

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE:

A Cross-cultural Study of First Conversations
Between Strangers

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Abstract

Two studies based on the Coordinated Management of Meaning theory of communicative competence are reported. Harris, Cronen and Lesch (1979) suggest three ideal levels of competence, operationalized by varying the type of aligning actions used in conversation: Minimal competence, characterized by no use of aligning actions; Satisfactory competence, characterized by use of normal aligning actions; and Optimal or Metacompetence, characterized by the use of meta-aligning actions, which allow the creation of new, nonnormative episodes. Harris et al.'s study compared the effects of Aligning Actions to Information Sequencing (Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck and Schulman, 1976) in a study using model transcribed episodes. Aligning was found to have significantly stronger effects than Information Sequencing, and the predicted three levels of competence were distinguished.

The first study employed a field descriptive design and used interviews to examine the rules of first conversations between strangers in Medellin, Colombia. The study attempted to find message equivalents to Aligning Actions and the norms governing Information Sequencing. Results indicated that there is no Colombian equivalent to "Meta-aligning", although information sequencing patterns tended to be similar to those found in the United States.

The second study was a partial replication of Harris et al.'s experimental study, using 141 subjects from Medellin and

248 subjects from the University of Kansas. Subjects read transcribed episodes which varied on three levels of Aligning Actions and on three types of Information Sequencing (Low-Low Self-Disclosure, Low-High, High-Low). One of the speakers in each episode was evaluated on CMM competence measures.

Results indicated that Colombian subjects did not differentiate levels of competence in the episodes used, nor were they significantly influenced by Information Sequencing. Kansas subjects differentiated only two levels of competence, rather than the expected three. Further, Aligning had significantly stronger effects than Information Sequencing.

These results are interpreted to imply that Colombian subjects were influenced by criteria other than Aligning Actions or Information Sequencing. They may simply be less influenced by formal aspects of conversation than are North American subjects. This difference is explained theoretically in terms of Hall's (1977) differentiation of Low Context and High Context cultures and the CMM hierarchy of contexts. Specifically, it is suggested that Colombians align and coordinate their conversations at the relationship level rather than at the episode level, while North American subjects focus on the episode level primarily.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Communicative competence has always been of primary concern to Western communication scholars. Rhetoricians have traditionally stressed persuasive skills, usually in public speaking situations. Linguists have attempted to discover what a speaker must know in order to create grammatically correct sentences. More recently, sociolinguists have pointed out that the appropriateness of utterances is as important a criterion as grammaticality, for everyday conversation as well as for public speaking. Scholars in the past ten years have included the achievement of the speaker's goals (including but not limited to persuasion) as an issue in evaluating communicative competence.

The proliferation of theories of communication makes the issue of communicative competence vastly complicated. There is little agreement among scholars as to the appropriate unit of observation (individual, dyad, small group, society, culture); whether the goal of study should be explanation, prediction, or control; whether the subject's explanation of his/her actions should be considered in research; or whether human behavior can best be explained in terms of laws, rules, or some other means.

In an attempt to deal with the many facets of the issue, Linda Harris (1979a; 1979b; Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979) has

argued convincingly for the need for a systemic view of competence. This view postulates: 1) that communication takes place within human systems; 2) that individuals may act more competently in some systems than in others; 3) that the coherence of a system is a product of the actions of its members; 4) that systems may constrain the behavior of their members to some extent; 5) that individuals may vary in the options they perceive as available to them in a given system; and 6) that an individual may perceive him/herself as operating within various systems or contexts at different levels simultaneously.

Harris proposes three ideal states or levels of competence: Minimal competence, Satisfactory competence, and Meta-competence (or Optimal competence). Minimal competence is conceptualized by Harris as a state in which "the individual is capable of functioning at a minimal level (motor skills, information processing skills, etc.). However, he/she is unable to function appropriately given the rules of any episode within a particular social system and thereby deviates from the expected behavior. His/her relationship to the system is therefore 'outside' the system" (Harris, 1979a). An example of an individual in this condition is a person who has recently arrived in a foreign country, who knows the language of the country but is unable to operate because of a lack of cultural knowledge.

Satisfactory competence exists when "the individual is capable of functioning at the age appropriate motor skill level as well as able to function appropriately within the rules of a given episode in the social system. He/she is 'inside' the social system" (Harris, 1979a). The normal teenager who has adjusted to the social climate of his/her high school, learned the appropriate slang, and is capable of having the types of conversations that generally occur among teenagers in the particular high school, is satisfactorily competent in that setting.

Optimal or Meta-competence exists when "the individual is capable of both minimal competence and satisfactory competence. In addition, he/she is capable of choosing his/her relationship to the system. That is, one can decide whether to act 'as if' one is minimally or satisfactorily competent, or one can decide to deviate from the system. Planned deviation places one outside of the system by choice rather than by inability" (Harris, 1979). For instance, a high school student may deliberately act unintelligent or incompetent in order to drive a teacher crazy.

Harris identified one aspect of communicative competence as the appropriate use of "aligning actions" (Stokes and Hewitt, 1976; Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979). Aligning actions are acts of conversation that provide flow and

coherence to conversation, linking statements to previous statements or providing transition, and bringing behavior into line with cultural or systemic expectations (Stokes and Hewitt, 1976).

To test the importance of aligning actions, Harris et al. (1979) designed model episodes made up of a standard set of statements. Episodes showing minimal competence merely included the statements, with no aligning actions to provide coherence or linkage between them.

A: Are you from around here?

B: I'm from New York.

A: I'm a native. I have a son at Penn State.

The speakers make no attempt to link their statements, nor to show their relevance. The episode produced appears nearly incoherent.

Satisfactory competence was shown using the same set of statements, with normal aligning actions (tag questions, comments on previous statements, interjections, etc.) providing flow and coherence:

A: Are you from around here?

B: No, I'm from New York. Where are you from?

A: I'm a native. You're a long way from home. I have a son at Penn State. We go through New York when we visit him.

The episode produced appears much more coherent and smooth-

flowing than the episode using no aligning actions.

The optimally competent episodes included the same statements, but the speakers carried on a concurrent episode of comment on the creation of the episode, demonstrating that they were choosing whether to follow norms governing initial conversations between strangers:

A: Hi, my name is Lee. What's yours?

B: Hi, Lee. Pat. I think your next question is supposed to be, "Are you from around here?"

A: Uh, right! "Are you from around here?" or something like that (laughs).

B: What a fascinating question! No,

These speakers are able to play with the rules of the conversation, creating an original episode while maintaining coherence and smoothness.

A second aspect of communicative competence is information sequencing. Information sequencing has to do with "norms" governing the selection of topics for conversation and appropriate self-disclosure, and comes from research based on Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger, 1973; Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck, and Schulman, 1976). Berger et al. found that subjects rated certain types of statements as likely to come up early in an initial conversation with a stranger ("My name is Pam"; "I'm from New York"), while other more intimate topics

would come up much later (if at all) in an initial conversation ("I think my daughter is pregnant"; "My son was arrested last night for possession of marihuana").

Harris et al. hypothesized that, with the use of meta-aligning, episodes could be created which break the norms of information sequencing, yet still would be perceived as exhibiting high communicative competence. For instance, an initial conversation could begin with the revelation that one speaker's son had been arrested the night before for the possession of marihuana, progress through medium disclosure statements ("I talk to my plants; I think it makes them grow bigger"), and end with the exchange of names. If this conversation were done using meta-aligning (to show that the speakers were using intimate disclosure early because of choice, not because of a lack of awareness of norms governing self-disclosure), the speakers might still be perceived as communicatively competent.

In her original studies in Massachusetts (1979b; Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979), Harris found that subjects differentiated the three expected levels of competence in their evaluations of the speakers in the model episodes. The studies included a comparison of the effects of aligning actions with the effects of information sequencing. Episodes were constructed which varied according to the levels of competence as reflected by aligning actions (see above), and in

information sequencing.

The results of Harris et al.'s study indicated that aligning actions influenced evaluations of communicative competence more than did norms governing information sequencing. Specifically, speakers who broke norms governing appropriate self-disclosure by making high disclosure statements early in an initial conversation with a stranger were still rated as communicatively competent if they used meta-aligning to show that they chose deliberately to break the norm.

Purpose of Study

My studies are an attempt to replicate Harris, Cronen and Lesch's (1979) study, using subjects in Medellin, Colombia and at the University of Kansas. By replicating this study using subjects from two cultures, I hoped to evaluate these theoretical constructs (Aligning Actions and Information Sequencing) as to their transcultural validity and influence (Ramsey, 1979; Asante and Vora, 1983; Kang and Pearce, 1984; Nakanishi and Johnson, 1985). Information Sequencing has been studied in comparisons of Oriental and North American subjects (Nakanishi and Johnson, 1985; Pearce and Kang, 1983; Alexander, Cronen et al., 1980). Aligning actions are especially interesting as they have not been subjected to crosscultural

study. If they serve the important function ascribed to them in CMM competence theory, equivalent actions should appear in conversations in other cultures. If they really are essential to conversation, they will be an important focus in future crosscultural and intercultural communication research.

The research has two parts. The first study is a field-descriptive study, using interviews to discover typical topics discussed in initial conversations between strangers in Medellín, the typical sequencing and relative intimacy of these topics, and the aligning actions most commonly used in initial conversations. This allows a comparison with the findings of Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck and Schulman (1976), regarding the likely sequence of topics in initial conversations between strangers in the United States. It also provides for a comparison between aligning actions used in Colombia and those commonly used in the United States. In particular I sought to discover methods similar to meta-aligning which allow for the deliberate breaking of norms regarding topic sequencing without penalty.

The second study is a replication of Harris, Cronen and Lesch's (1979) study. Using subjects at the University of Kansas and in the city of Medellín, Colombia, I compared the influence of Aligning Actions and Information Sequencing on subjects' perceptions of a speaker's communicative competence

in nine model episodes, varying in Information Sequencing and Aligning Actions, using dependent measures drawn from other Coordinated Management of Meaning (Pearce and Cronen, 1980) research.

The research questions with which my studies are concerned are as follow:

R 1a What are common topics and classes of topics in initial conversations between strangers in Medellin?

R 2a What is the usual or probable sequence of topics in an initial conversation between strangers in Medellin?

R 3a How do Colombian subjects classify these topics in terms of relative intimacy or self-disclosure?

A focus on aligning actions and style produced the following questions:

R 1b How are conversations between strangers begun (circumstances, openings, rituals, etc.)?

R 2b How are topics introduced or changed?

R 3b Can one choose not to follow the norms of topic choice or sequence and still perform acceptably?

R 4b How would one go about breaking a norm regarding topic intimacy or sequence and still perform acceptably?

R 5b Does a counterpart exist to Harris, Cronen and Lesch's meta-alignment?

A comparison of subjects in the United States and Colombia is based on the following questions:

R
7 Do the effects of Information Sequencing differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R
8 Do the effects of Aligning differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

Chapter II presents a review of communicative competence literature, focusing on the Coordinated Management of Meaning conceptualization of competence and recent crosscultural research on conversation. Chapter III describes the methods used in my two studies. Chapter IV is a presentation of the results of the studies. Finally, Chapter V discusses the results and their implications for communicative competence theory and intercultural communication. The discussion section is based heavily on Edward T. Hall's distinction between High-Context and Low-Context cultures, as well as the hierarchy of contexts proposed in CMM.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

A theory of competence is integral to a theory of human communication. "Communicative competence" is a term with which few scholars truly come to grips; it is along the lines of Bateson's questions: "'how to grow into five-way symmetry', 'how to survive a forest fire', 'how to grow and still stay the same shape', 'how to learn', 'how to write a Constitution', 'how to invent and drive a car', 'how to count to seven', and so on" (1979, p. 4). With rare exceptions, humans are communicatively competent to some degree. However, a clear definition of communicative competence with which all agree has yet to be formulated. Even to state the issue (à la Bateson) is either redundant or problematic: "Communicative competence is the capacity/ability to communicate." Any definition that is more specific must involve a specific theory of communication.

In this chapter, theories of communicative competence drawn from the fields of sociolinguistics and communication studies are reviewed and criticized. The communicative competence theory built on Pearce and Cronen's (1980) Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory is presented and criticized as well. Research questions and a rationale for research are presented at the end of the chapter.

Competence Theories in Sociolinguistics

The term "communicative competence" is usually attributed to Dell Hymes (1972, 1974). He proposed the term in his attacks on Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence.

Chomsky's "'competence' refers to the ability of the idealized speaker-hearer to associate sounds and meanings strictly in accordance with the rules of his language" (1968, p. 116). This rather abstract concept is the counterpart of Chomsky's term "performance",

"the actual observed use of language.

[Performance] does not simply reflect the intrinsic sound-meaning connections established by the system of linguistics. We do not interpret what is said in our presence simply by application of the linguistic principles that determine the phonetic and semantic properties of an utterance. Extralinguistic beliefs concerning the speaker and the situation play a fundamental role in determining how speech is produced, identified, and understood. Linguistic performance is furthermore, governed by principles of cognitive structure (for example, by memory restrictions) that are not, properly speaking, aspects of language" (1968, pp. 115-116).

The aspects of speech covered by most communication theorists

would have little to do with linguistic competence, according to this division of realms.

Hymes (1972) takes issue with this formulation, insisting that the "extralinguistic beliefs" are essential to the use of language, and should be included in a theory of competence: "The controlling image [in Chomsky's formulation] is of an abstract, isolated individual, almost an unmotivated cognitive mechanism, not, except incidentally, a person in a social world" (1972, p. 272). Hymes and other sociolinguists (Labov, 1972; Van Der Geest, 1975; Ervin-Tripp, 1972; Fishman, 1971) insist that language cannot be separated from its social context.

Sociolinguists generally object to Chomsky's formulation of linguistic competence, and his relegation of social aspects of speech to what he calls "performance". Several issues stand out as important in reviewing the sociolinguists' dissatisfactions with Chomsky's position: 1) Pragmatics; 2) Social appropriateness of speech; 3) Variable competence; and 4) Appropriate or useful ungrammaticality or inappropriateness.

For the purpose of linguistic study, Chomsky seems to disregard completely the pragmatic aspect of language. Dittmar stresses pragmatics in his criticism of Chomsky:

Sentences that are identical in their formal grammatical structure can, according to the situational context, be commands, requests, demands or apologies. Conversely,

two grammatically different sentences can be understood as one and the same speech act. Furthermore, speech acts have immediate pragmatic consequences: a person who makes a promise or apologizes for something is performing an action which has consequences both for himself and for others. It is obvious that traditional grammatical categories are not adequate for describing distinctions of this kind (Dittmar, 1976, p. 163).

This emphasis, on language as social action, is echoed by various sociolinguists. A speaker must know "how to do things with words" (Austin, 1962), not only how to make grammatical sentences. Knowledge of function cannot be separated from other types of linguistic knowledge.

