1984) found that satisfying communication differed amongst various ethnic groups in the United States. Furthermore, Barnlund's series of studies (Barnlund, 1975, 1989; Barnlund

& Araki, 1985; Nomura & Barnlund, 1983) found differences between American and Japanese communication styles in various situational contexts.

While it appears that culture may be an important determinant of interpersonal communication competence, the majority of the research in the area does not reflect that. Martin (1993) remarks, "Researchers investigating interpersonal competence wrestled with the definition and measurement of communication competence, but... largely ignore the cultural constraints of their findings" (p.16). Many conceptualizations of competence have a strong Western bias. According to Martin (1993), "[The] understanding (of competence) is limited primarily to a specific speech community -- the Euro-American community, and largely middle-class, co-educated strata within this community" (p. 18), and "the centrality of goal attainment and individual control in Euro-American communicative competence research may not be generalizable to cultural groups where achieving relational harmony may be more important in defining communication competence than defining individual communicative goals" (p. 19). The claim made by the latter quote is best typified by such definitions as Weinstein's (1969) definition, "interpersonal competence boils down to the ability to manipulate others' responses" (p. 755), which highlights the element of controlling the other. Measures for assessing competence are, subsequently, also biased. Collier (1989) notes, "the variable or process which may explain when and why some persons are more competent or are perceived to be more competent may not be on the list of choices given to respondents.... The origin of the actions included on lists of competencies and instruments constructed to measure those actions are important issues in that flexibility, respect, confidence, frankness, or self control may reflect a Western cultural bias on individualism or low social distance" (p. 289). Researchers in the area, thus, should be sensitive to the fact that competence is culturally constrained, and require, at the very least, conceptualizational and operationalizational adjustments, if not a complete overhaul, should competence be studied in non-Western cultures, or across cultures.

In conceptualizing competence, it should be kept in mind that the dimensions of effectiveness and appropriateness are most likely subjected to cultural differentiation. For example, in order to satisfy the effectiveness dimension of competence, it is necessary to achieve one's goals through interaction (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989), but the nature of that goal may differ with culture and individuals. Individuals high in collectivistic tendencies, i.e., those common in collectivistic cultures, may perceive interaction goals as simultaneously consisting of both personal and group interests, or may even outweigh the group goals over personal ones (Triandis, 1994). Furthermore, from the perspective of self-construals, a culture consisting of people who have strong interdependent self-construals may view maintaining a

relationship with others in itself as the prime goal of interaction (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Such a goal would not be consonant with many of the definitions of competence as devised by Western researchers.

Likewise, the appropriateness dimension can be expected to differ greatly with cultural norms. Collier, Ribeau and Hecht (1986) contend that rules, which determine appropriateness, "specify prescriptions for behaviors, i.e., when and how actions should be performed" (p. 440), and that these rules differ with ethnicity even within a single culture. Cooley and Roach (1984), similarly, assert, "appropriateness [is] defined in terms of cultural determination; that is to say, each culture sets forth rules that determine which of the many possible communication patterns are acceptable and appropriate for any given situation... what counts as a situation is determined by the culture and will differ from culture to culture." (p. 26). In effect, what is appropriate behavior in one culture may be considered inappropriate in another because of differences in social rules, as well as differences in the perception of situations.

Aside from the effectiveness/appropriateness issue, one additional limitation posed by Western bias is the reductionist/positivistic orientation. The focus of most conceptualizations is on the individual and her/his ability, often without reference to the context, such as the other with whom one is exercising her/his competence. Parks (1994) gathered ten definitions of competence, and most of these fail to mention the presence of the other person in the interaction through which competence is perceived or exercised. From his list, an example of this reductionist view is, "an organism's capacity to interact effectively with its environment" (White, 1959, p. 297). The focus on the agent of competence alone disregards the relational context, which Wiemann and Kelly (1981), and Spitzberg (1989) regarded as essential toward understanding of the concept. Wiemann and Kelly contend, "competence lies in the relational system. Consequently, judgments of competence can only validly be made in terms of systemic effectiveness, appropriateness and satisfaction" (p. 289). Such a systemic outlook, poses a methodological challenge for analysis using positivistic means. However, it is just such a perspective which is needed to analyze competence as it is conceptualized in some non-Western cultures, such as Japan. In the Japanese culture, the behavior of an individual cannot be analyzed without a relational other, since it is the relational context which decides what kind of communication style one adopts (Doi, 1971; Hamaguchi, 1983; Midooka, 1990; Nakane, 1970; Okabe, 1983). Such a relational orientation implies the need for a dyadic or group level analysis at the least, and an empirical approach may not be suitable. To this note, Miyahara (1995) warns, "many researchers believe that a theory of Japanese communication competence may be simply built by collecting data and

interpreting them in much the same way as they are employed when theorizing the American version of competence" (p.77). Many of the popular concepts in *nihonjinron*, the study of Japanese uniqueness, thus, have not been analyzed through scientific methods, perhaps because these concepts just do not lend themselves suitable for such an approach. Chen and Starosta (1996) suggest that competence in Asian cultures should be approached from a systemic perspective, and Collier (1989) suggests some alternative, qualitative methods for studying competence in non-Euro-American cultures.

While Western researchers are increasingly becoming aware of the cultural implications of competence, researchers in the very culture in which Western biases must be eliminated, i.e. Japan, have not caught on to the existence of such biases. Much of the work done in Japan consists of replications of studies conducted in the Western world, or translation/cross-validation of scales devised in these cultures (e.g., Daibo, 1991; Ishihara & Mizuno, 1992; Iwabuchi, Tanaka & Nakazato, 1982; Kayano, 1994; Wada, 1991). In other words, these researchers have taken Western *emics*, and have forced them onto their culture as *imposed etics* (Berry, 1989), without taking into account possible discrepancies in conceptualization due to cultural differences (see Takai, 1994 for a review). *Emics* are culture-specific phenomena, conceptualized and observed in one culture, while *imposed etics* occur when an emic concept of one culture becomes the standard by which the corresponding concept in another culture is observed, with the assumption that the concept is culturally universal. Lustig and Spitzberg (1993) explain, "an emic idea or procedure is developed in a specific culture – most often in a Euro-american culture – and is simply assumed to be etic and therefore universally generalizable to other cultures" (p. 156). For example, a communicative behavior such as self-assertion, as it is conceived in the American culture, becomes an *imposed etic* when the American standard for the ability to assert oneself is used to evaluate a Japanese person. An effective self-assertor may be judged as competent in America, but in Japan, the same person will likely be viewed as self-centered, pushy and rude (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The *imposed etic* approach would assume that such a person be competent in Japan as well.

The studies described above suffer from validity problems which may not appear in simple concurrent validity testing, which these Japanese researchers depend so highly upon for cross-validation. The scales on which they are tested against, however, are likely to be just as foreign. Incidentally, perhaps the most popular scale utilized in validity testing is the Japanese translation (Iwabuchi, Tanaka & Nakazato, 1983) of Snyder's (1974) self-monitoring scale, which contains items such as, "I sometimes feel I am an entertainer". A conceptualization of self-monitoring with the goal of capitalizing on any opportunity to receive

attention, and on expressing uniqueness, could hardly be considered characteristic of Japanese self-monitoring behavior, which would place more importance on avoiding "sticking out like a nail". Similar claims can be made of another popular scale, the Affective Communication Test (Friedman, Prince, Riggio & DiMatteo, 1980; Daibo, 1991), which deems one's competence on open and free expression of emotion, something Japanese are likely to avoid. Cultural equivalence, then, is not just a matter of using back-translation methods to achieve item equivalence. Hui and Triandis (1985) outline three other types of equivalence problems, namely, conceptual/functional equivalence, construct conceptualization equivalence, and scalar equivalence, and these are yet to be addressed in most Japanese studies of competence.

Should culture be suspected to confound results, it would be wise to study competence as an *emic* concept specific to the culture in question, but this would not allow for comparison between cultures, as it would be like comparing apples to oranges. A solution to this problem is the *derived etic* approach (Berry, 1989). This approach seeks to identify aspects of a phenomenon which overlap between cultures, and restricts comparisons to these common components only. In effect, *derived etic* is the act of taking the *emics* of two or more cultures, separating the *emics* (the culturally specific portions) from the *etic* (the culturally universal portion), and conducting comparison using this common *etic* part, hence calling it the 'derived' *etic*.

Rather than accumulating sporadic, bits-and-pieces research on specific cultures, the communication field would be much better served by research perspectives which attempt to integrate the findings into coherent, underlying, basic communication processes that are common across cultures (Gudykunst & Kim, 1992). Martin (1993) argues that a priority in competence research is, "being able to distinguish between culture-general and culture-specific notions. The eventual goal is an integrated theory of communicative competence -- one that is emically appropriate to any one particular cultural context, and that provides a framework allowing for meaningful comparisons" (p. 28). Furthermore, Spitzberg (1989) asserts, "What is needed is a culture *invariant* model of communication processes that accounts for cultural *variances*" (p. 261). Similarly, Applegate and Sypher (1983) posit that "what is needed is... a coherent theory of communication whose focus of convenience encompasses accounts of the probable impact of historically emergent forms of group life on the various forms and functions communication assumes in everyday life" (p. 63). Such a pancultural conceptualization of interpersonal communication competence seems possible, given that, as Spitzberg (1989) claims, "The fundamental *nature* of the communication process does not change given different cultural contexts; only the

contextual parameters change" (p. 261). The ideal, then, is an interpersonal communication competence model which traverses cultures; a single model having the capability to explain competence in any culture.