Social appropriateness is also an important issue for sociolinguists. Kenneth Pike states that "language is a part of behavior. It is not isolated from nonverbal action, but is integrated with it, and takes its meaning from social settings, intents, and reactions" (1982, pp. 70-71).

Geertz (1968) points out the centrality of social relations to language form in languages with a T/V distinction (thou/you, du/Sie, tú/Ud., etc.), as well as languages with more complex honorifics such as Japanese and Javanese. Geertz uses the Javanese language as an example of a language in which social status affects grammar very strongly: "Status is determined by many things -- wealth, descent, education, occupation, age,

kinship, and nationality, among others, but the important point is that the choice of linguistic forms as well as speech style is in every case partly determined by the relative status of the conversers" (Geertz, 1968, p. 282). In this case, clearly social factors cannot be relegated to the "extralinguistic" realm.

The issue of context-dependent versus context-free communication is the basis of the primary differences between Chomsky and the sociolinguists.

The variability of competence is another issue raised by sociolinguists. Hymes points out that some speakers are more competent than others, and that speakers are more competent in some situations than others. These cases would not be covered by Chomsky's "ideal speaker/hearer". Hymes (1972) also points out that Chomsky's formulation is inadequate to explain cases of dual competence in receiving but single competence in speech (as is the case with many black children -- or for that matter, white children -- who understand both Black and White English but can only speak one of the two).

Based upon his formulation (including his discovery of variable competence within speech communities), he proposes a classificatory scheme for comparative competence. He suggests roughly three degrees or levels of communicative competence:

1) Minimal competence: speakers are characterized by a single speech habit in a single social sphere without any shifting of

1

repertoire or code (restricted)

2) Average competence: speakers have a command of a set of speech habits which is neither large nor small; they use these in a limited range of different social spheres, and shift their verbal repertoire accordingly (flexible).

3) Maximal competence: speakers have versatile speech habits in many social spheres, and shift their verbal repertoire with ease (versatile) (Hymes, 1968; excerpt in Dittmar, 1976, p. 164).

These three levels serve as a useful means for classifying speakers according to their relative skill in dealing with a variety of contexts.

Finally, Hymes reminds us that in actual speech situations, speech may be quite adequate and functional even if it is ungrammatical (1974, pp. 273 ff.). Furthermore, he proposes that "some situations call for being appropriately ungrammatical" (p. 275).

This last observation is echoed by Saviile-Troike (1982) and Stanback and Pearce (1979), who give examples of persons or groups who act less competent than they are in order to gain an advantage in a social situation. For example, a beautiful actress may act less intelligent than she is in order to win a "dumb blond" role, or to gain an appearance on a television talk show. Stanback and Pearce discuss "shucking" and "tomming" by one African tribal group in order to win favors

from another group.

This would imply that a speaker must not only learn how to do things right, it may be to his/her advantage to know how to do things wrong, and to learn to recognize or create situations in which each would be helpful.

Competence in Sociolinguistics -- Summary and Critique

Hymes summarizes his own position as follows:

In sum, the goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to be to show the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible, and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behavior (1972, p. 286).

This reflects the position of most sociolinguists. Furthermore, the following issues are areas in which the sociolinguists differ with Chomsky:

1. Sociolinguists insist that a competence theory must take into account not only grammaticality but function. A speaker must know "how to do things with words" (Austin, 1962), not only how to make grammatical sentences. Knowledge of function cannot be separated from other types of linguistic knowledge.
2. Social appropriateness is an important issue for sociolinguists. Speech acts may be completely grammatical but

unsuitable for the social context. Speakers must have social knowledge and skills in order to use language functionally.

3. A theory of competence should be able to explain the differences in skills between speakers: how is it that some people communicate more effectively or are judged as higher in communicative ability than others? How is it that speakers have more ability in some contexts than in others?

4. A theory should be able to account for cases in which a speaker speaks ungrammatically but effectively, or deliberately chooses to act in a way viewed as "incompetent" in order to achieve a desired consequent condition.

Hymes attempts to incorporate these issues into his formulation of communicative competence, but the three levels of competence he suggests in his model (see above) share the characteristic of presenting competence in terms of repertoire: a speaker is able to use a greater or lesser number of "speech styles". No provision is made for the creation of new styles or the deliberate use of an inappropriate speech style, although this issue is discussed by sociolinguists.

Competence Theories in Communication Studies

Theories of competence in communication studies literature are primarily human relations theories, and are not clearly

grounded in any particular theory of communication. Few of them deal with the basic issues: What is communication? What does a communicator know and do? They are primarily theories about healthy human relationships; communication per se is taken for granted.

Several emphases can be seen in competence literature in communication studies. Theories tend to stress goal achievement, interaction skills, and perceived competence (Wiemann, 1977, pp. 224-225). Bochner and Kelly (1974) set the tone, stressing the following as criteria for judging competence:

Competence can be judged by the following criteria: 1) ability to formulate and achieve objectives; 2) ability to collaborate effectively with others, i.e., to be interdependent; and 3) ability to adapt appropriately to situational or environmental variations (p. 288; italics deleted).

These criteria are similar to those mentioned above, and are echoed in Wiemann (1977) and Brandt (1979). Skills and styles included in communicative or social competence formulations are: owning feelings and thoughts, descriptiveness, self-disclosure (Bochner and Kelly, 1974), affiliation with and support of partner, social relaxation, empathy, behavioral flexibility, interaction management skills (Wiemann, 1977), active listening, supportiveness of conversational partner, openness and candor, control of information flow, maintenance

of a relaxed atmosphere (Brandt, 1979), etc. Most of these constructs can be traced to the writings of Rogers, Jourard, and other humanistic psychologists.

Hale and Delia (1976) are somewhat different in emphasis from other theorists. In their conception of communicative competence, "role-taking or social perspective-taking -- the capacity to assume and maintain another's point of view -- becomes the basic cognitive process in communication" (Hale and Delia, 1976, p. 194). Role-taking and cognitive complexity are important concepts for Hale and Delia's competence:

Considerable evidence has been accumulated which shows that more complex perceivers 1) form interpersonal impressions which are more differentiated and which organize potentially contradictory information in more advanced ways, 2) are less dependent upon simplifying social schemas in construing social structures, and 3) demonstrate greater cognitive flexibility in being able to assume alternative cognitive sets and not focusing only upon the immediate salient context in forming impressions (Hale and Delia, 1976, p. 199)²

This theory stresses basic cognitive abilities, directly related to a theory of communication grounded in information processing. This grounding makes it a rare exception in competence theories.

Communication Studies
Summary and Critique of Competence Theories

The examples thus far presented of theories from the communication studies literature share several characteristics. With the exception of Hale and Delia (1976), none of the theorists link their theory of competence systematically to their theory of communication. They appear more to be theories about healthy human relationships than theories which explain what all communicators know and can do -- as Chomsky's competence formulates what speakers of a language know and can do.

These theories reflect quite consistently the values of the humanistic perspective in American psychology of the 1960s and the 1970s. The emphasis on constructs such as empathy, affiliation/support (Wiemann, 1977), active listening, openness and candor (Brandt, 1979), other-orientation, sensitivity to others, providing positive feelings toward others (Wheless and Duran, 1982), owning feelings and thoughts, descriptiveness, and self-disclosure (Bochner and Kelly, 1974), reflect a grounding in the writings of Rogers, Jourard, and the other humanistic psychologists.

The emphasis on goal achievement seems superficially to reflect a recognition of the pragmatic aspects of language use, brought to the forefront by the speech act theorists (Searle, 1969; Austin, 1962); however, none of these communication studies writers tie "goal-achievement" to a theory of

pragmatics.

The skills listed by the various theorists (listening, cueing, negotiation (Cushman and Craig, 1976); interaction management skills (Wiemann, 1977); adaptation to situational or environmental variations (Bochner and Kelly, 1974); active listening and control of information flow (Brandt, 1979); role-taking (Hale and Delia, 1976)) are certainly important skills. However, with the exceptions of role-taking and possibly situational adaptation, none of these skills is essential to "communication". For most of these theorists, the doing of conversation is of a different order from communication itself. Communication is taken for granted; its definition is presupposed and has little to do with the type of "competence" in question. "Competence" seems to refer only to how skilled and effective people are in using communication, not in communication per se; this is a far cry from Chomsky's original formulation.

These theorists address some of the criteria mentioned in the discussion of sociolinguistics, but tangentially. The skills listed include some relating to the use of communication to achieve goals, social appropriateness, and variable competence. However, they are not dealt with on the most basic level, that of communication itself. They do not explain the most basic things a speaker must know or do to be a competent communicator; the focus is primarily on human relations.

The Coordinated Management of Meaning

A theory in which competence is linked to the theory's definition of communication is the Coordinated Management of Meaning. It was designed by Pearce and Cronen (1980; Cronen, Pearce and Harris, 1979), and refined and extended by them and some of their students (Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979; Pearce and Kang, 1983; Cronen, Johnson and Lannaman, 1982).

Pearce and Cronen's view of communication is pragmatic. They would probably agree with Weimer (1974, p. 424) that "there is no meaning or knowledge in language per se". The basic unit of language is the speech act (although lower levels are recognized). Speech is primarily instrumental (Goring, 1984).

The theory is based on four assumptions: 1) communication is best seen as action, rather than primarily as information transfer; 2) meanings are personal, not necessarily shared; 3) humans are rule-creators and rule-users; 4) human relationships must be seen as systems.

Action theory has its roots in the anthropology of Malinowsky. Malinowsky arrived at the following conclusions about language:

Language in its primitive function and its original form has an essentially pragmatic character; it is a form of behavior, an indispensable element of concerted

human action. To consider it as a means of incorporating or expressing thought is to focus in a distorted manner on one of its most derivative and specialized functions (Malinowsky, 1923, p. 36).

For Malinowsky, the transfer of information was not the primary purpose of communication.

This perspective is echoed in the writings of Searle (1969), Austin (1962), and Bateson (1972). Bateson gives the example of a cat meowing when its owner enters the kitchen. The cat cannot say, "I'm hungry, give me milk," but by meowing expresses its dependence on its owner. This communication about the relationship has the effect of reminding the owner of his obligation, thus accomplishing the cat's desire. Insults are perhaps the most obvious example of instrumental communication. The content of an insult is not necessarily information, as it very probably is false. The purpose is to hurt the recipient -- it serves as a verbal blow.

The importance of this perspective can be seen in the comments of the sociolinguists in the literature above. Speech cannot be seen only or even primarily as the expression of thought. The relationship of communicative acts to their contexts must be considered.

The epistemology of CMM is based on the assumption that an individual's view of a situation is more important than the situation itself in understanding the individual's behavior.

This is consistent with Kelly's (1955) theory, that humans not only respond to their environment, we represent it or construct it mentally.

This position also is consistent with speech act theory. If one person greets another, or asks him/her for a favor, these acts have an effect on the relationship: to ask a favor is to express faith in the other person, and a certain amount of dependence. A greeting may mean, "I recognize your existence! I am very happy to see you again." But the words themselves do not necessarily express this meaning; they could as easily mask animosity. One may greet another because, even if one hates the other, one wishes to avoid conflict. In the same way, a request for a favor may serve as an expression of trust and dependence or as an opportunity to trap the other person.

Humans' behavior within or towards our environment is mediated by our theories or constructs. Not all our theories are the same. Some people's theories seem to function better than others'. Persons whose theories are inadequate for normal performance in society may be called "psychotic" or "schizophrenic".

This perspective is not entirely subjectivistic or solipsistic. A certain amount of similarity must be supposed between the construct systems of different people. Family members or members of a culture share certain concepts or beliefs. The important point is that ultimately the researcher

must focus on the individual's reality, and not take "reality" as a given.

This is in the tradition of Max Weber, who broke with his predecessors in this regard (Gerth and Mills, 1946). European intellectual tradition focused on general, categorical, and invariable events. The personal, dynamic acts of persons were used as examples to support general principles, but were considered unimportant in themselves. Weber, on the other hand, proposed that the individual and his/her behavior are the basic unit of analysis. What is real is specific; the general is not real, but rather a reification of the specific.

This focus, which is linked with the theory of speech acts, disrupted traditional sociology. "Social reality" could no longer be considered a preexistent entity within which we act, but rather a structure which emerges from human action. Human behavior creates and maintains social reality. There is a reciprocity or interaction between our action and the social order. Society changes as the behavior and ideas change of the people who compose society. People act according to their ideas of reality.

Weber's theory of human action is not deterministic. Weber observed that humans act for a variety of motives, from (nearly) deterministic to (nearly) purely rational. Many cultural patterns or rules are very deeply ingrained, beyond conscious awareness. For instance, most North Americans eat

three times a day, or at least consider that to be normal. It can be very startling and disruptive to travel to, say, Germany, and eat four times a day, with rather a different diet. An experience like this (or any other sort of cultural shock) can make one aware of one's hidden assumptions.

Other behaviors are purely voluntary or rational, willed by the individual.

Weber, observing that much of our behavior does not appear to follow invariable laws, but that it does seem to be structured, proposed that humans are creators and users of rules. We create rules through experimentation, or receive them from society. Weber distinguished four types or levels of rules, on a continuum from those that are so ingrained that they seem like laws, to those that are voluntary and rational (Gerth and Mills, 1946).

Pearce and Cronen (1980) distinguish two basic types of rules: regulative, which guide action, and constitutive, which guide interpretation. These rules are personal and may be idiosyncratic. Lucas, a small boy in an orphanage in Medellín, learned many regulative rules during his stay there: one is not allowed to open the doors, nor to play with the water faucet, nor to scream or yell. Furthermore, Lucas learned another regulative rule, of a higher level of abstraction: if one pretends to do these forbidden things, an adult will scold one and lead one to another part of the room. A constitutive

rule operating here is that this treatment counts as valuable human contact. This is understandable when one considers that Lucas was an abandoned child, and even in the orphanage was surrounded with adults who often forgot to give him much attention. To a different child, in different conditions, the same human contact might count as rejection.

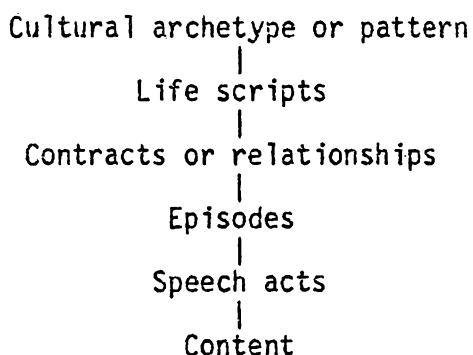
The anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972) has clarified many aspects of human behavior with his model of the human as a system, constantly adapting itself to its environment (or adapting by changing its environment). Bateson sees human relationships as interactive systems. He uses the example of the cat meowing for milk to point out that the cat is "talking" about a rather abstract pattern that forms part of the cat-owner relationship. A child's cry is a similar expression of dependence, and has the effect of getting the parents to meet the child's needs. According to Lorenz (1952), all higher animals seem to pay a lot of attention to the patterns of their relationships.