### The Importance of Relational Context

Another controversial issue in competence research has been that of context. Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) distinguish between trait and state approaches, which they refer to as dispositional and situational approaches. According to them, dispositional measures focus on behavioral tendencies which span interactional situations, thus, are generalized across contexts. Situational measures, on the other hand, focus on particular communication encounters. Spitzberg and Cupach criticize the former approach in that it does not take into consideration the context of communication. According to Larson, Backlund, Redmond and Barbour (1978), individuals are "differentially competent when dealing with different topics, with different people in different situations" (p. 19). The context of competence, therefore, is an important factor which needs to be addressed in any model of competence.

Context inherently implies some kind of relationship with an other, and such relational context has been the focus of attention of some competence researchers (Canary, Cupach & Serpe, 1995; Hansson, 1986; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Nomura & Barnlund, 1983; Spitzberg & Hecht, 1984; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Wiemann & Bradac, 1989; Wiemann & Kelly, 1981; Wiemann et al., in press). Not only does the relationship serve as a context, some researchers place the locus of competence on the relationship itself. Wiemann and Bradac (1989) argue, "competence is constructed in the relationship and is the result of a confluence of skills, applied appropriately because of knowledge of relational rules, expectations, and the like, and goals of the interactants" (p. 270), and "it is not the person who is competent at all, but rather it is the relationship that is awarded that label because the people in it 'fit together' in a mutually satisfying way" (p. 271). Researchers of this new perspective have coined the term *relational competence* to describe competence within the relational context. It should be noted, however, that relational competence can carry with it two different meanings. Spitzberg and Cupach (1989) distinguishes between *general* and *specific* relational competence. The former refers to competence at relationships in general, i.e. the ability to manage any relationship, whereas the latter refers to competence in a particular relationship. For the purpose of this paper, relational competence implies specific relationships, not relationships in general.

The principle behind the relational perspective is that competence requires an interactional partner, with whom competent behaviors are exercised (Spitzberg, 1989;

Wiemann & Kelly, 1981). Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) state, "One of the most essential features of relational competence is a recognition of the reciprocal and interdependent nature of human interaction. This inherent interdependence leads to the premise that a person can be interpersonally competent only in the context of a relationship" (p. 68). This brings up the problem of just *who* decides whether one is competent or not. Roloff and Kellerman (1984) argue, "While a person may have certain characteristics that facilitate the production of behavior judged to be competent, that person is not a competent communicator unless he or she has been judged to be so by a perceiver" (p. 175). Spitzberg and Cupach (1989) opine, "Because individuals tend to be outwardly focused, the partner is often a better observer than actor of actor's behaviors. Partners are not susceptible to the self-serving bias that accompanies self evaluation" (p. 59), and "knowledge about the quality of one's social performance is uniquely tied to the other social actors who constitute the interpersonal network" (p. 59). The relational perspective, then, has inherent in it a counter-measure of one's self biases, and also takes into consideration the relational other, who experiences the direct consequences of one's competence, and who may enhance or inhibit her/his competence.

Like the skills which constitute competence, the concept and processes of relationships can differ with culture (Bahk, 1993; Fitzpatrick & Indvik, 1986; Gao, 1991; Gudykunst & Matsumoto, 1996; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1993; Korn, 1993; Nicotera, 1993). However, Korn (1993) claims, "Despite cultural dissimilarities regarding interpersonal relationships, all cultures may have identifiable universals that can be consistently tested in research programs" (p. 61), suggesting that certain facets of relationships traverse cultures. While the constituents of competence may differ with culture, in certain relational contexts, especially those high on intimacy, the relational rules seem to supersede social customs, i.e. culture, as indicated in, "interpersonal encounters, especially where the interactants have an established relational history, are likely to operate according to idiosyncratic rules instead of social norms" (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, p. 91). Collier (1991), likewise, suggests that, "as relationships become more intimate, cultural predictions decrease, and self-disclosure and certainty about the relational partner as a unique individual increase" (p. 134). In addition, Wiemann et al. (1997) suggest that relational partners negotiate relational rules which determine competence through "the endless developings and workings-out" (Wiemann & Kelly, 1981) between each other, such that a relationally specific standard is formed. Relational contexts, thus, suggest a possible arena for observing competence without much of the confounding effects of culture, or conversely, it may provide a context where maximum cultural differences can be found, all depending on the intimacy of relationship. In other words, culture is most likely to exert

its influence in relationships with a certain amount of distance and formality, while very intimate, equal status relationships, such as best friends, require little in the likes of cultural prescriptions regarding the manner in which interaction should be conducted (Inoue, 1985; Midooka, 1990; Nakane, 1970).

### Proposing an Original Competence Model

In view of the issues discussed above, several statements can be made as directives for research. First, it is important to recognize that interpersonal communication competence is susceptible to the influence of culture, and that researchers should be aware of cultural biases which may severely restrict the validity of their studies. Second, competence is better examined within a specific context, as there are dangers in generalizing across situations and relationships. Again, the perception of contexts may carry with it cultural biases. Third, competence should be viewed in a relational context, as judgment of competence is more accurate when the point of view of proactor, who experiences the consequences of competent (or incompetent) behavior, is accounted for. Of course, there are a myriad of other considerations to take into account, but these are not within the scope of this paper.

The purpose of this paper is to devise a model of interpersonal communication competence which can account for the influence of culture, while at the same time, focuses on individual level processes which may mediate this influence. The proposed model is not necessarily an intercultural competence model, although it is suited for one, but one which is aimed at explaining competence within the constraints of culture. The model is based on a relational perspective, and consists of the components of culture, relational context, individual dispositions, communicative behaviors and relational competence. Figure 1 situates the components in causal order for an intercultural context, while Figure 2 depicts an intracultural context.

The concept of competence to be utilized in this model follows that of O'Hair et al.'s (1995) definition: "the ability of two or more persons to jointly create and maintain a mutually satisfying relationship by constructing appropriate and effective messages" (p. 32). This definition is also the basis by which Wiemann et al. (1997) composed their relational model, one which examines competence thorough a relationship system. While it borrows some ideas from their model, emphasis has been given to parsimony, assuming that it will allow for simplicity in the operationalization of its components, and for easier empirical analysis. Also, the model proposed will be based on dyadic relationships, not multi-personned ones, so the above definition should be altered from "two or more persons" to "two persons".

The basic premise on which the model is devised is that competence is an outcome, not a disposition. In other words, the model does not aim to identify prescribed behaviors to be generalized across relational contexts. It assumes that each relationship will define competent behaviors specific to itself, and seeks to identify commonality in such behaviors between dyadic pairs of particular relational contexts. This approach resembles Wiemann et al. (1997), in that the outcome variable is competence, or *relational competence*, as they word it. Other relational models focus on cognitive and behavioral facets of individuals as competence (Canary, Cupach & Serpe, 1995; Canary & Spitzberg, 1990; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Spitzberg & Hecht, 1984), which result in relational *satisfaction* as outcome, not relational *competence*.

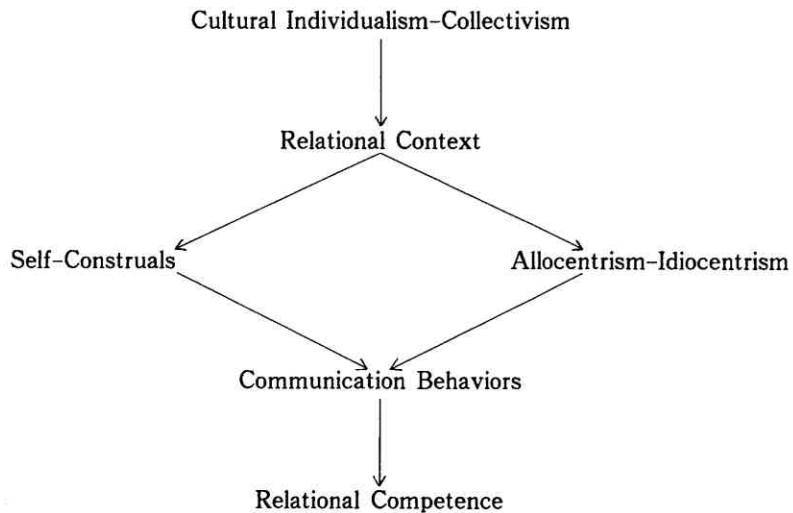


Figure 1. An Intercultural Model of Relational Competence

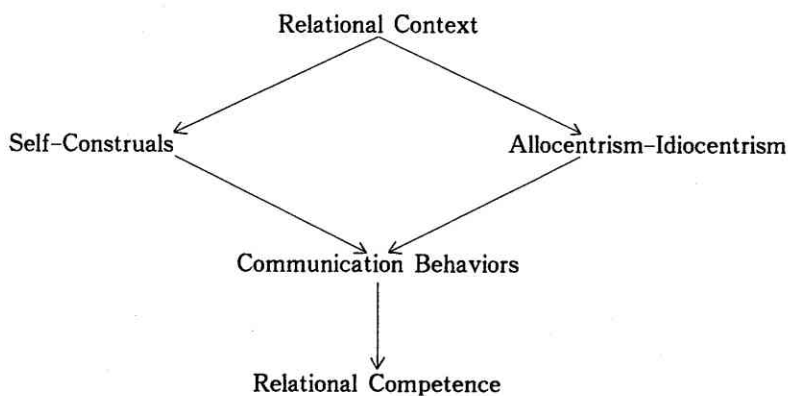


Figure 2. An Intracultural Model of Relational Competence

The model, as depicted in the figures, resembles recent causal models of the influence of individualism-collectivism on communication styles at both cultural and individual levels (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kim, Hunter, Miyahara, Horvath, Bresnahan & Yoon, 1996; Singelis & Brown, 1995). However, in these models, no account for relational context was made, nor were they geared to explore communication competence, as communication behaviors were the outcome, not mediating variables, as they are in the present model. The proposed model, while it adopts ideas from these studies, differs in that it is purely intended to assess competence, not just communication styles. Culture is an antecedent variable, as is relational context. Individual dispositions mediate culture's effect on behavior, which results in relational competence.

Like most models, the proposed model will account for cognitive and behavioral dimensions as input variables. O'Hair et al. (1995) distinguished between cognitive and behavioral processes within the individuals in a relationship, defining cognitive skills as, "Mental capacities including the ability to think, reason, remember, and make sense of one's world" (p. 41), and behavioral skills as tools for communication which are appropriate to the relational context at hand. The present model will focus on cognitive factors which are causally related to behavior, so the position of these two dimensions will differ from that of Wiemann et al., in which the two were placed in a mutually influencing, non-recursive fashion.

The following will outline each of the components of the model, discussing the rationale for their position within the model.

## Culture

The first component, and the utmost antecedent variable in the model is culture. Culture is an indispensable variable, in that an individual's cognitive, affective, and behavioral entities are all formed and affected by culture. Singelis and Brown (1995) contend, "Through [culture's] institutions, rituals, socialization practices, and patterning of interactions, culture provides the guidance and rewards that systematically shape individual social cognition... culture is a starting point, or an agent, that affects individual psychological processes" (p. 356). Culture, thus, is conceived to exert great influence on the cognitive and behavioral processes of individuals.

Depending on the relational context, culture may or may not be a variable in the model. If the relationship consists of partners of different cultural groups, i.e., an intercultural relationship with partners having been socialized in different cultural environments, then culture is included. If the relationship is intracultural, partners are assumed to share the

same *subjective culture*, thus culture is held constant, i.e. it does not vary. Triandis (1995) defines subjective culture as, "shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles, and values found among speakers of a particular language who live during the same historical period in a specified geographic region" (p. 6). In the intracultural context, while culture is not included, the model does not negate its influence on the partners. It is assumed that the partners are influenced by culture, but they do so in the same manner, so culture is held as a constant.

Culture can be seen to vary along various dimensions (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 1980; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1960). However, the most powerful theoretical framework for explaining cultural differences is, without doubt, individualism–collectivism (see Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi & Yoon, 1994; Triandis, 1995 for a review). According to Triandis (1995), individualistic cultures are composed of individuals who emphasize independent selves, personal goals, cognitions focusing on attitudes, personal needs, rights and contracts, and rational analyses of benefits and costs of maintaining relationships, while collectivistic cultures are composed of those who emphasize interdependent selves, collective goals, cognitions focusing on norms, obligations and duties, and relationships themselves.

Recent research has found that individualism–collectivism (IC) is not a dichotomous construct, but a relative one, meaning that a culture may be both individualistic and collectivistic at the same time. Triandis (1990) suggests that there are different kinds of individualism, as there are collectivism, and that IC should be defined in terms of attributes. These attributes can be culture specific, i.e. unique to one culture, and Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk and Gelfand (1995) claim that there are 60 or so attributes that characterize different types of IC.

The most recent development in the study of IC has been that of the distinction between horizontal and vertical dimensions of IC. According to Singelis et al. (1995), horizontal collectivism is "a cultural pattern in which the individual sees the self as an aspect of an in-group" (p. 244) in which all are similar and equal; vertical collectivism is when one sees her/himself as an ingroup in which all are different, especially with reference to status; horizontal individualism emphasizes an autonomous self amongst others who are more or less of equal status; and vertical individualism is when individuals are independent and inequality is the norm.

IC can also be distinguished between cultural and individual levels. Triandis, Leung, Villareal and Clack (1985) called the cultural level IC individualism and collectivism, while they referred to the individual level, or the psychological level of IC, idiocentrism and allocentrism. While it has been a research tradition to view the effects of cultural IC on communication behavior, a recent trend in research distinguishes between cultural and

individual levels of IC, and forwards the argument that the effect of cultural level IC on communication behavior is mediated through individual level IC. Gudykunst et al. (1996) elaborate on the problems of reliance on cultural level IC alone to explain cultural differences in behavior in that, "Because individualism *and* collectivism exist in all cultures, broad cultural-level tendencies in I-C alone cannot be used to predict individuals' behavior" (p. 514). Three recent studies have experimented with mediating variables between cultural IC and communication behavior.

First, Singelis and Brown (1995) devised a path model from cultural IC to individual IC in the form of self-construals, to high context communication styles. While they did not test the direct path between cultural level IC and communication style, they did find that cultural IC exerted an influence on self-construals, and that self-construals in turn influenced style. In another study, Kim, Hunter, Miyahara, Horvath, Bresnahan and Yoon (1996) hypothesized that the influence of culture (cultural level IC) on communication styles would be mediated by the individual level IC tendencies operationalized by, again, self-construals. They found that cultural level IC influenced self-construals, and that self-construals influenced communication style, but they only found partial support for direct effects of cultural IC on style, i.e. only cultural individualism influenced style directly. In yet another study, Gudykunst et al. (1996) also positioned individual level IC, i.e. self-construals and IC values, as mediating variables between cultural level IC and communication style. Their results showed that there were mediating effects present for both self-construals and values, and that these indices were more powerful than cultural level IC alone in predicting communication style.

The direct effects of cultural IC on communication behavior, therefore, appear to be less significant than its influence through mediating variables. Nonetheless, culture can be expected to be an influencing agent of competence in both inter- and intracultural relationships. While culture is included in the proposed model only in relational contexts where partners are of different cultural backgrounds, i.e., the intercultural context, it is assumed that it has an equally important role in determining behavior which leads to competence in intracultural contexts. However, when culture is the same between partners, they are affected by it in the same manner, thus culture as a variable is held constant.

### Relational Context

The most important feature of the proposed model is the relational context. What is meant by relational context is the type of relationship, such as best friends, superior-subordinate, teacher-student, husband-wife, etc. According to O'Hair et al. (1995), the relational

context “has pervasive influence, allowing us to talk about generic types of relationships and to generalize about communication across these types” (p. 37). The relational context is positioned as an antecedent to individual dispositions in the model, and is conceived to activate the essential dispositions which in turn influences the type of behavior chosen for interaction with the relational partner. It should be noted that relational context in this model does not entail a one-shot interactional episode i.e. a single *interaction event* with a specific relational other, but the frame of reference is the *sum of interactions* over time in an ongoing relationship, or in other words, throughout the history of the relationship. Spitzberg and Hecht (1984), in their relational model, looked at a specific conversational event with the relational partner. Wiemann et al. (1997) geared their model toward specific interactions as well, in that they include the physical context, i.e. where the interaction is taking place, as one of the model’s components.

The importance of relational context is clearly illustrated in comparing, for example, self disclosure in developing and established relationships. Relational development theories, such as uncertainty reduction theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) and social penetration theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973), attest that self-disclosure is much different, quantitatively and qualitatively, in initial interactions relative to that in established relationships. Relational contexts can differ along several dimensions. According to Burgoon and Hale (1984), these dimensions consist of control, intimacy, emotional arousal, composure, formality, similarity, and task-social orientation. This typology, however, seems to have a Western bias, as the notion of control does not seem consonant with Eastern notions of relationships, which would emphasize harmony over control (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Miyahara, 1993). This will be discussed later.

The dimensions of relational context may differ with culture. According to Triandis (1995), collectivists differentiate their behavior much more between ingroup and outgroup interactions, while individualists do so only slightly. In other words, there is little cross-situational generalizability in behavior for collectivists, relative to individualists. As an example of collectivists, the Japanese are known to differentiate their communication styles greatly depending on social identity (Hamaguchi, 1983; Inoue, 1985), intimacy (Yoneyama, 1976), age differences (Nakane, 1970), status differences (Nakane, 1970), and gender differences (Barnlund, 1989). Such dimensions, although having differences in nuance, could be subsumed under Burgoon and Hale’s (1984) six dimensions, provided they be adapted and renamed, such as, interdependency, relational history, self-orientedness, other-orientedness, goal mutuality, and equality.

The concept of relationship may differ with cultural IC. According to Wheeler, Reis and

Bond (1989), collectivists have fewer intimate relationships, but these relationships are functionally integrated, while individualists have more ingroups, characterized by less intimacy and having a particular function. For example, while a collectivist may engage in many activities with one particular friend, an individualist would engage in particular activities with certain friends. Furthermore, Moghaddam, Taylor and Wright (1993 ) remark, "The general cultural attitudes of an individualistic culture, where the individual's goals and interests are paramount, then, are consistent with the forming of relationships that are temporary, voluntary, and between individuals. Collectivism, on the other hand, is consistent with permanent, non-voluntary, and group-based interpersonal relationships" (p. 101). Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai and Luca (1988) contend, "In collectivist cultures the relationship of the individual to the ingroup tend to be stable, and even when the in-group makes highly costly demands the individual stays with it. On the other hand, in individualist cultures people often drop those in-groups that are inconveniently demanding" (p. 324). The notion of the specific types of relationships, such as that of *friend*, may differ, then, as well as the sense of permanency of relationships across cultures.

For the above reasons, it is necessary to include culture as a variable in the model, so as long as the relational context is of an intercultural nature, especially during its developmental stages, when culture can still be expected to be the dominant guidelines by which each partner makes attributions regarding each other (Gudykunst & Kim, 1992). The relational context, in turn, can be expected to influence the dispositional tendencies of the relational partners.