Communication takes place within human systems, and human systems result from communication. Systems exist at various levels, allowing for communication even between strangers. Because of the openness of many systems, communication need not be perfect or complete to be effective or substantial. A systems approach implies that the researcher should not focus exclusively on the individual, but must include his/her systems

of relationships and the functions his/her actions perform within these systems in his/her focus (Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson, 1967).

The Coordinated Management of Meaning theory, created in the late 1970s by Pearce and Cronen, suggests that communication is not the transmission or sharing of meaning, but rather the coordination of meanings between two or more persons. People operate according to their own meanings.

Pearce and Cronen suggest that we process information and make decisions on a variety of levels of context. They propose an idealized hierarchy of (at least) six levels. The number and types of levels, and the relationship between levels, may vary among people and situations.



1. Content

Content refers to the cognitive referential processes whereby people organize and interpret the world according to

their perceptions of it. This concept is related to the "constructs" of George Kelly (1955); reality is not considered in the objective sense, but rather as it is interpreted by the knower. The most basic interpretation of experience and basic symbolic functions operate at this level.

2. Speech acts

Speech acts are things we do to people through speaking or making a communicative gesture. This concept comes from the philosophy of language of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). This level has to do with our understanding of the function of a given act, the pragmatic function of communication. Some speech acts would be: insult, flattery, information, accusation, promise, etc.

As will be seen below, speech acts often depend on their contexts for meaning. The same words may serve as entirely different speech acts under different circumstances. Speech acts may also have the effect of redefining the context ("This conversation is getting heavy." "Will you marry me?")

3. Episodes

Episodes are "communicative routines which [the participants] view as distinct wholes, separate from other types of discourse, characterized by special rules of speech and nonverbal behavior and often distinguished by clearly recognizable opening or closing sequences" (Gumperz, 1972, p. 17). Pearce and Cronen remark that due to the "temporally

extensive pattern [of episodes,] a particular speech act, when perceived as part of an episode, is not only contextualized hierarchically but also temporally. The meaning of the act entails and is entailed by the context of the preceding and subsequent acts" (1980, p. 134).

A problem with the comments by Pearce and Cronen is that they imply a monochronic linear sequence to speech acts in all episodes. In fact, many episodes take place in a polychronic mode, with attention being paid to many stimuli simultaneously, and no necessary sequence or linear logical connection between subsequent acts.

The concept of "episodes" appears in Hall (1977, 1983) as "action chains", and in Goffman (1967) as "occasions". Harré and Secord (1973) describe episodes as "any sequence of happenings in which human beings engage which has some principle of unity" (p.10).

Episodes may be culturally patterned, such as the one which usually follows "Hi! How are you?" Others may be original, improvised on the spot. In any conversation, however, some sort of structure can be seen.

Episodes serve as contexts for speech acts. They may serve as hierarchical context: "As this conversation is a joking exchange, the threat my friend is making must be a joke." They may serve as temporal context: "It is too early in the conversation to ask that question."

Episodes may also be redefined by speech acts, as I mentioned above.

4. Contracts or relationships

The term "contract" reflects the human tendency to define our relationships according to characteristics or status. For instance, we make distinctions regarding the level of trust or commitment in different relationships.

Pearce and Cronen distinguish four aspects of interpersonal contracts: boundaries, repertoire, valence, and enmeshment. Of these, enmeshment, which is "the extent to which persons identify themselves as within the system" (1980, p. 133), has received the most attention in CMM research. Boundaries are the perceived differences between the persons in the relationship and those outside: "we" and "they". Repertoire denotes the selection of events which are legitimated within the contract. Valence has to do with the relative value or affect of the contract for those involved.

Contracts may serve as context to episodes and speech acts. The appropriateness of a given speech act may be evaluated according to the relationship: "Don't talk to your mother that way!"

There is a reciprocity between this and the lower levels, as can be seen in episodes of "defining the relationship" (or in a marriage proposal).

5. Life scripts

In CMM theory, life scripts refer to "that repertoire of episodes that a person perceives as identified with him/herself, the array of interactive situations that are consistent with a recognition of 'this is me' or 'this is something I would do'" (Pearce and Cronen, 1980, p. 136). This level, for Pearce and Cronen, is not a static set of traits affecting all situations. It is dynamic, changing with one's experience and relationships, and may include inconsistent or contradictory episodes, contracts, or other commitments.

In different situations, life scripts may be hierarchically above or below other levels. For instance, a child's life script may be subsumed by his/her relationship with parents. Later in life, one may make decisions about relationships based on one's life script. Both conditions may exist simultaneously in different relationships.

The self, in CMM theory, is the product and producer of interaction, in the tradition of Sullivan (1953) and Mead (1934). For the purpose of communication, the self is best described as patterns or episodes of interaction (real or possible), rather than a static, monadic entity, according to Pearce and Cronen. I personally see the self as a continuous entity, but recognize that one has patterns of behavior that one identifies with oneself, including contradictory elements, and that many aspects of one's self may change with experience or in different relationships.

6. Cultural archetypes or patterns

This level is probably indistinguishable from life scripts or episodes, until one does crosscultural research or has a real crosscultural experience (including anything from changing countries to Garfinkelling -- see Mehan and Wood, 1975). Cultural archetypes or patterns are perhaps the deepest rooted patterns, rooted in human experience of birth, development, pain, joy, hope, despair, gravity, sex, death, etc. Pearce and Cronen suggest that the commonality of human experience allows for some coordination between members of different cultures, even if language and lifestyle are not shared (1980, p. 136).

Constitutive rules

The links between levels are conceived as constitutive rules in CMM theory. Constitutive rules link stimuli to perceived contexts to produce interpretations. This involves the basic interpretation of sound as words, words as acts, and acts in one or more levels of context. For instance, the message content: "You knucklehead!" at the speech act level usually counts as an insult. However, in an episode of a joking exchange, in a warm, humorous friendship, that same message content can count as a joke or even as an expression of affection. The rule would involve several other constitutive rules, but could be phrased as follows: "In the context of a joking exchange (episode) with a good friend (contract), the message content "You knucklehead!" counts as a joke (speech

act) or expression of affection (speech act), rather than as an insult (speech act)."

This type of hierarchy of levels is described in a primitive form in Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967), in which they differentiate digital and analogic communication. In this and the double-bind article (Bateson, Jackson and Haley, 1956), they point out that contradictory messages may be perceived on different levels. A paradigm of interventionist therapy has emerged from this insight.

Regulative rules

These rules specify appropriate, preferred, possible, or required actions within social contexts. The "practical force", the logical, emotive, or pragmatic power of a rule, varies from situation to situation. At times one may act in response to another's action. At times one may act in order to achieve a desired consequent. At times one acts because the act is consistent with a life script or a relationship.

Regulative rules vary in the options they offer to the actor. For instance, in an embarrassing situation, one person may consider it required to act as though nothing out of the ordinary has occurred. Another person may decide between leaving the situation or trying to defuse it. The existence of more than one means to a goal in CMM theory is called "equifinality".

The selection of desired consequents varies also from person to person. Machistas, for instance, only accept one type of relationship with a woman. Real intimacy or equality are out of the question. Others see many possible outcomes to a situation, equally or differentially acceptable. This existence of several acceptable consequents is termed "multifinality".

Recent research (Nakanishi and Johnson, 1985; Kang and Pearce, 1984; Wolfson and Pearce, 1983) has focused on the implications of such variables as self-disclosure on conversational logics for members of different cultures. The studies generally found significant differences between North American and Asian subjects in their perceptions of the effects of high self-disclosure on subsequent actions within a conversation.

Communicative competence

The competence theory has been developed primarily by Linda Harris (Harris, 1979a, 1979b; Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979). Harris makes an argument for a systemic theory of competence, based on the assumptions of the interactionist paradigm. She points out that the sociolinguists' (specifically Hymes') view, which describes competence as knowledge of a repertoire of speech acts or styles appropriate to a variable selection of situations, has no way of accounting for creative episodes

which are not part of the selection handed by one's culture; or the deliberate choice of acting incompetent in order to gain a desired consequent (Saville-Troike, 1982; Stanback and Pearce, 1979).

Enmeshment, the extent to which a person is bound by a system, is a key concept for CMM competence theory. The theory avers that people are variably enmeshed in multiple systems. This means that we participate in many systems, and that some systems may have more control over us than others (or that a system may have more influence at certain times). Competence, in part, is the ability to decide one's enmeshment in a given system and to move easily between systems.

CMM theory also states that humans create systems by their action. As was stated above, there is reciprocity between action and the system in which it takes place. Episodic systems are in part created by the use of aligning actions in conversation. Aligning actions relate the speaker's acts to the flow of conversation, providing or demonstrating coherence. They also indicate the relationship of the acts to established cultural patterns (Stokes and Hewitt, 1976; Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979).

Harris et al. (1979) propose a model of three levels of competence: minimal, satisfactory, and optimal or metacompetence. Minimal competence is characterized by an inability to align one's acts with those of the other, or the inability to create coherent conversation. The minimally

competent speaker is outside the system, not by choice but by inability. Harris operationalized minimal competence by creating model episodes in which aligning actions are not used (see Episodes 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix).

Satisfactory aligning is demonstrated by a smooth-flowing conversation in which speech acts are clearly related to each other and follow social norms (see Episodes 4, 5 and 6). Tag questions, comments, and other aligning devices provide smoothness and coherence. The satisfactorily competent speaker knows culturally appropriate speech styles and is able to move easily between them as needed or desired. S/he is within the system, and operates according to the system's rules.

Optimal or metacompetence is demonstrated by episodes in which the creation of the episode and its relation to the norm are commented on as part of the episode, creating a "concurrent metaepisode" of talk about the episode (see Episodes 7, 8 and 9). The meta-competent speaker is able to choose whether s/he will be within the system or outside; s/he is capable of operating within the system, but can decide whether to "follow the rules" or create an original approach to a situation. S/he may choose to appear incompetent in order to achieve some desired consequent condition.

These three are ideal states; individuals rarely fit into the categories perfectly or consistently. It is likely that an individual will be satisfactorily competent in most situations,

but encounter situations in which s/he cannot act competently. The actions of the other person(s) involved may make it difficult to create a coherent conversation, for example, or one may encounter an enigmatic situation for which one is unprepared. It is also unlikely that one can be meta-competent in all situations, or that innovation will work in all situations.

In order to test this formulation, Harris, Cronen and Lesch (1979) created a set of nine model episodes, varying on three levels of aligning actions. Information sequencing was included as an independent variable in order to test the theory against Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger and Calabrese, 1975).

The episodes were created using statements drawn randomly from the materials used in Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck and Schulman's (1976) study. (Berger et al. had subjects rank-order 150 statements as to when they would likely appear in an initial two-hour conversation between strangers.) For a set of low self-disclosure episodes, Harris et al. selected nine statements from the group of statements ranked by subjects as likely to appear early in conversation. For a set of low-to-high self-disclosure episodes, nine statements were selected throughout the spectrum of levels of intimacy, ranging from those likely to appear early in conversation to those rated as unlikely to appear in an initial conversation. For a set of high-to-low self-disclosure episodes, the same statements were

used in reverse order.

The sets of statements were then turned into episodes varying on the three levels of aligning. For the no aligning conditions, the statements were merely strung into the form of a conversation, with no aligning actions linking them together. For the satisfactory aligning conditions, normal aligning actions were used to provide coherence to the conversation. For the meta-aligning conditions, the speakers carried on a concurrent meta-episode of comment on the doing of the conversation, while using the same statements as in the other episodes.

Harris et al. found that subjects distinguished the three levels of aligning and ranked the speakers accordingly on perceived competence, social attractiveness, and various other measures. Aligning actions influenced subjects' ratings of the speakers more than did information sequencing: the results suggest that one can break norms governing appropriate self-disclosure if one uses meta-aligning methods.

Critique of the CMM Competence Theory

The theory deals with the issues raised in the review of sociolinguistics: it postulates a pragmatics approach to communication, accounts for social appropriateness of communicative behavior, explains variable competence within a group or an individual, and allows for "competent" use of

"inappropriate" or ungrammatical communicative acts.

The theory is also integrally related to a theory of communication, and explains basic comprehension as well as aspects of human relations. It allows for new and creative behavior as well as culturally preexistent styles or episodes.

A problem I see is in the operationalization using aligning actions. Harris' research gives aligning actions a crucial place in the theory: communication is the "cocreation and maintenance of systems of meaning" (Harris, 1979a), and communication takes place by the coordination of meanings between persons. People in interaction coordinate their acts in order to create and maintain a relationship or social system in which symbols can become meaningful and talk can occur. Aligning is a means of coordination between people, and between persons' actions and the system in which they operate. Thus it is essential to interaction.

However, it appears that the particulars of alignment may vary among cultures. In the United States, much attention has been paid to alignment in conversation, especially methods of dealing with awkward situations. Stokes and Hewitt emphasize actions that serve to "restore or assure meaningful interaction in the face of problematic situations of one kind or another" (1976, p. 838). Alignment techniques suggested by Stokes and Hewitt include "motive talk" (Mills, 1940), "accounts" (Scott and Lyman, 1968), "disclaimers" (Hewitt and Stokes, 1975), and "quasi-theorizing" (Hall and Hewitt, 1970; Hewitt and Hall,

1973).

Alignment on other levels of abstraction may exist. For example, Bateson (1972) uses the term "metacommunication" to describe the message of one dog to another that "this is play, so don't take my growling or biting seriously". With animals, this is accomplished nonverbally. Similar nonverbal coordination or alignment may take place between humans.

In Japan, complete alignment of conversation is unimportant or even impossible until an alignment of the relationship definition occurs. Background information must be exchanged in order to establish the relative status of the interactants, so that the appropriate honorifics may be used (Nakanishi, 1984). Various episodes occur before the interactants decide whether to establish a personal relationship. Interaction in Japan is characterized by a minimum of explanations or aligning actions of the types listed by Stokes and Hewitt (see above); such redundancy is considered unnecessary and even insulting. Subtlety is highly valued (Nakanishi, 1984).

These two examples suggest that Harris' operationalization of competence in terms of aligning actions may be too narrow to generalize to other cultures. Coordination or aligning may take different forms in other cultures (or even sectors of North American culture).

Rationale for Research

A study similar to the one done by Harris, Cronen and Lesch using subjects from another culture could be a means to discovering the generalizability of the operationalization of competence in terms of aligning. The study would need to include episodes which follow the culture's norms governing topics and topic sequencing, as well as episodes which do not follow the norms. In particular, the researcher would need to discover whether anything resembling meta-aligning exists in the culture, and whether it has the effects that meta-aligning seems to have in our culture according to Harris et al.'s findings.