### Dispositional Tendencies

By disposition, what is intended here is the individual level indices of IC, in order to be consistent with the cultural level. Two IC related dispositions are focused upon in the model: self-construal and allocentrism-idiocentrism. These two dispositions have been causally related to communication behavior (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kim et al., 1996; Singelis & Brown, 1995), as had been described earlier. Self-construals could be independent or interdependent. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), an independent self-construal entails "construing oneself as an individual whose behavior is organized and made meaningful primarily by reference to one's own internal repertoire of thoughts, feelings, and actions, rather than by reference to the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others" (p. 226), and an interdependent self-construal is "seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behavior is determined, contingent on, and , to a large extent organized by what the actor perceives to be thoughts, feelings, and actions of *others*

in the relationship" (p. 227). Singelis and Sharkey (1995) summarize, that an independent self-construal emphasizes, "(a) internal abilities, thoughts and feelings; (b) being unique and expressing the self; (c) realizing internal attributes and promoting one's own goals; and (d) being direct in communication" (p. 359), while an interdependent self-construal emphasizes. "(a) external, public features such as status, roles, and relationships; (b) belonging and fitting-in; (c) occupying one's proper place and engaging in appropriate action; and (d) being indirect in communication and "reading others" minds" (p. 360). Triandis (1995) states that collectivists are likely to have interdependent self-construals, while individualists would have independent self-construals, suggesting that cultural IC has an influence on the concept. Furthermore, self-construals are subject to the contextual constraints of the relationship. Markus and Kitayama (1991) argue, "An interdependent self cannot be properly characterized as a bounded whole, for it changes structure with the nature of the particular social context.... The uniqueness of such a self derives from the specific configuration of relationships that each person has developed. What is focal and objectified in an interdependent self, then, is not the inner self, but the *relationships* of the person to other actors" (p. 227).

While self-construals are affected by culture and relational context, they in turn can affect behavior within relationships. For example, Markus and Kitayama (1991) note that for persons with interdependent self-construals, "relationships, rather than being means for realizing various individual goals, will often be ends in and of themselves... maintaining a connection to others will mean being constantly aware of others and focusing on their needs, desire, and goals" (p. 229). On the other hand, those with independent self-construals may use the relationship as an opportunity to "strategically determine the best way to express or assert the internal attributes of the self" (p. 226). While on one side, behaviors geared toward maintaining harmony within the relationship takes priority, on the other, behaviors strategically executed to serve the individual self are of prime interest.

Allo-idiocentrism is the individual level IC, or psychological IC. According to Triandis et al. (1988), allocentric individuals are those who assume collectivistic tendencies, "feeling positive about accepting ingroup norms and do not even raise the question of whether or not to accept them" (p. 325), while idiocentric individuals assume individualistic tendencies, and "find it completely natural "to do their own thing" and to disregard the needs of communities, family, or work group" (p. 325). While it is assumed that individualistic cultures consist of idiocentrists, and collectivistic cultures of allocentrists, in actuality, the two may coexist within each type of culture. Relational context may activate idiocentric tendencies in collectivists, depending on the ingroup or outgroup nature of the relationship. Triandis (1995)

reports that, "Collectivists use equality or need as the basis for allocating resources to ingroup members, and equity... as the basis for allocation to outgroup members" (p. 73). Thus, while culture can be expected to exert an influence on allo-idiocentric tendencies, it is likely to do so in conjunction with the relational context.

Self-construals and allo-idiocentrism are "individual variables that affect behavior panculturally, but which are affected nonetheless by culture" (Singelis & Brown, 1995, p. 355), as had been elaborated on earlier. Thus, they are influenced by culture, and mediate culture's influence on behavior. As for panculturality, Singelis (1994) found that individuals can have both independent and interdependent self-construals, and these are activated depending on the situation at hand (Singelis & Brown, 1995). With regard to this model, it can be presumed that the relational context activates a certain self-construal, and/or a certain allo-idiocentric stance, which is reflected in behavior.

### Communication Behaviors

The model proposes that self-construal and allo-idiocentrism tendencies, triggered by the relational context, affects communication behaviors. These behaviors, in turn, might enhance or impede the outcome of relational competence. Behaviors considered appropriate and effective to the relational context at hand can naturally be assumed to lead to greater mutual satisfaction with the relationship. What constitutes effectiveness and appropriateness will be determined by the particular relationship, so by principle, it is not possible to prescribe competent behaviors. Wiemann and Bradac (1989) assert, "behavioral *patterns* of exchange are examined in connection with various antecedents... and various consequences.... Thus a competent dyad is one which exhibits particular patterns of behavior which are associated with various individual and dyadic benefits" (p. 278). Moreover, Kiesler (1983) suggests that relational compatibility is most likely with partners who complement each other's behavioral pattern, thus effective and appropriate behaviors seem to be specific to the relationship. What the proposed model intends is not to identify *competent behaviors*, but to identify patterns of behaviors which bring about *relational competence*, and to seek commonality in behavioral patterns between dyads for a given relational context, taking into account the dispositional, and if applicable, the cultural antecedents.

Behavioral norms or prescriptions imply cultural biases, so behavioral patterns must be composed of etic or pancultural entities. In previous research which sought cultural and individual level effects on communication related phenomena, communication behavior was operationalized in the form of communication style (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kim et al., 1996; Singelis & Brown, 1995), and perceived importance of interactive constraints (Kim & Sharkey,

1995; Kim, Sharkey & Singelis, 1994). While perceived importance of interactive constraints, or the ability to perceive such, suggests a facet of dispositional competence in itself, communication style seems more likely to be sensitive to the variations in relational context, and more suited as a predictor variable of an outcome. The use of communication *style*, rather than communication *skills* averts any evaluative nuance within this variable. Skills imply being bound by the constraints of a social norm, something generalized and leaving little room for exceptions, whereas style allows for liberty in assessing what is effective and appropriate to particular relationships. Also, skills are generalized to relationship types. For example, skills pertinent to a competitive, male football teammate relationship would not likely be the same as those appropriate in a dating relationship. Style, on the other hand, is not constrained by rules, as what is deemed appropriate to the relationship naturally arises from the "workings-out" between partners (Wiemann & Kelly, 1981). This means that even a male partner who practices "boys' locker room" communication styles toward his date can behave appropriately and effectively, so as long as she has an acceptance to it, and the relationship is mutually satisfying for both partners.

Gudykunst et al. (1996) devised an etic measure of communication style by including both high and low context communication behaviors, based on Hall's (1976) contextual theory. Through a culture-free analysis, they derived four high context factors, consisting of interpersonal sensitivity, indirect communication, feeling-based communication, and positive perception of silence, and four low context factors, composed of ability to infer, dramatic communication, openness, and precise communication. It would seem that communication style, when operationalized in such a manner, would fit the purpose of the proposed model best.

Thus, the variable of communication behavior consists of pancultural styles of communication; which style is adopted depends on the relational context, and the particular self-construal and allo-idiocentric stance one adopts in that context. There is no connotation of individuals being skilled or competent here, as in this model, competence is an outcome which arises from the relationship. While most researchers located competence in the individual, this model places the locus on the relationship unit. This feature of the model, borrowing from the ideas of O'Hair et al. (1995) and Wiemann et al. (1997), differs from relational models forwarded by Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), Imahori and Lanigan (1989), and others, which view the individual's knowledge, motivations and skills as composing competence. While these models may claim to be relational in nature, the locus of competence is on the individual, not on the relationship.

## Relational Competence

Finally, the outcome of the model is relational competence. Certain communication behaviors, activated by the self-construal and allo-idiocentric tendencies which in turn are affected by the relational context, are effective and appropriate to a specific relationship, resulting in relational competence, or incompetence at that. The definition of relational competence is difficult, as there are many facets to the concept. Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), in their relational model, suggested that outcomes can be composed of communication satisfaction, feeling good, interpersonal attraction, interpersonal solidarity, relational satisfaction, relational trust, negotiation and conflict satisfaction, and intimacy. O'Hair et al. (1995) contend that relational competence is the production of optimal distribution of control, expressed affiliation, and orientation to the goal and task at hand. Canary and Spitzberg (1989) called their outcome *relational quality*, which amounts to "the degree that partners trust one another, agree on who has rightful power to influence, share knowledge about one another *and* like what they know, and experience satisfaction with the partner" (pp. 633, 635, citations deleted). They claim that these components are universal across relationships, being generalizable to all relational contexts.

However, these relational outcomes may just as well be susceptible to the influence of culture in which they were conceived. In particular, the theme of *control*, which appears in many conceptualizations of relational outcome, seems to carry with it a Western bias when taken as is. Miyahara (1993) notes in reference to Japanese, "[they] are not generally known to control but to "adapt" to the environment" (p. 84). With reference to the Chinese, Chang and Holt (1991) remark, "relationship is not something that can be manipulated but something that must follow its own development, extending beyond human control. By not forcing a final solution to relational problems, Chinese apparently lack the strategic view of "relationshiping" (p.51). For collectivists, the notion of control is directed inward, or intrapersonally, while for individualists, control is directed outward, or interpersonally (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). To illustrate, Sugiyama-Lebra (1993) notes, "[Japanese] communication ... refers to the mutual, reciprocal, empathetic process of "turn-giving" [rather than -taking] between conversational partners" (p. 70).

The notions of relational satisfaction and stability might also construe a problem of cultural bias. Triandis (1995) claims, "Collectivists maintain established relationships even if it is not in their best interests to do so. Individualists rationally analyze the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining and fostering relationships" (p. 12). Collectivists may face pressures from the ingroup to stay with a relationship, for fear of causing an important other to lose face (Inoue, 1983). Western theories, such as equity theory (Walster, Walster

& Berscheid, 1978), which consists of analyses of personal input versus outcome in relationships, resource theory (Foa & Foa, 1972), which deals with the distribution of relational resources, and social exchange theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), which weighs costs and rewards in a relationship, all have the nuance of the calculating and economical nature of relationships, albeit rational, as conceived from the point of view of individualists. Miell and Croghan (1996) suggest that equity principle in relationships are mainly applicable to individualistic societies, citing a study by Berman, Murphy-Berman and Singh (1985). They looked at reward allocation of Indian and American students, and found that the former were likely to make allocations based on need, while the latter were likely to base them on equity. While this study involved resource distribution within a group context, and not the mutual distribution of social provisions between partners in a dyadic relationship, the underlying principle of equity is the same, thus, equity may not be an important facet of relationships in some non-Western cultures.

The relational outcome to be proposed here, should be composed of factors which reflect the interpersonal values of both individualists and collectivists in order to be consistent with the model's overall theme. One word of note should be that depending on the relational context, what constitutes relational competence should differ, so relational outcomes would presumably consist of relationally universal factors along with relationally specific ones, as well as culturally universal and specific ones. Here, some indices of relational competence which appear to be both relationally and culturally universal are outlined. Such indices might include: relational trust (Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Canary, Cupach & Serpe, 1995); attraction (Canary, Cupach & Serpe, 1995); identity need fulfillment (Tesser & Campbell, 1983); relational stability (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984); respect (Nicotera, 1993); and general relational satisfaction (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Wiemann et al., 1997). Some possible collectivistic relational outcomes might include: mutual dependency or *amae* (Doi, 1973); obligation fulfillment or *giri-ninjo* (Sugiyama-Lebra, 1976); interpersonal harmony or *wa* (Midooka, 1991; Pan, Chaffee, Chu & Ju, 1994); relational goal achievement (Wiemann et al., 1997) and sense of "one-ness" or *ninin-sankyaku*, i.e. two individuals merged into a single entity (Nakane, 1970). Individualistic outcomes may consist of: mutual enhancement of self-esteem and self-evaluation maintenance (Erber & Tesser, 1994); optimal distribution of relational control (Park, 1994; O'Hair et al., 1995); equity (Walster, Berscheid & Walster, 1976); and personal goal achievement (Berger, 1993; Wiemann et al., 1997).

How ever relational outcome may be conceptualized, it must be examined at the relational level as opposed to the individual level, since in this model, competence is a relational phenomenon, not an individual one. Some possible ways in which this can be

operationalized and investigated will be suggested in the following sections.

### Theoretical and Research Implications

#### Theorems

The proposed model suggested some key variables deemed important in producing relational competence from a cultural perspective, and the relationship between these variables were discussed. From the above, the following theorems can be formulated.

*Theorem 1:* Culture influences the perception of the relational context by relational partners.

A direct path from culture to relational context is proposed. The way a specific relational context is perceived may differ with the cultural background of an individual.

*Theorem 2:* Culture influences the individual dispositions of self-construals and allo-idiocentrism of relational partners.

Direct paths from culture to each of self-construals and allo-idiocentrism are proposed. Culture, by virtue of its socialization process, will influence the self-construals and allo-idiocentric tendencies of individuals.

*Theorem 3:* Culture influences the communication behaviors of the relational partners.

A direct path from culture to communication behaviors is proposed. As in above, culture influences the norms and standards of communication behaviors, through the socialization process.

*Theorem 4:* Culture influences the perception of the relational outcome by the relational partners.

A direct path from culture to relational outcome is proposed. What constitutes a competent relationship depends on the expectations of the individual, and such expectations can be assumed to be formed through social experience within cultural constraints.

*Theorem 5:* Relational context influences the dispositional aspects of the relational partners, i.e. the facet of self and allo-idiocentric tendencies salient within the relationship.

The relational context activates particular facets of self-construals and allo-idiocentric tendencies. Individuals are assumed to have both interdependent and independent self-construals, and both allocentric and idiocentric tendencies. The nature of the relationship is assumed to determine which facets are at work.

*Theorem 6:* Dispositions influence communication behaviors of the relational partners.

Self-construals and allo-idiocentric tendencies influence the choice of communication behaviors exercised within a relationship. Behaviors are assumed to be congruent with the facets of the two dispositional variables at work within the individual for a particular relationship.

*Theorem 7:* Communication behaviors influence relational outcomes.

Communication behavior has direct consequences on the perception of how competent a relationship is. Behaviors must be appropriate and effective for the given relationship.

*Theorem 8:* Relational outcomes consist of both individual and relationship effects.

The outcomes of both relational partners must be considered, as well as the net relational outcome. Competence, thus is treated as a dyadic level construct.

The model approaches competence from both the cultural level and individual level effects. It allows an examination of both the direct and indirect effects of culture, as well as the mediating effects of individual level factors on the effect of culture on competence. Competence is seen as a relational effect, rather than an individual one.

### **Operationalization of Variables**

Previous relational models (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Wiemann et al., 1997) are composed of intricate relationships between large numbers of variables, which lend them difficult to examine from a pragmatic perspective. In particular, relational models deal with the relationship as the unit of analysis, which poses a creative challenge in how to operationalize the outcome variable. Not only that, relational data would require more than conventional statistical procedures for analyses.

In the proposed model, the outcome of the model is relational in nature, implying that individual level analyses are insufficient, and that a relational level analysis is appropriate. In addressing the issue of relational analysis, Cupach (1986) offers three means by which such a phenomenon can be examined: (1) discrepancy/congruency score derived from actor and proactor perceptions of competence; (2) application of the Social Relations Model (Kenny & La Voie, 1984); and (3) observation of dyadic behaviors rather than individual ones.

Discrepancy/congruence calculations have been widely applied in equity theory research (Hatfield & Traupmann, 1981; Rusbult, 1983; Van Ypren & Buunk, 1990; Walster, Walster & Bercheid, 1978). The typical method in which equity in a relationship is assessed is to measure the difference between one's perceived outcome minus her/his perceived input divided by the absolute value of her/his input, and to subtract the sum from the value obtained for the partner (Hatfield & Traupmann, 1981). For the purpose of assessing relational competence, though, the above calculations may be simplified to involve only the difference between partners' perceived relational competence scores. Any difference beyond a certain standard deviation criteria (e.g. + or - one standard deviation) can be considered an incompetent relationship if equity were an index of relational competence. However, as had already been discussed, equity principles may not be descriptive of relationships in

non-Western cultures, and furthermore, such economic models of interpersonal relationships may not be consonant with Eastern cultures. In other words, depending on what is measured, it is conceivable that partners may perceive a relationship to be competent and satisfactory, although the calculated discrepancy value might not point to that fact. Special care, then, is required to ascertain that measures are sensitive to cultural differences. Spitzberg and Cupach (1989) also mention that discrepancy scores are less reliable and have less statistical power than the original scores from which they are computed.

A better alternative would be to utilize a round robin analysis of variance, as proposed by Kenny and La Voie (1984) in their Social Relations Model (SRM). The SRM provides several analytic tools to study simultaneously and independently individual differences and relationship effects. To summarize briefly, the SRM is a special type of analysis of variance with which a researcher can obtain an actor effect, a partner effect, and a relationship/dyad effect. Spitzberg and Cupach (1989) comment, "With respect to competence, the actor effect represents the extent to which an actor tends to be perceived as competent when communicating with a variety of other partners.... The partner effect identifies the extent to which an actor consistently elicits behavior from others.... The relationship effect represents the extent that an actor's competence represents a unique adjustment to her/his specific partner" (pp. 68-69). Relational competence, in the case of the proposed model, is represented by the relationship effect.

Finally, the third alternative, one of observing dyadic behaviors is an observation approach, thus not suited for tapping into cognitive indices of relational competence. For example, relational satisfaction is hardly likely to be measured by observation, unless it is measurable as incidences of particular nonverbal cues, such as smiling, during a particular interaction episode, or by some ethnographical approach. The proposed model deals with cognitive dimensions of competence in the long-run, not episodes, so this alternative must be ruled out as a feasible means of analyzing relational competence.

While relational competence is difficult to operationalize and assess, the other variables in the model pose less of a challenge. Culture can be operationalized by assigning values from Hofstede's (1980) measure of individualism-collectivism, or from his rank-order of countries, assign dichotomous dummy values of as individualistic or collectivistic. Triandis' (1995) two dimensional categorization of cultures by IC and verticalism/horizontalism seems appealing, but there is no empirical base on which to locate cultures on his quadrants.

Relational context is a little more difficult to operationalize, since individual experiences with a certain type of relationship can vary greatly. Strict controls on confounding factors, such as relational history, and frequency of contact, would be necessary so that subjects

would be assessed on comparable relationships. For instance, "best friend" could mean long-term relationships such as childhood buddies, or a room-mate just met one year ago. Much demographic information about relational partners needs to be gathered to control for extraneous factors.

Self-construal measures have been developed by Gudykunst et al. (1996), Kim and Sharkey (1995), Singelis (1995), and Kiuchi (1995). The former three were devised in the United States, while the latter was constructed in Japan. Since these scales are all dealing with a concept which is supposed to differ with culture from its onset, there seems to be no need to worry about cultural biases, but there is inherently the problem of structural equivalence (Hui & Triandis, 1985). Singelis et al. (1995) note, "when the instrument is generated in one culture... the factors that are extracted from a factor analysis may not emerge as clearly in other cultures" (p. 242). Of the above scales, only Gudykunst et al. has demonstrated structural equivalence in their conducting a pancultural factor analysis. Furthermore, another concern is the somewhat low internal consistency reliability figures as reported in all four of these studies.

Allo-idiocentric tendencies have been measured by Hui (1988), Triandis et al. (1985), Triandis, McCusker and Hui (1990), Triandis, Chan, Bhawuk, Iwao and Sinha (1995), and Triandis et al. (1988). Again, these scales suffer from low reliability and possibly from problems in structural equivalence. Recently, Triandis and his associates (Singelis et al., 1995) reconceptualized IC, and added a new dimension: horizontal and vertical IC. Their measure of the four types of IC contributed for finer distinctions between individuals than just allo-idiocentrism. However, their scale, too, did not display good reliability. An alternative scale is Gudykunst et al.'s (1996) IC values scale, with which they measured individual level IC. Of course, these scales are not descriptive of the traits of an individual, but did indicate what types of values they hold. Their scale was subjected to a culture-free factor analysis, and shows fair reliability across the four cultures studied.

Communication behavior, as had already been discussed, can be operationalized as communication style as opposed to communication skills. Gudykunst et al. (1996) developed a scale for communication style, which was factor analyzed through a pancultural method, and which also showed adequate reliability across their selected cultures.