Initial conversations between strangers is a convenient area for research for several reasons. It serves as the first stage in relationship building; in our culture and probably in most others as well. As a somewhat isolatable event, the initial conversation between strangers (in a specified context) is an example of a "situation" and an "action chain" of the type that E.T. Hall (1977) proposes as the minimal unit of observation for research³. Furthermore, initial conversations between strangers have received much attention in research in the United States (Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck and Schulman, 1976; Altman and Taylor, 1972; Couch and Hintz, 1974; Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979; Harris, 1979b). Much of this research has focused on topics, topic sequence, and self-disclosure

(Berger, Gardner et al., 1976; Berger and Calabrese, 1975; Derlega and Stepien, 1977; Tardy and Hosman, 1982; Gilbert and Horenstein, 1975).

The studies following attempted to test Harris et al.'s operationalization, using subjects from Medellin, Colombia, and from the University of Kansas. The first study looked for the normative topics and topic sequence in initial conversations between strangers in Medellin, as well as the usual aligning actions used in these conversations. These findings allow for a comparison with similar research in the United States (Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck and Schulman, 1976). By using an open-ended interview format, and collecting material generated from the interviewees, rather than asking them to rank-order a preset list of topics, we attempted to avoid the imposition of North American expectations on the results. The research questions with which this study was concerned are the following:

R
1a What are common topics and classes of topics in initial conversations between strangers in Medellin?

R
2a What is the usual or probable sequence of topics in an initial conversation between strangers in Medellin?

R
3a How do Colombian subjects classify these topics in terms of relative intimacy or self-disclosure?

A focus on aligning actions and style produced the following questions:

R 1b How are conversations between strangers begun (circumstances, openings, rituals, etc.)?

R 2b How are topics introduced or changed?

R 3b Can one choose not to follow the norms of topic choice or sequence and still perform acceptably?

R 4b How would one go about breaking a norm regarding topic intimacy or sequence and still perform acceptably?

R 5b Does a counterpart exist to Harris, Cronen and Lesch's meta-alignment?

Based on the findings of the first study, it was decided to replicate Harris, Cronen and Lesch's study using the stimulus materials translated to Spanish with few changes. This allows us to compare the relative effects of information sequencing with aligning actions on Colombian subjects' ratings of a speaker's competence. The research questions with which the second study was concerned are these:

R 6 Do the effects of Information Sequencing differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R 7 Do the effects of Aligning differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

The methods used in these two studies are presented in Chapter III. Chapter IV presents the results. Discussion of

the results and implications for theory are presented in Chapter V.

Notes

1. Labov (1972) claims that he has yet to find a minimally competent speaker: "As far as we can see, there are no single-style speakers. . . . Every speaker we have encountered shows a shift of some linguistic variables as the social context and topic change" (p. 208).

2. Cognitive complexity need not be a helpful trait; schizophrenics and psychotics are often extremely cognitively complex.

3. "Some common settings and situations are: greeting, working, eating, bargaining, fighting, governing, making love, going to school, cooking and serving meals, hanging out, and the like. The situational frame is the smallest viable unit of a culture that can be analyzed, taught, transmitted, and handed down as a complete entity" (Hall, 1977, p. 129). "An action chain is a set sequence of events in which usually two or more individuals participate. It . . . is used as a means of reaching a common goal that can be reached only after, and not before, each link in the chain has been forged" (Hall, 1977, p. 141).

CHAPTER III -- METHODS

Study I

Study I is a field-descriptive study, carried out by means of open-ended interviews, informal observation, and a brief literature review. It took place in Medellín, Colombia in 1983.

Research questions

My interest in this study was to discover patterns in initial conversations between strangers in Medellín. Specifically, I was concerned with topics and topic sequence (Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck and Schulman, 1975) and with alignment methods used for topic shifts (Hewitt and Stokes, 1975; Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979). The focus on these two areas is based on Harris, Cronen and Lesch's comparison of two sets of hypotheses regarding competence in initial conversations between strangers.

A focus on topics and topic sequence (information sequencing) produced the following research questions:

R
1a What are common topics and classes of topics in initial conversations between strangers in Medellín?

R
2a What is the usual or probable sequence of topics in an initial conversation between strangers in Medellín?

R
3a How do Colombian subjects classify these topics in terms

of relative intimacy or self-disclosure?

A focus on alignment methods and style produced the following questions:

R How are conversations between strangers begun
1b
(circumstances, openings, rituals, etc.)?

R How are topics introduced or changed?
2b

R Can one choose not to follow the norms of topic choice or
3b
sequence and still perform acceptably?

R How would one go about breaking a norm regarding topic
4b
intimacy or sequence and still perform acceptably?

R Does a counterpart exist to Harris, Cronen and Lesch's
5b
meta-alignment?

As research progressed, I added the following questions:

R Do initial conversations between males differ in topic,
6
self-disclosure, or alignment methods from initial
conversations between females?

R Do initial conversations between males and females differ
7
from conversations between members of same-sex dyads?

Variables

Variables related to the information sequencing focus are: topics or types of topics of conversation, sequence of topics, perceived intimacy of topics or topic types.

Variables having to do with alignment methods are: rituals

or speech acts used in establishing dialogue, speech acts or other means used for topic introduction or topic shift, speech acts or other forms of behavior used to introduce acceptable breaks with the norms governing appropriateness of topic.

As research progressed, gender was included as a variable.

Design

The study consisted primarily of a program of open-ended field-descriptive interviews using a standardized list of interview questions. Results were qualitative rather than quantitative.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to facilitate explicit discussion between researcher and subjects, of the variables listed above, and to elicit the subjects' knowledge regarding their own behavior. The researcher asked the subject to imagine an initial conversation with a stranger in a casual setting, such as a party. Questions pertained to the initiation of the conversation ("To begin this conversation, what would you or the other person say?") and likely topics ("What topics would be discussed in the first five minutes?"). Subjects were asked to recall a normal initial conversation with a stranger and repeat what they recalled of it.

Further questions had to do with topics chosen if one desires a deeper relationship with the other ("If you or both

of you wish the relationship to become deeper, what topics would you introduce (and when) after the first five minutes?"). The researcher then asked the subjects to rank-order the topics generated by the interview in their likely chronological order. Subsequent questions had to do with possible changes in sequence in order to accelerate the deepening of the relationship ("If you want the relationship to develop more rapidly, can you change the sequence of topics? What order would you put them in?") and the means to such changes ("How would you go about changing the order, or introducing a more intimate or personal topic, in a natural, smooth manner? What would you say?"). The subjects were asked to recall an initial conversation that had moved much more rapidly into more intimate topics, and repeat what they could recall of it to the researcher.

The questionnaire was translated into Spanish by the researcher, with collaboration from a professor at the University of Antioquia. English and Spanish copies of the questions are included in the Appendix.

Subjects

Subjects were 15 middle-class people from Medellín. They included six faculty members from a state university, three professional psychologists, an artist, an unemployed professional, a freelance garment manufacturer and merchant, a

salesgirl, an unemployed civil engineer, and an English teacher. Ages ranged from 17 to late 50s. Four were women.

Subjects were recruited by means of personal contacts. A request for an interview was made by phone or in person. At the time of the request, an appointment was made.

Procedures

Appointments were made with the subjects in advance. I asked for their help in my research, and explained that it had to do with patterns in conversation. The interviews took place in the subjects' offices or in my parents' home. Answers were recorded by the researcher directly onto the questionnaire. In addition, most interviews were recorded on a portable cassette recorder, with subjects' permission.

All interviews were done by the researcher in Spanish. The format was informal; the sequence of questions varied occasionally depending on the flow of conversation. All questions on the interview schedule were asked, unless not applicable.

Length of the interviews varied from half an hour to just over an hour.

As the project progressed, I began to use results from earlier interviews in my later ones. I asked subjects to comment on an earlier response, or used earlier responses as prompts. I also began to ask more questions regarding gender differences in conversation, and regarding patterns of

conversation between members of mixed-sex dyads.

At the end of each interview, I gave a brief description of Berger's study of topic sequence in initial conversations, and of Harris, Cronen and Lesch's suggestions regarding alignment levels. This was done in order to brief them on the expected use of the interview results, and to give them a final opportunity to give answers to my questions regarding aligning or meta-aligning actions used for introduction of more intimate topics.

Study II -- Field experiment

Research questions

Study II was intended to be a replication of Harris, Cronen and Lesch's (1979) study. The focus was on the rival emphases on information sequencing (Berger, 1973; Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck and Schulman, 1975) and aligning actions (Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979). The study was done with North American and Colombian subjects in order to test the generalizability of the variables.

The primary research questions with which this study was concerned are:

R Do the effects of Information Sequencing differ for
1 Colombian and North American subjects?

R Do the effects of Aligning differ for Colombian and North
2 American subjects?

A third question is the extent to which students in Kansas are similar to the students in Massachusetts who served as subjects for Harris et al.'s original study:

R Do subjects from Kansas differ from subjects in the
3 original (Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979) study in Massachusetts?

Independent variables

The independent variables in this study are: Nationality of subject, Alignment level of the episode, and Information Sequencing. The episodes are constructed according to a 3x3 design, to vary in level of Aligning (No Aligning, Satisfactory or normal Aligning, and Meta-Aligning) and Information Sequencing (Low-to-low Self-Disclosure, Low-to-high Self-Disclosure, High-to-low Self-Disclosure).

Dependent variables

The dependent variables come from CMM theory. Pearce and Cronen (1980) mention various elements of communicative competence, including perceived communicative competence, episode valence, perceived enmeshment, and social attractiveness. Items were designed to tap these elements.

The variables are usually stated as statements, followed by

seven-point Likert-like scales allowing answers from "Strongly agree" through "Neither agree nor disagree" to "Strongly disagree". A few of the items were stated as questions, also followed by Likert-like scales.

Four competence measures were designed, to test various aspects of competence. COM 11 tests perceived individual competence: "The Target Person acted very competently in this episode." COM 21 attempts to tap systemic or dyadic competence: "This was a very productive conversation for A and B." COM 31 attempts to tap a system-individual relationship dimension: "The Target Person not only could predict how the episode would go, s/he could also experiment with new strategies without causing confusion." COM 41 is intended to tap the subject's perception of the Target's understanding of the episode: "I think the Target Person understood this episode very well."

Three items were intended to tap enmeshment: ENM 11: "The Target Person could have performed different acts that would have been appropriate in this situation"; ENM21: "The Target Person feels stuck in this episode"; and ENM31: "The Target Person probably felt compelled to act as s/he did; there were no alternatives for him/her."

There were three valence measures: VAL 11: "The Target Person was probably satisfied with his/her performance in this episode"; VAL 21: "This episode is one the Target Person very

much desires to have occur"; and VAL 31: "The Target Person enjoys participating in this episode very much."

Social attractiveness measures were as follows: SAT 11: "I think it would be difficult to talk to the Target Person"; SAT 21: "I could never establish a personal friendship with the Target Person"; SAT 31: "I would be pleased to have the Target Person as a friend"; and SAT 41: "The Target Person is offensive to me."

Predictability was included as a variable for purposes of comparison of CHM with Uncertainty Reduction Theory. There were three measures: PRE 11: "I could predict with great certainty that the Target Person's actions would have the results they did" (this first item taps systemic predictability); PRE 21: "How well can you predict the Target Person's behavior?"; and PRE 31: "How well can you predict the Target Person's emotional states?" These last two were answered on a scale of, "Extremely well" to "Not at all".

We also added scales to measure subjects' identification of performance with cultural patterns. There were two cultural pattern items: CUL 11: "This episode could never happen around here"; and CUL 21: "The Target Person acted as any normal person would under the circumstances."

There was one item to test subjects' identification with the Target Person: SEL 11: "I am a type of person who could do what the Target Person did in this episode." This dimension has proved quite important in studies of competence (Johnson,

1983; Nakanishi and Johnson, 1985).

Cronbach's (1951) Alpha was used to test internal reliabilities of these measures. The reliabilities are presented in Chapter 4, along with earlier reliabilities of the same variables (Harris et al., 1979).

Hypotheses

Hypotheses are based on Harris et al.'s 1979 study. No hypotheses are suggested for the comparisons of North American with Colombian subjects and of Kansas with Massachusetts subjects.

From Uncertainty Reduction Theory, emphasizing information sequencing, we derive the following hypotheses:

H_{1a} There will be a significant main effect for Information Sequencing, such that communicative competence will be perceived highest in the Low-to-low Self-Disclosure conditions and lowest in the High-to-low Self-Disclosure conditions, with significant differences between the three levels.

H_{2a} There will be a significant main effect for Information Sequencing such that the cultural normalcy of the Target's behavior will be perceived significantly higher in the Low-to-low Self-Disclosure conditions than in the Low-to-high Self-Disclosure conditions, and higher in the Low-to-high conditions than in the High-to-low conditions.

H_{4a} There will be a significant main effect for Information

Sequencing such that subjects' identification of self with the Target will be significantly higher for the Low-to-low Self-Disclosure conditions than for the Low-to-high conditions, and significantly higher for the Low-to-high conditions than for the High-to-low conditions.

H_{5a} There will be a significant main effect for Information Sequencing such that social attractiveness scores will be significantly higher for the Low-to-low conditions than for the Low-to-high condition, and higher for the Low-to-high condition than for the High-to-low conditions.

H_{6a} There will be a significant main effect for Information Sequencing such that valence of episode scores will be significantly higher for the Low-to-low Disclosure condition than for the Low-to-high Disclosure conditions, and higher for the Low-to-high Disclosure conditions than for the High-to-low Disclosure conditions.

Hypotheses derived from CMM theory follow:

H_{1b} There will be a significant main effect for the variable Aligning such that scores for perceived competence will be significantly higher in the Meta-Aligning conditions than in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions, and higher in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions than in the No Aligning conditions.

H₂ There will be significant effects for both Aligning and

Information Sequencing such that the Satisfactory Aligning Low-to-low Disclosure condition will be rated as significantly more culturally normal than other conditions.

H_{3b} There will be a significant main effect for Aligning such that scores for enmeshment will be significantly higher in the No Aligning conditions than in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions, and significantly higher in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions than in the Meta-Aligning conditions.

H_{4b} There will be significant effects for both Aligning and Information Sequencing such that subjects will identify the Satisfactory Aligning Low-to-low Disclosure condition significantly more with self than other conditions.

H_{5b} There will be a significant main effect for Aligning such that scores for social attractiveness will be significantly higher in the Meta-Aligning conditions than in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions, and significantly higher in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions than in the No Aligning conditions.

H_{6b} There will be a significant main effect for Aligning such that scores for valence of the episode will be significantly higher in the Meta-Aligning conditions than in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions, and significantly higher in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions than in the No Aligning conditions.

Design

The study uses three independent variables, creating a 3 x 3 x 2 design. The conditions varied on three degrees of Information Sequencing (Low-to-low Disclosure, Low-to-high Disclosure, High-to-low Disclosure) and three degrees of Aligning methods (No Aligning, Satisfactory Aligning, and Meta-Aligning). Subjects were classified according to Nationality (North American or Colombian). All subjects responding to the questionnaires in Medellin were considered Colombians. In the Kansas University group, the questionnaires of students who were obviously from other countries (judging from accent and/or name) were disregarded. All other subjects were considered North American.

Questionnaire

Subjects read first and signed an informed consent statement, followed by instructions and a sample question. The second page of the booklet was one of the episodes. It was followed by a set of the scaler items. All materials were presented in Spanish to the Colombian subjects, and in English to the North American subjects. Translation was done by the researcher in conjunction with a counseling professor at the University of Antioquia with extensive experience in human research.

The set of episodes is borrowed from Harris, Cronen and

Lesch (1979). It is designed to demonstrate aspects of normative conversational patterns in the United States.

The episodes vary on three levels of alignment: no aligning, satisfactory or normal aligning, and meta-aligning (see Chapter II and Appendix). The episodes were created by Harris et al. from statements used in Berger et al.'s (1975) study. The low-disclosure episodes are made up of statements drawn from the lowest three classifications of statements made in the 1975 study. The low-to-high disclosure episodes are made up with statements drawn from each of the nine levels in ascending order. The high-to-low disclosure episodes are the same statements in reversed order. In the no aligning condition, the statements are left as is, with no aligning actions to provide coherence, for the Target's speech. In the satisfactory aligning conditions, normal aligning actions are added to provide linkage between the statements and make them more like a typical conversation. For the meta-aligning conditions, the conversants talk about the episode as they make the statements.

Subjects

In Colombia, subjects were recruited from a state university and from the senior classes of a large public high school. Colombian high school seniors are generally about the age of North American college freshmen, and are often more

intellectually and politically sophisticated, so we considered them a reasonable equivalent.

Subjects were recruited by means of personal contacts with professors. Permission was solicited to use class time (maximum of half an hour) for a research project. All students in the classes were given questionnaires, unless they refused them. Classes in various subjects were used. Questionnaires from 141 Colombian subjects were used in the data analysis.

In the United States, subjects were students in beginning-level classes in Communication Studies at the University of Kansas. As part of course requirements, students signed up as subjects for any of several studies done by graduate students or faculty during the semester. All subjects, Colombian and North American, signed the Informed Consent Statement. 248 North American subjects' questionnaires were used in the data analysis.

Procedures

In Colombia, instructors at a large public high school (the INEM) and at a state university (the Universidad de Antioquia) were contacted and the use of their classes for communication research was requested. During a regular class session, students' participation was requested, and questionnaires were passed out to those students who would accept them. Instructions were given on the filling out of the questionnaires, clarifying the written instructions. After the

students were finished, the questionnaires were collected. Subjects were given a brief oral debriefing.

In the United States, subjects were recruited by means of a signup sheet in the Communication Studies Department of the University of Kansas. They signed up for a preset half-hour time slot in groups of 20. At the appointed times, subjects gathered in a room equipped with desks. The researcher handed out the questionnaires and gave instructions on their use. A time was allowed for questions. As subjects finished, they left their questionnaires by the door and departed. A written debriefing was given them. Later on, questionnaires were sorted and those of international students eliminated in order to control for homogeneity of the population.

CHAPTER IV -- Results

Results from Study I follow, preceded by demographic description as context. (The information contained in the context section is from 1983; some of it may be obsolete now.) The format of the questionnaire is followed to a certain extent. A hierarchy of topics according to relative intimacy is included, in order to provide a parallel to Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck and Schulman's (1976) findings.

Contextual Notes

Medellin, the capitol of Antioquia, is a large industrial city in the north mountains of Colombia. Antioquia as a department (state) produces a large portion of Colombia's GNP. Medellin's inhabitants maintain a strong regional identity, with a distinctive accent to their Spanish and a wheeler-dealer mentality renowned in much of Latin America.

Medellin has a population approaching two million people. The textile and garment industries are the most visible commercial concerns, although these industries have been in decline since the early 1970s. The most prominent building in town is the Coltejer building, built by what was once the largest textile company in Colombia. Fabric stores and clothiers abound. Coffee, cement, appliances, and flowers are other major industries in Antioquia.

However, commerce even more than industry is the forte of

the "Paisas". Speculation, sales on commission, sidewalk vendors, boutiques and stores abound. In any city of Colombia and the surrounding countries, one is likely to find a store run by an Antioqueño. Often the store will bear the name "Medellin" or "El Paisa" or something similar

Among Colombians, Antioqueños are renowned for their industriousness, thriftiness, cleverness, and unsophisticated wit. One author (Fajardo, 1966) even suggests that Antioqueños have a work ethic resembling Weber's Protestant Work Ethic. There is a strong sense of individualism and the pursuit of goals by dint of personal effort. Curiously, this is accompanied by a gambler mentality which results in the abundance of lotteries, "chances", and other betting establishments.

This combination of traits has its root in the history of the city. The city began as a mining town, very isolated from the mainstream of the Spanish colonial system. In the usual manner, "encomiendas" (grants of land and slaves) were granted to the soldiers who helped conquer the land. However, much more land was granted than was actually available, so the early settlers found that their only means to prosperity was to work hard. Furthermore, there were few Indians for slaves, not nearly enough to go around, so the settlers were forced to work with their own hands. Small placer mines were established all over the valley. Families also cultivated small plots for

food. Little cash was available, so family members went door-to-door to trade their surplus for what was needed. Titles meant little so far from the rest of colonial society; a man was what he had made himself. This is very different from the pattern in areas which had more contact with Spain. As a result of this industriousness, Medellín prospered in developing industry and commerce (Fajardo, 1966; Goring, 1972; Twinam, 1982).

Hard times have hit Medellín in the past fifteen years. The national economy has suffered. The peso has been devaluated to 10% of its former strength against the dollar. The world textile market has changed, reducing Colombia's exports, and contraband cloth has undermined the national garment and textile market. The largest textile companies have laid off thousands of workers. Unemployment and violent crime statistics are much higher. Leftist guerrillas control enormous areas of the countryside, disrupting the harvesting of crops and intimidating the peasant farmers. Urban terrorists raid banks and other large businesses. The police, the military and right-wing death squads are violent in their persecution of "Communists". Drug use among young people has increased, partly as a result of the United States' crackdown on drug traffic. Drug traffickers sell at home instead of abroad.

The upheaval influences the topics of everyday conversation. Work (and its scarcity) is naturally a big item

of conversation, as is the national situation.

However, so far the inhabitants of Medellín retain their gregariousness. The current economic and political situations have not produced as much privatization as one would encounter in a similar city in the United States. First conversations tend to be important, especially in situations where there is a likelihood of a continuing relationship, in forming interpersonal bonds of a longlasting nature.

Results -- Study I

R How are conversations between strangers begun
1b (circumstances, openings, rituals, etc.)?

Conversations are usually begun with greetings and/or an introduction. The greetings usually take the form of polite questions:

¿Qué tal?

¿Cómo está?

¿Cómo le va?

¿Qué más?

¿Qué hay?

These questions are all roughly equivalent to "How are you?" The appropriate response is a similar question or an appropriate answer ("Bien, gracias. Y usted?"). One may also say "Mucho gusto", which translates "Pleased to meet you." If

the other has asked you how you are or offered you a drink or a smoke, you may say "Muy amable", which means "Very polite" and is often tacked onto the required "Gracias".

It is also acceptable to begin a conversation with a comment on the context, leaving introductions either for the next interchange or for later in the conversation:

¿Linda fiesta, no? Nice party, isn't it?

¿Qué aguacero, no? Quite a thunderstorm, huh?

Eh ave María, estos buses se están volviendo insoportables!

My God, these buses are getting intolerable!

One may comment on something one has noticed about the other person, especially if one is talking to a person of the opposite sex:

Lindísimo su vestido! Very pretty dress!

¿Por qué no baila? Why don't you dance?

Any of the above elements may be used to begin a conversation. The order is quite flexible, but nearly always includes some of these rituals. Very often, people meet through a third party who introduces them. The introducer usually does not give the names. Conversation commences after the introductions. Sometimes conversation will start with a request for permission to sit (on a bus or in a cafeteria) or a similar request.

R What are common topics and classes of topics in initial
1a
conversations between strangers in Medellín?

Following the introductions, comments may be made or exchanged about the context (eg., party, bus, meeting, weather, big news of the day, lecture, concert, crowd, traffic, class, professor -- context at any level). Early conversation often includes comments about the other's appearance, participation in the situation, or possible mutual or previous acquaintance. These comments may have an interrogative tacked on the end ("¿no?" or "¿no le parece?").

Other common topics are very similar to those North Americans talk about: sports, movies, news, weather, music, the economy, work, the social crisis (meaning the decay of values and the huge problems with drugs and violence), mutual acquaintances, family (in some situations, this is brought up immediately), and other low intimacy common interests.

One may explain one's relationship to others present, or to mutual acquaintances. One may ask what relationship the other has to these acquaintances, or the other's reasons for being present.

Politeness demands comment on what the other says about him/herself or about the situation. Questions implying curiosity are appropriate as a means of showing interest. Exclamations of surprise, interest, sympathy, agreement, etc. are common. Antioqueño slang is full of them: "Ave María!

Por Dios! Santos cielos! No! ¿Cómo así? Eso! Ahh!
[aspirated "h"] Eh! [these last two have different meanings]
Qué horror!" One should show interest, responding with
appropriate expressions to whatever the other says (unless one
disagrees strongly).

R How are topics introduced or changed?
2b

The focus of attention shifts often in conversation. One
person speaks, the other comments or questions. After two or
three exchanges, the one speaking should shift attention to the
other person with a question or a statement that invites a more
substantial comment:

A: "So, what's your line of work, Mr. Pelaez?"

B: "I'm a garment manufacturer."

A: "Hmm. You own your own business?"

B: "Yes. Maybe you've seen my brand-name: 'Soccer
Sports Clothes'. And what do you do?"

One may shift attention to oneself simply by beginning to
talk, or by making a dangling or interesting comment that
invites a request for clarification:

A: "Business has been terrible. I'm thinking about
applying for a teaching position."

B: "Oh, yes? What a coincidence!"

A conversation can be coordinated so that there is a steady
parallel exchange of information, but this is not usually the

case. (One friend told me that this was becoming more acceptable and common as a result of North American TV programs with terse, fast-paced dialogue. "Dallas" and "Falconcrest" are extremely popular.)

All of my interviewees told me that first in the conversation after initial greetings is an attempt to "ubicar" (classify or place) the other person. This means finding what sort of things the other would like to talk about, as well as the other's occupation or vocation, interests (hobbies, pastimes, etc.), reasons for being there, mutual acquaintances, family situation (this can be a touchy subject, especially in mixed company when one wishes to flirt), social status, etc. This form of social classification involves such issues as level of education, neighborhood of residence, job level, and other demographic information, as well as more personal criteria such as the other's attitude towards the context or his job, or how friendly the person seems, or how polite.

A vast amount of context is involved in this process. Since most inhabitants of Medellín know the city fairly well, they are likely to know whether a given business or agency is large or small, prestigious or otherwise. The sector of town in which the business (or the person's home) is located also gives clues as to the person's status. Office jobs carry relatively high status, as do professorships (university or high school).

Questions about the other's employment must be made with a certain amount of tact, as unemployment is very high. Many qualified people work at relatively menial tasks, waiting for work in their own field. (I knew an engineer who worked as a driving instructor.) The question should be phrased such that the other is free to talk about his/her vocation or avocation ("I'm an engineer") rather than necessarily what he or she does at present.

Work is an exceptionally popular topic among Antioqueños, perhaps more so than among other Colombians. It is a very important indicator of status, more so than family background (Fajardo, 1966). Antioqueños also make social judgments based on race, which is usually evident from a person's features. The Antioqueño is a racial mixture of Spanish European and American Indian (a few have Black ancestry as well). Generally, the higher social classes have a rather European complexion. This criterion is not as strong in Medellín as elsewhere, as economic criteria seem to predominate. Dress is important; the inhabitants of Medellín generally dress as well as possible.

Besides this process of "ubicación", my interviewees informed me that it is important to seek topics of interest to the other person, and to seek to please them. This seems to be regardless of relative social status, to some degree. However, the degree of interest and politeness varies somewhat with one's perception of the other's status. (Most interviewees did

not mention this with regard to themselves -- they noticed it in other people and in society at large, and especially in others' treatment of themselves.) Rich people and sometimes North Americans are sometimes fawned over (the Colombian terms for this are various, bordering on obscenity), plied with questions (often with very obvious answers), responded to with exaggerated expressions of interest and shown inordinate politeness and solicitousness. Women especially receive this treatment from lower-status males.

R What is the usual or probable sequence of
2a
topics in an initial conversation between strangers
in Medellin?

R How do Colombian subjects classify these topics
3a
in terms of relative intimacy or self-disclosure?

The usual sequence of topics, from least to most intimate,
is as follows:

1. Introductions, greetings
 - 1a. Comment on context, news, or other's appearance
 - 1b. Male to female: compliment
2. Mutual acquaintances, reasons for presence
3. Work or vocation (2 and 3 are interchangeable)
4. Conditions at work, economy, social problems, or related topics
5. Hopes for work, successes, future plans or prospects
6. Effects of economy, changes at work, social problems on one's life or lifestyle

7. Civil status, lifestyle, family situation (may come earlier if not problematic)
8. Personal or family problems
9. Personal convictions

The sequence of these topics is flexible, and obviously not all will be hit in all conversations. Categories 1 through 5 are the ones most likely to be discussed in an initial conversation.

If one wishes the conversation to become deeper, there are two basic approaches: a) topic change, and b) topic aspect change. One can move to topics of deeper emotional concern, or one can talk about the previous topics but at a deeper level. For instance, in the typical initial conversation, one may discuss one's work. As the conversation deepens, one discusses the problems related to one's work: the bad management situation, the failing economy, the strikes. Deeper yet is the way in which one is affected personally by the problems: one's job is threatened, one has to support a laid-off relative, the salary doesn't cover the bills. The focus can quickly be returned to a more superficial level if either person becomes uncomfortable.

One may also discuss one's hopes or prospects at work, or one's search for employment, or one's progress in studies, following an initial mention of these.

Attitudes become evident as these things are talked about. One may explicitly describe his attitude regarding something.

Explicitness is not necessary, however, as Antioqueños do a lot of guessing about each others' attitudes. Personal convictions regarding religion, politics, or philosophy usually come late in conversation if at all, although these topics may be discussed in the abstract earlier on.

One may also talk about one's goals in life, and the obstacles to these. Discussion of family can lead into comments on family problems, or lifestyle, or background. Between males, women are (of course) a popular topic, though usually not early in a conversation between strangers.