### Implications for Research

The proposed model of interpersonal communication competence was designed to account for cultural differences in the way competence might be defined. Through a relational approach, the model proposed a context specific means by which individual

factors, in conjunction with culture, might be able to unveil patterns of communication style which are effective and appropriate to a given relationship. Previous models of competence had not sufficiently addressed the issue of culture, unless they were intercultural models, but the proposed model assumes that culture is at work in both inter- and intracultural contexts.

While recognizing that culture is an important driving force for behavior, the model assumes that individuals can be both individualistic and collectivistic at the same time, and also, that it is the relational context which determines what aspect of the individual is made salient at any given time. The effect of culture on competence, thus, is mediated by individual factors.

Distinguishing between cultural and individual levels in predicting competence has several advantages. First, no assumption is made that people in a culture should be one way or the other. For example, the model allows for the possibility that even in a collectivistic culture, not everyone is characterized by interdependent self-construals and allocentrism. By tapping into these individual level dimensions, reliance on cultural stereotypes are avoided, and variance within culture is expected. Also, by grouping individuals on dispositional tendencies, regardless of culture, common relational characteristics of, for instance, allocentrists can be explored. Second, a better understanding of the effect of culture on competence can be afforded when mediating variables, in this case, the relational context and individual factors, are accounted for. Placed within a causal model, the predictive powers of culture versus individual factors, i.e. the strengths of influence via direct causal paths, can be determined and compared. Gudykunst et al. (1996) note that most cross-cultural studies to date have only observed the direct influence of culture, without probing into the possibility of a third variable effect. Third, the model can be applied simultaneously to both intra- and intercultural contexts, whereas most other competent models are intended to be either intercultural, or to have been conceived without culture in mind. Because the model assumes individuals can have both individualistic and collectivistic tendencies, its nature is one which inherently traverses cultures, and when its variables are operationalized with pancultural measures, this characteristic becomes even more pronounced.

The key feature of the relational design of the model is, as had already been discussed, its inclusion of the perspective of a proactor or partner regarding one's competence. A one-sided view of relational competence is likely to be biased, so the point of view of the proactor is warranted. By combining the two, or by deriving a relationship effect, competence can be assessed with greater accuracy. Also, the interactive nature of the model

is advantageous over other models which focus on an individual's general ability to perform competent behaviors. While these dispositional models are psychological in nature, the relational approach is within the interests of the communication discipline, as more than just the individual is considered. Furthermore, the relational specificity of the proposed model frees it from any prescriptive or evaluative nuances imposed by social norms. Relationships which are seemingly abusive may be competent in themselves, as the complementarity theory of attraction would attest with its example of the sadist and masochist pairing.

One shortcoming of the proposed model is the compromise made on behalf of parsimony. Other relational models have been designed with a great number of variables, whereas the proposed model has limited itself to a few selected variables. There is the possibility that the model has oversimplified itself, and may not be capable of accounting for enough of the variance in the outcome variable.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to present an original model of interpersonal communication competence. Taking into consideration problematic issues of previous research, as well as recent developments in this research area, a relational model was proposed, which incorporated culture. The model was intended to examine the influence of culture on relational competence, both directly, and indirectly through mediating, individual level factors. Suggestions on how the model might be operationalized were offered, but an empirical test is required to determine its robustness.

### References

- Abe, H., & Wiseman, R.L. (1983). A cross-cultural confirmation of the dimensions of intercultural effectiveness. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 7, 53-67.
- Aikawa, M., Sato, S., Sato, Y., & Takayama, I. (1993). A study on the interpersonal behaviors of lonely university students: The relationship between the self-reported loneliness and social skill deficits. *Japanese Journal of Social Psychology*, 8, 44-55.
- Altman, I., & Taylor, D. (1973). *Social penetration: The development of interpersonal relationships*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Applegate, J., & Sypher, H. (1983). A constructivist outline. In W.B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Intercultural communication theory: Current perspectives* (pp. 63-78). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Arkin, R.M., & Shepperd, J.A. (1990). Strategic self-presentation: An overview. In M.J. Cody & M.L. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Psychology of tactical communication* (pp. 175-193). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Bahk, C. (1993). Interpersonal perceptions of same-sex and opposite-sex friendships in the United States and Korea. In A.M. Nicotera & Associates (Eds.), *Interpersonal communication in friend and mate relationships* (pp. 79-106). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

- Barnlund, D.C. (1975). *The public and private self in Japan and the United States*. Tokyo: Simul Press.
- Barnlund, D.C. (1989). *Communicative styles of Japanese and Americans: Images and realities*. Belmont, WA: Wadsworth.
- Barnlund, D.C., & Araki, S. (1985). Intercultural encounters: The management of compliments by Japanese and Americans. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 16, 9-26.
- Barnlund, D.C., & Yoshioka, M. (1990). Apologies: Japanese and American styles. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14, 193-206.
- Berger, C.R. (1993). Goals, plans and mutual understanding in personal relationships. In S.W. Duck (Ed.), *Individuals in relationships* (pp. 30-59). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Berger, C.R., & Calabrese, R.J. (1975). Some explorations in initial interaction and beyond: Toward a developmental theory of interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research*, 1, 99-112.
- Berman, J.J., Murphy-Berman, V., & Singh, P. (1985). Cross-cultural similarities and differences in perceptions of fairness. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 16, 55-67.
- Berry, J.W. (1989). Imposed etics-emics-derived etics: The operationalization of a compelling idea. *International Journal of Psychology*, 24, 721-735.
- Bochner, A.P., & Kelly, C.W. (1974). Interpersonal competence: Rationale, philosophy, and implementation of a conceptual framework. *Speech Teacher*, 21, 279-301.
- Brislin, R.W. (1970). Back-translation for cross-cultural research. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 1, 185-216.
- Burgoon, J.K., & Hale, J.L. (1984). The fundamental topoi of relational communication. *Communication Monographs*, 51, 193-214.
- Buhrmester, D., Furman, W., Wittenberg, M.T., & Reis, H.T. (1988). Five domains of interpersonal competence in peer relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55, 991-1008.
- Canary, D.J., & Cupach, W.R. (1988). Relational and episodic characteristics associated with conflict tactics. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 5, 305-325.
- Canary, D.J., Cupach, W.R., & Serpe, R.T. (1995). *A competence based approach to examining interpersonal conflict: Test of a longitudinal model*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Conference, Albuquerque, May, 1995.
- Canary, D.J., & Spitzberg, B.H. (1989). A model of perceived competence of conflict strategies. *Human Communication Research*, 15, 630-649.
- Canary, D.J., & Spitzberg, B.H. (1990). Attribution biases and associations between conflict strategies and competence outcomes. *Communication Monographs*, 57, 139-151.
- Canary, D. J., & Stafford, L. (1994). Maintaining relationships through strategic and routine interaction. In D. J. Canary, & L. Stafford (Eds.), *Communication and relational maintenance* (pp. 3-22). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Cegala, D.J. (1981). Interaction involvement: A cognitive dimension of communicative competence. *Communication Education*, 30, 109-121.
- Cegala, D. J., Savage, G. T., Brunner, C. C., & Conrad, A. (1982). An elaboration of the meaning of interaction involvement: Toward the development of a theoretical concept. *Communication Monographs*, 49, 229-248.
- Chan, H.C., & Holt, R.G. (1991). The concept of *yuan* and Chinese interpersonal relationships. In S. Ting-Toomey & F. Korzeny (Eds.), *Cross-cultural interpersonal communication* (pp. 28-57). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Chen, G.M., & Starosta, W. J. (1996). Intercultural communication competence: A synthesis. In B. Burleson (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook*, 19 (pp. 353-383). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Cocroft, B.A., & Ting-Toomey, S. (1994). Facework in Japan and the United States. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 18, 469-506.
- Collier, M.J. (1989). Cultural and intercultural communication competence: Current approaches and directions for future research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13, 287-302.
- Collier, M.J., Ribeau, S.A., & Hecht, M.L. (1986). Intracultural communication rules and outcomes within three domestic cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10, 439-457.
- Cooley, R.E., & Roach, D.A. (1984). A conceptual approach. In R.N. Bostrom (Ed.), *Competence in communication: A multidisciplinary approach* (pp. 11-32). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Cupach, W.R. (1986, May). *Communication satisfaction and interpersonal solidarity as outcomes of conflict message strategy use*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Conference, Boston, MA.
- Cupach, W. R., & Imahori, T. T. (1993). Identity management theory: Communication competence in intercultural episodes and relationships. In R. L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 112-131). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Cupach, W. R., & Spitzberg, B. H. (1983). Trait versus state: a comparison of dispositional and situational measures of interpersonal communication competence. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 47, 364-379.
- Daibo, I. (1991). Higengo hyoushutusei no sokutei: Affective Communication Test shakudo no kosei (Measuring nonverbal expressivity: The factor structure of the Affective Communication Test). *Hokusei Ronshu*, 28, 1-12.
- Doi, T. (1971). *Anatomy of dependence*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.
- Duran, R.L. (1983). Communicative adaptability: A measure of social communicative competence. *Communication Quarterly*, 31, 320-326.
- Duran, R.L. (1992). Communicative adaptability: A review of conceptualization and measurement. *Communication Quarterly*, 40, 253-268.
- Duran, R.L., & Kelly, L. (1988). The influence of communicative competence on perceived task, social, and physical attraction. *Communication Quarterly*, 36, 41-49.
- Erber, R., & Tesser, A. (1994). Self-evaluation maintenance: A social psychological approach to interpersonal relationships. In R. Erber & R. Gilmour (Eds.), *Theoretical frameworks for personal relationships* (pp. 211-234). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.
- Edelsky, C. (1976). The acquisition of communicative competence: Recognition of linguistic correlates of sex roles. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 22, 47-59.
- Fitzpatrick, M.A., & Indvik, J. (1986). On alternative conceptions of relational communication. *Communication Quarterly*, 34, 19-23.
- Foa, U., & Foa, E. (1972). Resource exchange: Toward a structural theory of interpersonal communication. In A. Siegman & B. Pope (Eds.), *Studies in dyadic communication* (pp. 291-325). New York: Pergamon Press.
- Friedman, H.S., Prince, L.M., Riggio, R.E., & DiMatteo, M.R. (1980). Understanding and assessing nonverbal expressiveness: The affective communication test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39, 333-351.
- Furuya, T., & Yuda, A. (1988). Verbal strategies for impression management in social predicaments: A multidimensional approach. *Japanese Journal of Psychology*, 59, 120-126.
- Gao, G. (1991). Stability in romantic relationships in China and the United States. In S. Ting-Toomey & F. Korzeny (Eds.), *Cross-cultural interpersonal communication* (pp. 99-115). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Gudykunst, W. B. (1993). Toward a theory of effective interpersonal and intergroup communication: An anxiety / uncertainty management (AUM) perspective. In R. L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 16-32). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gudykunst, W.B., & Kim, Y.Y. (1992). *Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Gudykunst, W.B., Gao, G., Nishida, T., Bond, M.H., Leung, K., Wang, G., & Barraclough, R.A. (1989). A cross-cultural comparison of self-monitoring. *Communication Research Reports*, 6, 7-12.
- Gudykunst, W.B., Gao, G., Schmidt, K.L., Nishida, T., Bond, M.H., Leung, K., Wang, G., & Barraclough, R.A. (1992). The influence of individualism-collectivism, self-monitoring, and predicted-outcome value on communication in ingroup and outgroup relationships. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 23, 196-213.
- Gudykunst, W.B., Gao, G., Nishida, T., Nadamitsu, Y., & Sakai, J. (1992). Self-monitoring in Japan and the United States. In S. Iwawaki, Y. Kashima & K. Leung (Eds.), *Innovations in cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 185-198). Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger.
- Gudykunst, W.B., Gao, G., & Franklyn-Stokes, A. (1996). Self-monitoring and concern for social appropriateness in China and England. In J. Pandey, D. Sinha & D.P.S. Bhawuk (Eds.), *Asian contributions to cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 255-270). Newbury Park: Sage.
- Gudykunst, W.B., & Matsumoto, Y. (1996). Cross-cultural variability of communication in personal relationships. In W.B. Gudykunst, S. Ting-Toomey & T. Nishida (Eds.), *Communication in personal relationships across cultures* (pp. 19-56). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gudykunst, W.B., Matsumoto, Y., Ting-Toomey, S., Nishida, T., Kim, K., & Heyman, S. (1996). The influence of individualism-collectivism, self-construals, and individual values on communication styles across cultures. *Human Communication Research*, 22, 51-543.
- Gudykunst, W.B., & Nishida, T. (1993). Closeness in interpersonal relationships in Japan and the United States. *Research in Social Psychology*, 8, 76-84.
- Gudykunst, W.B., Yang, S.M., & Nishida, T. (1987). Cultural differences in self-consciousness and self-monitoring. *Communication Research*, 14, 7-34.
- Hall, E.T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. New York: Doubleday.
- Hamaguchi, E. (1983). *Nihon rashisa no sai hakken* (Rediscovering Japanese-likeness). Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha.
- Hansson, R.O. (1986). Relational competence, relationships and adjustment in old age. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 1050-1058.
- Hatfield, E., & Traupmann, J. (1981). Intimate relationships: A perspective from equity theory. In S. Duck & R. Gilmour (Eds.), *Personal relationships 1: Studying personal relationships* (pp. 165-178). New York: Academic Press.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected readings*. Baltimore: Penguin.
- Horike, K. (1988). The concept of self-monitoring and its assessment. *Tohoku Fukushi Daigaku Shinrigakka Ronshu*, 11, 185-199.
- Hui, C.H. (1988). *Measurement of individualism-collectivism*. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 22, 17-36.
- Hui, C.H., & Triandis, H.C. (1985). Measurement in cross-cultural psychology: A review and comparison of strategies. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 16, 131-152.
- Imahori, T.T., & Cupach, W.R. (1994). A cross-cultural comparison of the interpretation and