Few of the interviewees could remember any recent initial conversations with strangers. The conversations repeated by those that could followed the norm as described above, although they did not move through all the steps. The episodes tended to be condensed in the telling -- the interviewees described conversations of various lengths, but when they repeated them to me, it never took more than three minutes. (The same type of condensation occurs in literature, movies, and television.)

R Can one choose not to follow the norms of topic
3b choice or sequence and still perform acceptably?

R How would one go about breaking a norm
4b regarding topic intimacy or sequence and still
perform acceptably?

The subjects said that it was possible to break the pattern of topic sequence without negative consequences, but usually in special circumstances. For instance, in a group of people a conversation could become deep, and strangers could find themselves discussing an idea or an event heatedly or even intimately, without having been introduced or having gone through the usual preliminaries.

R Does a counterpart exist to Harris, Cronen and
5b
Lesch's meta-alignment?

When I pressed the question regarding aligning methods which allow one to break the normative sequence, many of the subjects informed me that if one wanted to talk on a more intimate level, one did not use any sort of unusual preliminaries, one simply launched into that level of talk.

None of the subjects was able to give me an example of a true initial conversation with a stranger that had gone more rapidly than the norm into more intimate topics.

R Do initial conversations between males differ in
6
topic, self-disclosure, or alignment methods from
initial conversations between females?

Subjects could tell me little about the conversational differences between men and women. It was generally agreed that women are more likely to discuss children and family, while men prefer topics related to work, sports, news, and

women. As in the United States, women seem freer to talk about feelings and relationships. Subjects thought men were often more direct, especially in asking favors. Paralinguistic differences between men and women are obvious when it comes to how they ask for favors: women often use a higher-pitched, pleading tone, and ask the question with flourishes; men are more likely to use a normal tone of voice and a simple phrasing.

R Do initial conversations between males and
7 females differ from conversations between members of
same-sex dyads?

Between men and women there is generally a sexual dynamic stronger than in the United States. Men are often flirtatious, even with business associates or superiors. This is not usually considered sexual harassment unless the man is insistent. Women respond in ways that simultaneously discourage and encourage the men. Men often feel obliged to flirt, even when they have no interest in pursuing a relationship. It is a form of play and sometimes even of politeness.

There is a pattern of conversation used especially by young men, called "echando carreta". This term comes from the practice a sector of Medellín's working class has of hauling two-wheeled wooden carts around. These men will haul anything, and between jobs haul various kinds of junk to the places where

it can be sold or traded. "Echando carreta" in conversation means talking in an ingratiating style, and saying what one thinks the other wants to hear. This includes flattery, self-praise, humor, lies, anything to further one's cause. Young men often use this style of conversation in talking to women in whom they are interested. The extreme form of this is called "gallinaceando", or "buzzarding" -- attempting to seduce someone else's woman.

Summary of Results -- Study I

The results suggest that initial conversation patterns in Medellin share many characteristics with those in North America. Topic sequence was very similar to the patterns found by Berger et al. (1976): general biographic or demographic information was considered less intimate and more likely to be discussed early in an initial conversation with a stranger than personal convictions or intimate problems. Certain kinds of demographic information are considered to be more intimate by people from both cultures ("I make \$14,000 a year"; "My wife is divorcing me"). The kinds of statements classed by subjects in the 1976 study as highly intimate or not likely to come up in an initial conversation were similar to the sorts of information classified by Colombians as highly intimate ("I'm suspicious of my husband's constant need to work late"; "I don't believe in an afterlife, but I'm really not sure"; "There

are times when I think I've wasted my life").

Colombians saw as the purpose of initial conversations to "ubicar" or "place" the other person. This seems to involve both social classification and evaluating the likelihood of a good relationship with the other. The subjects also saw as an important goal in initial conversations to try to please the other person, by finding topics of interest to him/her, and to respond with interest to his/her remarks.

Study II

All statistics were computed using the SPSS program on the Honeywell main frame computer at the University of Kansas. Pearson correlations were run on all variables (see Table 2). Eight dependent variables were selected for further manipulations based on consistently significant correlations. These were submitted to Aligning (COM) by Information Sequencing (SDDS) by Nationality of subjects (NAT) MANOVAS.

Social attractiveness measures were factor analyzed and summed into one item. McCroskey and McCain (1974), using social attractiveness measures similar to ours, reported finding more than one dimension to social attractiveness. Our social attractiveness measures were analyzed using the PA2 principal solution. Only one factor reached the 1.0 Eigenvalue level. All four items loaded on social attractiveness and ranged from .70 to .78. We combined the four items into one, multiplying them by their respective factor loadings (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

Social Attractiveness

Factor Matrix using Principal Factor with Iterations

	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2
SADT	-0.70438	0.27288
SAPHF	-0.77957	-0.25298
SANPF	-0.76056	0.00334
SATPO	-0.74373	0.00332

Table 1 (Continued)

Variable	Communality	Factor	Eigenvalue	Pct. of Var.
SADT	0.57061	1	2.23546	94.2
SAPHF	0.67173	2	0.13849	5.8
SANPF	0.57846			
SATPO	0.55314			

$$\text{SATTR} = (\text{Sat11} \times .70) + (\text{Sat21} \times .73) + (\text{Sat31} \times .76) + (\text{Sat41} \times .74)$$

Pearson correlations distinguished eight dependent variables as showing consistently significant correlations with each other and with the independent variables. These items are listed in Table 2, along with their correlations.

TABLE 2
Pearson Correlation Coefficients*

NAT	-.170								
COM 11	.244								
ENH 11	-.340	-.328							
COM 21	.251	.603	-.347						
SATTR	-.123	.286	.502	-.426	.527				
CUL 21	-.152				.142				
SEL 11	-.099	.274	.456	-.373	.510	.538	.112		
VAL 11		.323	-.156	.377	.249	.072	.239		
COM 41	-.110	.343	-.287	.477	.362	.211	.374	.355	
	SEX	NAT	COM 11	ENH 11	COM 21	SATTR	CUL 21	SEL 11	VAL 11

* $p \leq .05$

Various dependent measures were discarded due to poor correlations. Sex of subjects was not a highly significant variable, so it was disregarded for this study.

Reliabilities of items were calculated using Cronbach's (1951) Alpha. Reliabilities are reported in Table 3 along with the reliabilities reported in Harris, Cronen and Lesch (1979).

TABLE 3

Internal Reliabilities of CHM Measures
Cronbach's (1951) Alpha

		H,C&L (1979)
COM 11*:	.86	.72
COM 21*:	.86	
COM 41*:	.88	.72
PRE 11:	.84	
PRE 21:	.86	.79
PRE 31:	.88	.79
SEL 11*:	.89	
VAL 11*:	.79	.85
VAL 21:	.83	.85
ENM 11*:	.86	
ENM 21:	.84	.80
CUL 11:	.88	
CUL 21*:	.88	
SATTR*:	.89	.82

*These items retained for study; others disregarded

Perceived Competence Measures

H_{1a} There will be a significant main effect for Information Sequencing, such that communicative competence will be perceived highest in the Low-to-low Disclosure condition and lowest in the High-to-low Disclosure condition, with significant differences

between the three levels.

H_{1b} There will be a significant main effect for Aligning such that scores for perceived competence will be significantly higher in the Meta-Aligning conditions than in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions, and significantly higher in the Satisfactory Aligning Conditions than in the No Aligning conditions.

R₁ Do the effects of Information Sequencing differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R₂ Do the effects of Aligning differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R₃ Do subjects from Kansas differ from the subjects in the original (Harris, Cronen and Lesch, 1979) study in Massachusetts?

COH 11 (Perceived individual competence of Target):

MANOVA shows a three-way effect for Information Sequencing by Nationality of subjects by Aligning. Two way interactions are also present between these independent variables. Nationality and Aligning exhibit main effects. No significant main effect was present for Information Sequencing.

TABLE 4a

COM11: I think the Target Person communicated in a very competent manner in this episode.

MANOVA: Information Sequencing by Aligning by Nationality of Subjects²

Hotellings T	Value	Approx.F	H.DF	Sign. of F
SDDS x COM x NAT	.03837	1.77458	4	0.045*
COM x NAT	.07262	6.71728	2	0.000*
SDDS x NAT	.04299	3.97659	2	0.007*
SDDS x COM	.08619	3.98650	4	0.000*
NAT	.09876	18.31992	1	0*
COM (Aligning)	.17266	15.97102	2	0*
SDDS (Info seq.)	.04419	4.08750	2	0.507

* $p < .05$

Student Newman Keuls -- Within Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S. 2.56a	5.74c	4.74b,c
Low to High	2.65a	4.53b	4.17b
High to Low	2.74a	3.64a,b	4.96b,c
Low to Low	Col. 3.63	4.88	4.25
Low to High	5.53	4.40	3.86
High to Low	4.38	5.36	5.33

a,b,c=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

Student Newman Keuls -- Between Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S. 2.56a,f,m	5.74b, y	4.74b
Low to High	2.65a,f	4.53b	4.17
High to Low	2.74a	3.64 p,x	4.96b
Low to Low	Col. 3.63 p,x	4.88b	4.25 n
Low to High	5.53b q	4.40b	3.86 x
High to Low	4.38 g	5.36b	5.33b

a,b,f,g;m,n;p,q;x,y = Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

The Student Newman Keuls test within nationality groups shows homogeneous scores for Colombian subjects across all conditions. North Americans make a clear differentiation between the No Aligning conditions and those with Aligning. Scores for the No Aligning conditions are in the Somewhat Disagree to Disagree range (\bar{x} =2.56, 2.65, 2.74). Other scores are in the Neutral to Somewhat Agree range (\bar{x} =3.64 to 4.96) except for the fully normative condition (Low-to-low Disclosure, Satisfactory Aligning) which approaches Agree (\bar{x} =5.74). The fully normative condition was significantly higher than the Low-to-high Disclosure condition in both the Satisfactory and Meta-Aligning conditions

Colombian scores are all above Neither Agree nor Disagree except for the Low-to-low No Aligning Condition (\bar{x} =3.63) and the Low-to-high Meta-Aligning condition (\bar{x} =3.86). These scores are approximately neutral. The Low-to-high No Aligning (\bar{x} =5.53) and the High-to-low Satisfactory (\bar{x} =5.36) and Meta-Aligning (\bar{x} =5.33) are between Somewhat Agree and Agree.

The Student Newman Keuls test across nationality groups shows that Colombian scores for the No Aligning conditions are significantly higher than the North American scores. The interaction of Aligning by Nationality can be seen in the North American High-to-low Disclosure conditions -- scores increase from 2.74 through 3.64 to 4.96 -- and in the Colombian Low-to-high Disclosure conditions, where scores decrease from 5.53 to 4.40 to 3.86.

The three-way effect can be seen in the North American High-to-low conditions and the Colombian Low-to-high conditions. The North American scores increase progressively across Aligning conditions, while Colombian scores decrease. An effect for Aligning can be seen in the North American High-to-low conditions, in which scores progress as predicted from the No Aligning condition to the Meta-Aligning condition.

COM 21 (Productivity of conversation -- systemic competence): Two-way interactions exist for Aligning by Nationality of subjects and Aligning by Information Sequencing. Main effects are present again for Aligning and Nationality. No effect is seen for Information Sequencing.

TABLE 4b

COM21: This is a highly productive interchange between Persons A and B.

MANOVA: Information sequencing by Aligning by Nationality of Subjects

Hotellings T2	Value	Approx.F	H.DF	Sign. of F
SDDS x COM x NAT	.01169	0.54076	4	0.479
COM x NAT	.07610	7.03879	2	0.000*
SDDS x NAT	.00772	0.71441	2	0.312
SDDS x COM	.24545	11.35186	4	0.047*
NAT	.11284	20.93139	1	0.000*
COM	.26373	24.39514	2	0*
SDDS	.04326	4.00192	2	0.613

*P < .05

Student Newman Keuls -- Within Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing		No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S.	2.04a	4.56b	4.56b
Low to High		2.58a	4.09b	4.26b
High to Low		2.74a	3.79b,x	5.12b,y
Low to Low	Col.	3.88	5.12	3.92
Low to High		5.16	4.50	4.57
High to Low		4.19	5.00	4.61

a,b;x,y=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

Table 4b (Continued)

Student Newman Keuls -- Between Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing		No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S.	2.04a,x	4.56b	4.56b
Low to High		2.58a	4.09 y	4.26 y
High to Low		2.74a	3.79 y	5.12b
Low to Low	Col.	3.88 y	5.12b	3.92 y
Low to High		5.16b	4.50b	4.57b
High to Low		4.19 y	5.00b	4.61b

a,b;x,y=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

As before, Student Newman Keuls show a differentiation by North Americans between No Aligning and Aligning conditions. No Aligning scores are uniformly in the Somewhat Disagree to Disagree range (\bar{x} =2.04, 2.58, 2.74). Scores for the Aligning conditions are between Neither Agree nor Disagree (\bar{x} =3.79) and Somewhat Agree (\bar{x} =5.12). No distinction is made between Satisfactory and Meta-Aligning, except for the High-to-low Disclosure conditions, which have the predicted three-step progression (\bar{x} =2.74, 3.79, 5.12). Colombian scores are

homogeneous, ranging from Neither Agree nor Disagree (\bar{x} =3.88) to Somewhat Agree (\bar{x} =5.16). They are significantly higher for the No Aligning conditions than the North American scores, reflecting the Nationality by Aligning interaction.

COM 41 (Perceived Understanding of episode by Target):

MANOVA shows main effects for Aligning and Information Sequencing. No other effects are present.

TABLE 4c

COM41: The Target Person understood this episode very well.

MANOVA: Information Sequencing by Aligning by Nationality of Subjects

Hotellings T ²	Value	Approx.F	H.DF	Sign. of F
SDDS x COM x NAT	.02333	1.07900	4	0.332
COM x NAT	.00607	1.40789	2	0.110
SDDS x NAT	.00607	0.51655	2	0.582
SDDS x COM	.06415	2.96711	4	0.106
NAT	.03733	6.92384	1	0.094
COM	.17884	16.54295	2	0*
SDDS	.06941	6.42010	2	0.040*

*p < .05

Student Newman Keuls -- Within Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S. 4.00b,f	4.93b,y	5.26b,y,g
Low to High	3.84b,x	4.38b	5.09b,y
High to Low	3.11a	4.46b	4.85b,y
Low to Low	Col. 4.00	5.41	4.67
Low to High	4.63	4.10	5.43
High to Low	3.90	5.07	4.50

a,b,f,g;x,y=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

Student Newman Keuls -- Between Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low U.S.	4.00	4.93b	5.26b
Low to High	3.84	4.38	5.09b
High to Low	3.11a	4.46	4.85b
Low to Low Col.	4.00	5.41b	4.67b
Low to High	4.63b	4.10	5.43b
High to Low	3.90	5.07b	4.50

a,b=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

According to the Student Newman Keuls test, for North American subjects there is a significant differentiation between No Aligning conditions and Meta-Aligning conditions. In addition, the No Aligning Low-to-low Disclosure condition is significantly different from the fully normative condition. The No Aligning High-to-low Disclosure condition is significantly different from all other conditions. No Aligning scores range between Somewhat Disagree (\bar{x} =3.11) and Neither Agree nor Disagree (\bar{x} =4.00). Other scores range between just above Neither Agree nor Disagree (\bar{x} =4.38) to just above Somewhat Agree (\bar{x} =5.26). There is a progression for all Information Sequencing conditions across Aligning conditions. However, Satisfactory Aligning conditions do not differ significantly from the Meta-Aligning conditions nor from all the No Aligning conditions. Colombian data is homogeneous. Colombian scores are in the same range as North American scores, between Neither Agree nor Disagree (\bar{x} =3.90) and the Somewhat Agree to Agree range (\bar{x} =5.43). No Colombian scores

are as low as the North American No Aligning High-to-low Information Sequencing score.

The main effect for Information Sequencing can be seen in the North American No Aligning scores and Meta-Aligning scores, which show the predicted progression from High-to-low to Low-to-low Disclosure.

H
1a The hypothesized effects for Information Sequencing on Perceived Competence measures were partially supported. For COM 11 (Perceived Individual Competence), there was a progression as predicted which nearly reached the expected three steps (H-L:3.64, L-H:4.53, L-L:5.74) in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions. For COM 41 (Perceived Systemic Competence), a differentiation was made between the High-to-low Disclosure No Aligning condition and the other episodes in the No Aligning conditions (H-L:3.11, L-H:3.84, L-L:4.00). A similar progression was present in the Meta-Aligning conditions, but was statistically insignificant. These differences were present in the North American data; the Colombian data showed no significant effects for Information Sequencing.

H
1b The hypothesized effects for Aligning on competence scores are partially supported. North American subjects differentiated the No Aligning conditions from the Aligning conditions for all three competence measures. For COM 11, a

three-step progression can be seen across the matrix of scores, although no set of Information Sequencing conditions exhibits such a pattern. The fully normative condition is scored highest for COM 11. COM 21 exhibits the predicted three-step progression only for the High-to-low Disclosure conditions. No Aligning conditions are clearly differentiated from Aligning conditions. COM 41 shows the predicted progression, but the middle step (Satisfactory Aligning) is not significantly different from Meta-Aligning scores nor from all No Aligning scores. Colombian subjects made no significant differentiations between conditions on competence measures.

R₁ Colombian subjects' scores do not differentiate between the Information Sequencing conditions on competence measures.

R₂ Colombian subjects' scores do not differentiate between the Aligning conditions on competence measures.

R₃ Kansas subjects do not make a consistent three-level differentiation in Aligning conditions. However, the differentiation is made for High-to-low Disclosure conditions on two of the three measures. Two levels can be seen in all three measures, between No Aligning and Aligning conditions.

Perceived Cultural Normalcy

H_{2a} There will be a significant main effect for Information Sequencing such that the cultural normalcy of the Target's behavior will be perceived significantly higher in the Low-to-low Self-Disclosure conditions than

in the Low-to-high Disclosure conditions and significantly higher in the Low-to-high conditions than in the High-to-low conditions.

H_{2b} There will be significant effects for both Aligning and Information Sequencing such that the Satisfactory Aligning Low-to-low disclosure condition will be rated as significantly more culturally normal than other conditions.

R₁ Do the effects for Information Sequencing differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R₂ Do the effects for Aligning differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R₃ Do subjects from Kansas differ from subjects in the original (1979) study in Massachusetts?

CUL 21 (Perceived cultural normalcy of Target's actions):

MANOVA shows interaction effects for Nationality by Information Sequencing and Aligning by Information Sequencing. Main effects are present for all three variables.

TABLE 4d

CUL21: The Target Person acted as any normal person would under the circumstances.

MANOVA: Information Sequencing by Aligning by Nationality of Subjects

Hotellings T ²	Value	Approx.F	H.DF	Sign. of F
SDDS x COM x NAT	.02450	1.15293	4	0.444
COM x NAT	.01668	1.54291	2	0.617
SDDS x NAT	.04269	3.94895	2	0.028*
SDDS x COM	.10441	4.82911	4	0.013*
NAT	.12385	22.97509	1	0.000*
COM	.05751	5.31959	2	0.051
SDDS	.06346	5.87020	2	0.016*

*p < .05

Student Newman Keuls -- Within Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S. 3.37b	4.85a	3.56b
Low to High	3.35b	3.47b	3.26b
High to Low	3.19b	3.21b	3.15b
Low to Low	Col. 3.63	4.82	4.50
Low to High	4.16	3.90	3.07
High to Low	4.76	4.57	4.22

a,b=means that differ significantly on the .05 level

Student Newman Keuls -- Between Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S. 3.37	4.85	3.56
Low to High	3.35	3.47	3.26
High to Low	3.19	3.21	3.15
Low to Low	Col. 3.63	4.82	4.50
Low to High	4.16	3.90	3.07
High to Low	4.76	4.57	4.22

No means differ from each other at the .05 level.

North American scores exhibit a pattern of ascension from high-to-low disclosure conditions to the low-to-low disclosure conditions, although this pattern is not statistically significant. The fully normative score is significantly higher than scores for all other conditions. It is the only score above Neither Agree nor Disagree ($\bar{x}=4.85$). Other scores are uniformly between Somewhat Disagree and Neither Agree nor Disagree ($\bar{x}=3.15$ to 3.56). Colombian scores appear to be randomly scattered around Neither Agree nor Disagree ($\bar{x}=3.63$ to 4.22). For both sets of scores the fully normative (low-to-low disclosure, Satisfactory Aligning) condition scores are highest. The effect for Nationality of subjects is not supported by the Student Newman Keuls test.

The Information Sequencing by Nationality interaction can be seen in the No Aligning conditions: North American scores ascend from the High-to-low Disclosure condition to the Low-to-low condition, while Colombian scores do the opposite.

H_{2a} The hypothesized effects for Information Sequencing on perceived cultural normalcy were not supported, although North American scores tended to follow the predicted pattern.

H₆ The fully normative scores were highest, supporting the hypothesized effects for Aligning and Information Sequencing. All other conditions were seen as uniformly slightly abnormal by North American subjects.

R₁ Information Sequencing seems to have no systematic effects on perceived cultural normalcy scores for Colombian subjects.

R² Aligning seems to have no systematic effects on perceived cultural normalcy scores for Colombian subjects.

R³ This variable was not used in Harris, Cronen and Lesch's (1979) original study. Kansas subjects differentiate the fully normative condition from other conditions.

Perceived Enmeshment

H^{3b} There will be a significant main effect for aligning such that scores for enmeshment will be significantly higher for the No Aligning conditions than for the Satisfactory Aligning conditions, and significantly higher for the Satisfactory Aligning conditions than for the Meta-Aligning conditions.

R¹ Do the effects of Information Sequencing differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R² Do the effects of Aligning differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R³ Do subjects from Kansas differ from subjects in the original (1979) study in Massachusetts?

ENM 11 (Perceived enmeshment of Target):

MANOVA shows a three-way interaction for Nationality by Aligning by Information Sequencing. There are also two-way interactions for Information Sequencing by Nationality and by Aligning. Main effects are present for Nationality and Aligning.

TABLE 4e

ENM11: The Target Person could have performed different acts that would have been appropriate in this situation.

MANOVA: Information Sequencing by Aligning by Nationality of Subject

Hotellings T ²	Value	Approx.F	H.DF	Sign. of F
SDDS x COM x NAT	.03965	1.83367	4	0.039*
COM x NAT	.00675	0.62445	2	0.659
SDDS x NAT	.02554	2.36227	2	0.013*
SDDS x COM	.06058	2.80168	4	0.010*
NAT	.15472	28.70031	1	0*
COM	.02714	2.51035	2	0.014*
SDDS	.03407	3.15152	2	0.056

*p_g.05

Student Newman Keuls -- Within Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S. 5.85b	4.41a	5.22b
Low to High	5.71b	5.47b	5.48b
High to Low	5.22b	5.39b	5.46b
Low to Low	Col. 5.44	4.06	4.67
Low to High	3.79	4.60	3.86
High to Low	5.29	3.64	4.50

a,b=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

Student Newman Keuls -- Between Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S. 5.85b	4.41	5.22
Low to High	5.71b	5.47	5.48
High to Low	5.22	5.39	5.46
Low to Low	Col. 5.44	4.06	4.67
Low to High	3.79a	4.60	3.86a
High to Low	5.29	3.64a	4.50

a,b=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

For the North American data, the fully normative condition is scored significantly lower than other conditions ($\bar{x}=4.41$). Other North American scores are uniformly in the Somewhat Agree to Agree range ($\bar{x}=5.22$ to 5.85). The scores in the Colombian data are scattered randomly from just below Neither Agree nor Disagree ($\bar{x}=3.64$) to above Somewhat Agree ($\bar{x}=5.44$), but the highest scores both for Colombians and North Americans are for the No Aligning condition with low-to-low disclosure (U.S. $\bar{x}=5.85$, Col. $\bar{x}=5.44$). Colombian data shows no significant differentiations.

The Student Newman Keuls test between Nationality groups may illuminate the interactions and the main effects for Nationality: three scattered scores (No Aligning, L-H; Satisfactory Aligning, H-L; and Meta-aligning, L-H) differ significantly from the U.S. No Aligning L-L and L-H scores.

H_{3b} The hypothesis regarding the effect for Aligning on enmeshment is partially supported. American subjects perceive the fully normative condition as significantly less enmeshing than other conditions. The expected differentiation between Meta-Aligning and Satisfactory Aligning conditions is not supported.

R₁ Colombians did not differentiate between conditions as the North American subjects did.

R₂ For Colombians, Aligning seems to have some effect, as scores in the No Aligning conditions were higher than scores for other conditions. However, the difference was not

statistically significant. The fully normative condition was not scored lowest as it was in the North American data.

R₃ Kansas subjects did not make the three-level distinctions in enmeshment that the population in Harris et al.'s (1979) study made.

Identification of Self with Target

H_{4a} There will be a significant main effect for Information Sequencing such that subjects' identification of self with the Target will be significantly higher for the Low-to-low Self-Disclosure conditions than for the Low-to-high Disclosure conditions, and significantly higher for the Low-to-high Disclosure conditions than for the High-to-low Disclosure conditions.

H_{4b} There will be significant main effects for both Aligning and Information Sequencing such that subjects will identify the Satisfactory Aligning Low-to-low Disclosure condition significantly more with self than other conditions.

R₁ Do the effects of Information Sequencing differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R₂ Do the effects of Aligning differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R₃ Do subjects from Kansas differ from subjects in the original (1979) study in Massachusetts?

SEL 11 (Identification of self with Target's actions):

This variable shows an interaction effect for Information Sequencing by Aligning. Main effects are also visible for Nationality and Aligning.

TABLE 4f

SEL11: I am a type of person who could do what the Target Person did in this episode.

MANOVA: Information Sequencing by Aligning by Nationality of Subjects

Hotellings T	Value	Approx.F	H.DF	Sign. of F
SDDS x COM x NAT	.02451	1.13358	4	0.205
COM x NAT	.02360	2.18339	2	0.177
SDDS x NAT	.00565	0.52238	2	0.951
SDDS x COM	.08761	4.05217	4	0.018*
NAT	.11121	20.62896	1	0.000*
COM	.08451	7.81682	2	0.001*
SDDS	.07646	7.07276	2	0.250

* $p < .05$

Table 4f (Continued)

Student Newman Keuls -- Within Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing		No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S.	2.81a	4.63b	2.93a
Low to High		2.87a	3.72 y	3.17a
High to Low		2.44a,x	3.18a	3.73a
Low to Low	Col.	3.63	4.94	4.67
Low to High		4.32	3.50	3.86
High to Low		3.76	4.14	4.06

a,b;x,y=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

Student Newman Keuls -- Between Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing		No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S.	2.81 x	4.63b	2.93
Low to High		2.87	3.72	3.17
High to Low		2.44a,x	3.18	3.73
Low to Low	Col.	3.63	4.94b,y	4.67b
Low to High		4.32	3.50	3.86
High to Low		3.76	4.14	4.06

a,b;x,y=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

Student Newman Keuls show a significant difference between the fully normative condition and other scores excepting the Low-to-high Satisfactory Aligning condition. This last is also significantly different from the No Aligning High-to-low Disclosure condition. The Meta-Aligning conditions exhibit a progression in scores from the Low-to-low Disclosure condition ($\bar{x}=3.72$) through the Low-to-high Disclosure condition ($\bar{x}=3.73$) to the High-to-low Disclosure condition ($\bar{x}=4.63$). This

progression is the opposite of the tendency in the No and Satisfactory Aligning conditions, explaining the interaction effect for Aligning by Information Sequencing.

Colombian scores are homogeneous, although the fully normative condition is the highest. Colombian scores are generally higher than North American scores (\bar{x} =3.50 to 4.94). The Student Newman Keuls test between Nationality groups does not provide much support for the MANOVA effects for Aligning, Nationality, and Information Sequencing by Aligning. Colombian Satisfactory Aligning L-L and Meta-aligning L-L scores are significantly higher than the North American No Aligning L-L and H-L scores. Other scores are not significantly different.

H_{4a} The hypothesized effects for Information Sequencing are partially supported. For the North American scores in the No Aligning and Satisfactory Aligning conditions, the trend is as predicted (though significant only for the Satisfactory Aligning conditions). The fully normative condition is most strongly identified with self (\bar{x} =4.63). However, the trend in the Meta-Aligning scores (while insignificant) is the opposite. Colombian data does not support this hypothesis, although the highest score is also for the fully normative condition (\bar{x} =4.94).

H_{4b} The hypothesized effects of Aligning and Information Sequencing on identification of self with target are supported. Subjects identified most strongly with the normative condition,

as predicted. Colombian scores were homogeneous, although the highest was for the fully normative condition.

R₁ Colombian subjects seem to recognize the fully normative condition and identify with it, although the results were not significant. Otherwise, there seem to be no systematic effects for Information Sequencing on identification with self for Colombian subjects.

R₂ Colombian subjects seem to recognize the fully normative condition and identify with it, although the results were not significant. There were no effects for Aligning on Colombian responses. Colombian scores generally were higher.

R₃ This item was not used in the original study.

Social Attractiveness Measures

H_{5a} There will be a significant main effect for Information Sequencing such that social attractiveness scores will be significantly higher for the Low-to-low Disclosure conditions than for the Low-to-high conditions, and higher for the Low-to-high conditions than for the High-to-low conditions.

H_{5b} There will be a significant main effect for Aligning such that scores for social Attractiveness will be significantly higher in the Meta-Aligning conditions than in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions, and significantly higher in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions than in the No Aligning conditions.