- management of face: U.S. American and Japanese responses to embarrassing predicaments. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 18, 193-219.
- Imahori, T. T., & Lanigan, M. (1989). Relational model of intercultural communication competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13, 269-286.
- Inoue, T. (1985). *Sekentei no kozo* (The structure of *sekentei*). Tokyo: NHK.
- Ishihara, T., & Mizuno, K. (1992). A study of the revised self-monitoring scale. *Japanese Journal of Psychology*, 63, 47-50.
- Iwabuchi, C., Tanaka, K., & Nakazato, H. (1983). A study of the self-monitoring scale. *Japanese Journal of Psychology*, 53, 54-57.
- Kayano, J. (1994). SSI ni tsuite (On the Social Skills Inventory). In A. Kikuchi & K. Horike (Eds.), *Shakaiteki skill no shinrigaku* (The psychology of social skills) (pp. 192-200). Tokyo: Kawashima Shoten.
- Kenny, D.A., & LaVoie, L. (1984). The social relations model. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* Vol. 18 (pp. 142-182). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Kiesler, D.J. (1983). The 1982 circle: A taxonomy for complementarity in human transactions. *Psychological Review*, 90, 185-214.
- Kikuchi, A. (1988). *Omoiyari o kagaku suru* (Science of prosocial behavior). Tokyo: Kawashima Shoten.
- Kikuchi, A., & Horike, K. (1994). Shakaiteki sukuru towa (Definition of social skills). In A. Kikuchi & K. Horike (Eds.), *Shakaiteki skill no shinrigaku* (The psychology of social skills) (pp. 192-200). Tokyo: Kawashima Shoten.
- Kim, M.S. (1993). Culture-based interactive constraints in explaining intercultural strategic competence. In R. L. Wiseman, & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 132-152). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kim, M.S. (1994). Cross-cultural comparisons of the perceived importance of conversational constraints. *Human Communication Research*, 21, 128-151.
- Kim, M.S., Hunter, J.E., Miyahara, A., Horvath, A.M., Bresnahan, M., & Yoon, H.J. (1996). Individual vs. culture-level dimensions of individualism and collectivism: Effects on preferred conversational styles. *Communication Monographs*, 63, 29-49.
- Kim, M.S., & Sharkey, W.F. (1995). Independent and interdependent construals of self: Patterns of communication in multi-cultural organizational settings. *Communication Quarterly*, 43, 20-38.
- Kim, M.S., Sharkey, W.F., & Singelis, T.M. (1994). The relationship between individuals' self-construals and perceived importance of interactive constraints. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 18, 117-140.
- Kim, M.S., & Wilson, S.R. (1995). A cross-cultural comparison of implicit theories of requesting. *Communication Monographs*, 61, 210-235.
- Kim, U., Triandis, H.C., Kagitcibasi, C., Choi, S.C., & Yoon, G. (Eds.). (1994). *Individualism and collectivism: Theory, method, and applications*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kiuchi, A. (1995). Construction of a scale for independent and interdependent construal of self and its reliability and validity. *Japanese Journal of Psychology*, 66, 100-106.
- Kluckhohn, F., & Strodtbeck, F. (1961). *Variations in value orientations*. New York: Row, Peterson.
- Koester, J., Wiseman, R.L., & Sanders, J. A. (1993). Multiple perspectives of intercultural communication competence. In R. L. Wiseman, & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 3-15). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Konno, H. (1992, September). *Taijin kankei ni okeru shakaiteki skill no koto* (The function of social skills in interpersonal relationships). Paper presented at the 56th Conference of the Japanese

Psychologist's Association, Kyoto, Japan.

- Korn, C.J. (1993). Friendship formation and development in two cultures: Universal constructs in United States and Korea. In A.M. Nicotera and Associates (Eds.), *Interpersonal communication in friend and mate relationships* (pp. 61-78). Albany, NY: SUNY.
- Kurosawa, K. (1993). Self-monitoring and conformity revisited: A case for four-factor measurement model. *Japanese Psychological Research*, 35, 19-31.
- L'Abate, L. (1990). *Building family competence*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Larson, C.E., Backlund, P., Redmond, M., & Barbour, A. (1978). *Assessing functional communication*. Falls Church, VA: Speech Communication Association.
- Leung, K., & Iwawaki, S. (1988). Cultural collectivism and distributive behavior. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 19, 35-49.
- Lustig, M.W., & Spitzberg, B.H. (1993). Methodological issues in the study of intercultural communication competence. In R.L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 153-167). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 2, 224-253.
- Martin, J.N. (Ed.) (1989). Intercultural communication competence: Special issue. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13 (3).
- Martin, J.N. (1993). Intercultural communication competence: A review. In R.L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 16-29). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Matsumoto, Y. (1988). Reexamination of the universality of face: Politeness phenomena in Japanese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 12, 403-426.
- Midooka, K. (1990). Characteristics of Japanese-style communication. *Media, Culture and Society*, 12, 477-489.
- Miell, D., & Croghan, R. (1996). Examining the wider context of social relationships. In D. Miell & R. Dallos (Eds.), *Social interaction and personal relationships* (pp. 267-318). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miyahara, A. (1994, July). *Toward a conceptualization of Japanese communication competence: Epistemological and ontological issues in theory building*. Paper presented at annual conference of the International Communication Association, Sydney, Australia.
- Miyahara, A. (1995). Meta-theoretical issues in conceptualization of Japanese communication competence. *Keio Communication Review*, 17, 63-82.
- Miyahara, A. (1993). An empirical investigation of communication strategies employed by Japanese as "collectivists". *Seinan Gakuin Daigaku Eigo-Eibungaku Ronshu*, 33, 83-110.
- Mizuno, K., & Hashimoto, T. (1993). An examination of self-monitoring as a determinant of conforming behavior. *Japanese Journal of Psychology*, 63, 341-345.
- Moghaddam, F.M., Taylor, D.M., & Wright, S.C. (1993). *Social psychology in cross-cultural perspective*. New York: Freeman.
- Nakamura, M., & Masutani, M. (1991, October). *Kanjo communication noryoku to shakaiteki skill* (Affective communication competence and social skills). Paper presented at the 32nd Conference of the Japanese Social Psychologist's Association, Tokyo, Japan.
- Nakane, C. (1970). *Japanese society*. Tokyo: C.E. Tuttle Co.
- Nicotera, A.M. (1993). Summary of studies on the theory of friendship and consideration of implications. In A.M. Nicotera & Associates (Eds.), *Interpersonal communication in friend and mate relationships* (pp. 125-138). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

- Nomura, N., & Barnlund, D.C. (1983). Patterns of interpersonal criticism in Japan and United States. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 7, 1-18.
- Ohsako, H., & Takahashi, S. (1994). Effects of "amae" on interpersonal emotions and conflict-resolution strategies of interpersonal conflict situations. *Japanese Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 34, 44-57.
- Okabe, R. (1983). Cultural assumptions of East and West: Japan and the United States. In W.B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Intercultural communication theory* (pp. 21-44). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Ota, H., Kayano, J., & Hirota, K. (1992, October). *Kyoshi hyoutei ni yoru seito no shakaiteki gino shakudo no sakusei* (Developing a scale for teacher evaluation of a student's social skills). Paper presented at the 40th Conference of the Japanese Group Dynamics Association, Nagoya, Japan.
- O'Hair, D., Friedrich, G.W., Wiemann, J. M., & Wiemann, M. O. (1995). *Competent communication*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Pan, Z., Chaffee, S.H., Chu, G.C., & Ju, Y. (1994). *To see ourselves: Comparing traditional Chinese and American cultural values*. San Francisco: Westview.
- Parks, M.R. (1994). Communicative competence and interpersonal control. In M. Knapp & G.R. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of interpersonal communication (2nd ed.)* (pp. 589-618). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Pavitt, C., & Haight, L. (1985). The 'competent communicator' as a cognitive prototype. *Human Communication Research*, 12, 225-242.
- Roloff, M.E., & Kellerman, K. (1984). Judgments of interpersonal competence: How you know, what you know, and who you know. In R.N. Bostrom (Ed.), *Competence in communication: A multidisciplinary approach* (pp. 175-218). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Ruben, B.D. (1989). The study of cross-cultural competence: Traditions and contemporary issues. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13, 229-240.
- Rusbult, C.E. (1983). A longitudinal test of the investment model: The development (and deterioration) of satisfaction and commitment in heterosexual investments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45, 101-117.
- Sekime, M. (1991, October). *Jiko kaiji no henposei ni oyobosu self-monitoring no koka* (Effect of self-monitoring on reciprocity of self-disclosure). Paper presented at the 32nd Conference of the Japanese Social Psychologists' Association, Tokyo, Japan.
- Shibata, T. (1993, September). *Daigakusei no yujin kankei ni okeru shakaiteki competence* (Social competence within friendship relationships of university students). Paper presented at the 34th Conference of the Japanese Social Psychologists' Association, Tokyo, Japan.
- Singelis, T.M. (1994). The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20, 580-591.
- Singelis, T.M., & Brown, W.J. (1995). Culture, self, and collectivistic communication: Linking culture to individual behavior. *Human Communication Research*, 21, 354-389.
- Singelis, T.M., & Sharkey, W.F. (1995). Culture, self-construal, and embarrassability. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 26, 622-644.
- Singelis, T.M., Triandis, H.C., Bhawuk, D.P.S., & Gelfand, M.J. (1995). Horizontal and vertical dimensions of individualism and collectivism: A theoretical and measurement refinement. *Cross-Cultural Research*, 29, 240-275.
- Snyder, M. (1974). Self-monitoring of expressive behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 32, 637-644.
- Spitzberg, B.H. (1989). Issues in the development of a theory of interpersonal competence in the

- intercultural context. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13, 241-268.
- Spitzberg, B.H. (1990). The construct validity of trait-based measures of interpersonal competence. *Communication Research Reports*, 7, 107-115.
- Spitzberg, B.H., & Cupach, W.R. (1984). *Interpersonal communication competence*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Spitzberg, B.H., & Cupach, W.R. (1989). *Handbook of interpersonal competence research*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Spitzberg, B.H., & Hecht, M.L. (1984). A component model of relational competence. *Human Communication Research*, 10, 575-599.
- Steil, J.M., & Hillman, J.L. (1993). The perceived value of direct and indirect influence strategies: A cross-cultural comparison. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 17, 457-462.
- Sueda, K., & Wiseman, R.L. (1992). Embarrassment remediation in Japan and the United States. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 16, 159-173.
- Sugiyama-Lebra, T. (1976). *Japanese patterns of behavior*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Sugiyama-Lebra, T. (1993). Culture, self, and communication in Japan and the United States. In W.B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Communication in Japan and the United States* (pp. 51-87). Albany, NY: SUNY.
- Takai, J. (1994). Cultural considerations in interpersonal competence research. *Japanese Journal of Interpersonal Behavior*, 12, 1-10.
- Takai, J., & Ota, H. (1994). Assessing Japanese interpersonal communication competence. *Japanese Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 33, 224-236.
- Tanaka, K.M., & Bell, R.A. (1996). Equivocation in America and Japan: A cross-national comparison of the effects of situational conflict and status. *Communication Research*, 23, 261-296.
- Tesser, A., & Campbell, J. D. (1983). Self-definition and self-evaluation maintenance. In J. Suls & A. Greenwald (Eds.), *Psychological perspectives on the self Vol.2*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.
- Thibaut, J., & Kelley, H.H. (1959). *The social psychology of groups*. New York: John Wiley.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1988). Intercultural conflict styles: A face-negotiation theory. In Y.Y. Kim & W.B. Gudykunst (Eds.), *Theories in intercultural communication* (pp. 213-238). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1993). Communicative resourcefulness: An identity negotiation perspective. In R. L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 72-111). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Triandis, H.C. (1988). Collectivism v. individualism: A reconceptualization of a basic concept in cross-cultural social psychology. In G.K. Verma & C. Bagley (Eds.), *Cross-cultural studies of personality, attitudes and cognition* (pp. 60-95). London: MacMillan Press.
- Triandis, H. C. (1990). Cross-cultural studies of individualism and collectivism. In J. Berman (Ed.), *Nebraska symposium on motivation* (pp. 41-133). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Triandis, H. C. (1994). Theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of individualism and collectivism. In U. Kim, H.C. Triandis, C. Kagitcibasi, S.C. Choi & G. Yoon (Eds.), *Individualism and collectivism: Theory, method, and applications* (pp.41-51). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Triandis, H.C. (1995). *Individualism & collectivism*. San Francisco: Westview.
- Triandis, H.C., Bontempo, R., Willareal, M.J., Asai, M., & Lucca, N. (1988). In dividualism and collectivism: Cross-cultural perspectives on self-ingroup relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 323-338.
- Triandis, H.C., Chan, D.K., Bhawuk, D.P.S., Iwao, S., & Shinha, J.B.P. (1995). Multimethod probes of allocentrism and idiocentrism. *International Journal of Psychology*, 30, 461-480.
- Triandis, H.C., Leung, K., Villareal, M.V., & Clack, F.L. (1985). Allocentric versus idiocentric tendencies:

- Convergent and discriminant validation. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 19, 395-415.
- Triandis, H.C., McCusker, C., & Hui, C.H. (1990). Multimethod probes of individualism and collectivism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59, 1006-1020.
- Van Ypren, N.W., & Buunk, B. (1990). A longitudinal study of equity and satisfaction in intimate relationships. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 20, 287-309.
- Wada, M. (1991). A study of interpersonal competence: Construction of nonverbal skill scale and social skill scale. *Japanese Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 31, 49-59.
- Walster, E.H., Walster, G.W., & Berscheid, E. (1978). *Equity: Theory and research*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Weinstein, E.A. (1969). The development of interpersonal competence. In D.A. Goslin (Ed.), *Handbook of socialization theory and research* (pp. 753-775). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Wheeler, L., Reis, H.T., & Bond, M.H. (1989). Collectivism-individualism in everyday social life: The Middle Kingdom and the melting pot. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 79-86.
- White, R.W. (1959). Motivation considered: The concept of competence. In D. A. Goslin (Ed.), *Handbook of socialization theory and research* (pp. 753-775). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Wiemann, J.M. (1977). Explication and test of a model of communicative competence. *Human Communication Research*, 3, 195-213.
- Wiemann, J.M., & Backlund, P. (1980). Current theory and research in communicative competence. *Review of Educational Research*, 50, 185-199.
- Wiemann, J. M., & Bradac, J.J. (1989). Metatheoretical issues in the study of communicative competence.. In B. Dervin (Ed.), *Progress in communication science* (vol. 9, pp. 261-284). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Wiemann, J.M., & Kelly, C.W. (1981). Pragmatics of interpersonal competence. In C. Wilder-Mott & J.H. Weakland (Eds.), *Rigor and imagination: Essays from the legacy of Gregory Bateson* (pp. 283-297). New York: Praeger.
- Wiemann, J.M., Takai, J., Ota, H., & Wiemann, M.O. (1997). A relational model of communication competence. In B. Kovacics (Eds.), *Emergent theories in human communication*. Albany (pp. 25-44). NY: SUNY Press.
- Yoneyama, T. (1976). *Nihonjin no nakama ishiki* (Japanese construals of nakama). Tokyo: Kodansha.