R₁ Do the effects of Information Sequencing differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R₂ Do the effects of Aligning differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R₃ Do subjects from Kansas differ from subjects in the original (1979) study in Massachusetts?

SATTR (Social attractiveness):

Social attractiveness scores are very similar to perceived competence and identification with self scores. MANOVA shows an interaction for Information Sequencing by Aligning, and main effects for each of the three dependent variables.

TABLE 4g
*

SATTR (following items combined):

SAT11: I think it would be difficult to talk to the Target Person**.

SAT21: I would be pleased to have the Target Person as a friend.

SAT31: I could never establish a personal friendship with the Target Person**.

**

SAT41: The Target Person is offensive to me .

*These items multiplied by their respective weights and summed -- see Table 1

**These items scored from 1 to 7, rather than 7 to 1

Table 4g (continued)

MANOVA: Information Sequencing by Aligning by Nationality of Subjects

Hotellings T2	Value	Approx.F	H.DF	Sign. of F
SDDS x COM x NAT	.04954	2.29110	4	0.184
COM x NAT	.03156	2.91956	2	0.279
SDDS x NAT	.00446	0.41272	2	0.761
SDDS x COM	.10083	4.66318	4	0.000*
NAT	.15427	28.61774	1	0.000*
COM	.19437	17.97949	2	0*
SDDS	.12549	11.60799	2	0.007*

* $P \leq .05$

Student Newman Keuls -- Within Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S. 10.12a,x	16.66b	13.00a,y
Low to High	10.80a	13.16a,y	12.04a
High to Low	10.48a	11.63a	13.01a
Low to Low	Col. 13.15	16.54b	13.80
Low to High	13.86	13.96	13.32
High to Low	11.76a	14.95	14.27

a,b;x,y=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

Student Newman Keuls -- Between Nationality Groups

Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low to Low	U.S. 10.12a,x	16.66b	13.00
Low to High	10.80a	13.16	12.04a
High to Low	10.48a	11.63a	13.01
Low to Low	Col. 13.15	16.54b	13.80
Low to High	13.86	13.96	13.32
High to Low	11.76a	14.95 y	14.27 y

a,b;x,y=Means that differ significantly from each other at the .05 level

According to the Student Newman Keuls test within Nationality groups, the fully normative condition ($\bar{x}=16.66$) is

significantly higher than the other conditions for the North American data. The Low-to-high Disclosure Satisfactory Aligning condition ($\bar{x}=13.16$) and the Low-to-low Disclosure Meta-Aligning condition ($\bar{x}=13.00$) are also significantly higher than the Low-to-low Disclosure No Aligning condition ($\bar{x}=10.12$), but homogeneous with other scores.

Colombian subjects also rated the fully normative condition highest ($\bar{x}=16.54$), but the only mean that was significantly lower was for the High-to-low No Aligning condition ($\bar{x}=11.76$).

The Satisfactory Aligning conditions show an ascending progression of scores from the High-to-low Disclosure condition ($\bar{x}=11.63$) through the Low-to-High condition ($\bar{x}=13.16$) to the fully normative condition ($\bar{x}=16.66$). (The difference is significant.) The High-to-low Disclosure conditions show a similar progression, from No Aligning ($\bar{x}=10.48$) to Meta-Aligning ($\bar{x}=13.01$), although there is no statistically significant difference between these scores.

The majority of the North American scores are in the Neither Agree nor Disagree range ($\bar{x}=10.12$ to 13.16 ; Neither Agree nor Disagree = 11.92). Colombian scores are all above Neither Agree nor Disagree except for one ($\bar{x}=11.76$; otherwise $\bar{x}=13.14$ to 16.54). The effect for Nationality appears to be primarily for the H-L Satisfactory Aligning and Meta-aligning conditions; otherwise scores are similar.

H The hypothesized effect for Information Sequencing is
5a

partially supported. North American scores for the Satisfactory Aligning conditions follow the predicted pattern. The remaining scores, including the Colombian data, do not support the hypothesis.

H_{5b} The hypothesis regarding the effects of Aligning on social attractiveness scores is partially supported. Some scores in the No Aligning condition are significantly lower than some scores in the Satisfactory and Meta-Aligning conditions. However, the expected three-step differentiation is not supported.

R₁ Information Sequencing has no systematic effects, although it appears from the data that Colombian subjects recognized the fully normative condition as such.

R₂ Aligning seems to have a small effect on Colombian responses for this variable. The score for the fully normative condition was significantly higher than the score for the High-to-low Disclosure No Aligning condition. Colombians did not make other differentiations.

R₃ Kansas subjects did not make the three-step differentiation made by the subjects in the original study. However, some No Aligning conditions were clearly differentiated from some of those using Aligning.

Episode Valence

H_{6a} There will be a significant main effect for Information Sequencing on the dependent variable valence

of the episode such that subjects will rate the High-to-low Disclosure conditions significantly lower than the Low-to-high conditions, and the Low-to-high Disclosure conditions lower than the Low-to-low Disclosure conditions.

H_{6b} There will be a significant main effect for Aligning on valence of the episode such that subjects will rate the No Aligning conditions significantly lower than the Satisfactory Aligning conditions, and the Satisfactory Aligning conditions significantly lower than the Meta-Aligning conditions.

R₁ Do the effects of Information Sequencing differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R₂ Do the effects of Aligning differ for Colombian and North American subjects?

R₃ Do subjects from Kansas differ from subjects in the original (1979) study in Massachusetts?

VAL 11: (Enjoyment of Episode):

MANOVA shows interaction effects for Aligning by Nationality and for Aligning by Information Sequencing. There are main effects for Aligning and Information Sequencing. There are no other effects.

TABLE 4h

VAL 11: The Target Person enjoyed participating in this episode very much.

MANOVA: Information Sequencing by Aligning by Nationality of Subjects

Hotellings T2	Value	Approx.F	H.DF	Sign. of F
SDDS x COM x NAT	.01052	0.48639	4	0.940
COM x NAT	.06901	6.38310	2	0.000*
SDDS x NAT	.01248	1.15424	2	0.397
SDDS x COM	.10722	4.95906	4	0.005*
NAT	.00062	0.11573	1	0.751
COM	.27940	25.84433	2	0*
SDDS	.05341	4.94088	2	0.025*

* $p < .05$

Student Newman Keuls -- Within Nationality Groups

	Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low-to-low	U.S.	3.04a	5.11c	5.26b,c
Low-to-high		4.42b	5.22c	5.48b,c
High-to-low		3.52a	5.39c	5.42b,c
Low-to-low	Col.	3.94	4.88	5.33
Low-to-high		5.32	4.20	5.14
High-to-low		4.14	4.43	4.89

a,b,c=means that differ from one another significantly at the .05 level

Student Newman Keuls -- Between Nationality Groups

	Information Sequencing	No Aligning	Satisfactory Aligning	Meta-Aligning
Low-to-low	U.S.	3.04a,x	5.11b	5.26b
Low-to-high		4.42 y	5.22b	5.48b
High-to-low		3.52a	5.39b	5.42b
Low-to-low	Col.	3.94	4.88b	5.33b
Low-to-high		5.32b	4.20	5.14b
High-to-low		4.14	4.43 y	4.89 y

a,b,c=means that differ from one another significantly at the .05 level

The Student Newman Keuls test reveals significant differences between the No Aligning conditions and the Satisfactory Aligning conditions in the North American data. Meta-Aligning scores differ from the Low-to-low Disclosure and the High-to-low Disclosure scores. The Low-to-high Disclosure No Aligning score is significantly higher than the other No Aligning scores.

The North American scores for the six Aligning conditions are uniformly in the Somewhat Agree to Agree range (\bar{x} =5.11 to 5.48). The scores in the No Aligning conditions range between Somewhat Disagree (\bar{x} =3.04) and the Neither Agree nor Disagree to Somewhat Agree range (\bar{x} =4.42).

Colombian scores are fairly uniform, ranging from Neither Agree nor Disagree (\bar{x} =3.94) to just above Somewhat Agree (\bar{x} =5.33). No statistically significant differentiations are made. The No Aligning L-H condition score is significantly higher than two of the North American No Aligning scores, which accounts for the Nationality effect.

H_{6a} The hypothesized effects for Information Sequencing are not supported, although the Colombian Meta-Aligning conditions show the predicted tendency. The tendency is not significant. The North American Satisfactory Aligning conditions show the opposite tendency. In fact, for all three Aligning conditions (No, Satisfactory and Meta-Aligning), the Low-to-low Disclosure is the lowest.

H_{6b} The hypothesized effects for Information Sequencing are

partially supported in the North American data; the No Aligning conditions are differentiated from most of the Aligning conditions. The expected differences between Satisfactory and Meta-Aligning are not present.

R₁ Colombian subjects did not exhibit systematic effects for Information Sequencing, nor did North Americans.

R₂ Colombians did not differentiate between Aligning conditions as the North Americans did. As usual, the Colombian scores for No Aligning conditions are higher.

R₃ Kansas subjects did not make the three-level differentiation that Massachusetts students did; only two levels were distinguished.

Summary of Results

Information Sequencing was influential on some dependent variables, most notably the Satisfactory Aligning conditions for COM 11, SATTR, CUL 21, ENM 11, and SEL 11. For most of these, the fully normative (Low-to-low disclosure) condition was differentiated from the Low-to-high and High-to-low conditions. For the other Aligning conditions (No and Meta-Aligning), the pattern was occasionally the opposite, but rarely approached significance. These patterns can be seen only in the North American data; Colombians rarely made significant distinctions between Information Sequencing conditions.

Effects for Aligning as predicted in the hypotheses can be seen only in the High-to-low Disclosure conditions for COM 11 and COM 21. The pattern was significant only for COM 21. For all three competence measures and the valence measure (VAL 11), a significant differentiation is made between No Aligning conditions and the Satisfactory and Meta-Aligning conditions. The predicted differentiations between Satisfactory and Meta-Aligning conditions were rarely present. On all variables except episode valence, subjects rated the fully normative condition most favorably.

Colombian subjects generally scored the No Aligning conditions higher than did North Americans, sometimes significantly so. Only for the social attractiveness measures was there a significant difference between a No Aligning condition and the fully normative condition. Colombians scored the fully normative condition most favorably on identification with self, social attractiveness measures, systemic competence, and cultural normalcy, as did North American subjects. Colombians did not score the fully normative condition highest on the other measures, however.

Subjects from Kansas generally did not respond as did the original Massachusetts subjects. Kansans tended to score the fully normative condition highest, and rarely differentiated the Meta-Aligning conditions from the Satisfactory Aligning conditions except occasionally for High-to-low Disclosure conditions.

These results confirm the findings of Study I, that Aligning as operationalized by Harris, Cronen and Lesch (1979) is not of as much importance in conversation in Medellín as in North America. Since Colombian subjects did not usually differentiate significantly between Information Sequencing conditions, the findings from Study I suggesting that no special approaches are needed to break Information Sequencing norms are also supported. The recognition of the fully normative condition by Colombian subjects implies that norms governing initial conversations with strangers in Medellín are similar to North American norms, including both Aligning and Information Sequencing.

Notes

1. While traveling in the south of Colombia, I saw a shanty by the side of the road, a store of some kind, with the slogan painted on the side: "El último esfuerzo del pobre paisa" ("The poor Paisa's last effort")!

CHAPTER V -- DISCUSSION

In this chapter we will discuss the results of the previously reported studies, criticism of the methods used, and the implications of the results of the studies for theory, pedagogy, and future research.

Summary of Results

In Study I we found the sequence of topics in casual initial conversations between strangers in Medellín, as perceived by subjects. We also found that subjects did not perceive any special means for breaking the norms governing appropriate sequence of topics; in their perception, one simply "does it" when one wishes to talk about a more intimate topic than the norm for that point in the conversation. No equivalents to "Meta-aligning" were discovered. Topic sequence was discovered to be similar to that found in the United States by Berger et al. (1976). It was decided to attempt a replication of Harris et al.'s (1979) study, using translated stimulus materials.

In Study II, we attempted to discover similarities and differences between the effects of the independent variables Information Sequencing and Aligning Actions for subjects from Medellín and from the University of Kansas. The results from Kansas were also compared with the results from the original (1979) study, which took place at the University of Massachusetts.

It was found that Aligning Actions tended to have stronger effects on Kansas subjects than did Information Sequencing, and that both independent variables had stronger and more consistent effects on Kansas subjects than on Medellin subjects. Subjects at the University of Kansas tended to differentiate between the No Aligning conditions and the Satisfactory and Meta-Aligning conditions, rating the target in the latter conditions as more competent than the target in the former. Colombian scores seemed to be random for most dependent variables, although they were highest on the fully normative (Satisfactory Aligning, Low-to-low disclosure) condition on several measures, suggesting that they recognized the fully normative condition as such; but otherwise they were not as strongly, or at least as systematically, affected by the independent variables as were North American subjects.

Kansas subjects also rated the fully normative condition highest. In this respect they differed from the population in the original study: Massachusetts subjects rated the target in the Meta-Aligning conditions as more competent than the target in the Satisfactory Aligning conditions. Massachusetts subjects discriminated three levels of Aligning rather than two; there were significant differences in the Massachusetts data between the No Aligning conditions and the Satisfactory Aligning conditions for most measures, and significant differences between the Satisfactory Aligning and Meta-Aligning

conditions, with Meta-Aligning rated the highest and No Aligning rated the lowest on competence and competence-related measures.

Nakanishi and Johnson (1985) report similar differences between Midwestern and Eastern subjects. In a replication of a study done in Massachusetts by Wolfson and Pearce (1983), on the utility of "logical force" as a transcultural concept, they found that subjects from Kansas responded differently from the East Coast subjects. The findings were similar to mine in that the Kansas subjects tended to reflect more "conventional" or "conservative" attitudes regarding first conversations with strangers than the subjects from Massachusetts.

Discussion of Results

Method Criticism

A number of methodological difficulties were encountered in these studies. The first study could be improved by including more systematic observation of the social events described. This would allow for confirmation of the subjects' theories and impressions.

It can be argued that the first study did not include enough subjects, since the total number was under twenty. However, the uniformity of subjects' responses suggested that adding more interviews would probably confirm what had already been found, rather than finding it to be anomalous.

The second study included more problematic aspects. In this study the number of subjects is definitely an issue: there were about half as many Colombian subjects as North American, and the number of subjects per condition varied from 10 to 33. All conditions could use larger numbers of subjects (especially of Colombians) to improve confidence in the results.

Part of the reason for the low number of Colombian subjects was that Colombian subjects had difficulties with the questionnaire. Dozens of questionnaires had to be discarded due to incompleteness or improper filling-out. This may be due to unfamiliarity with this sort of test. Future studies should attempt different formats, after a study of the types of tests that have been effective in Latin America.

The ages of the subjects also call the generalizability of the results into question. The North American subjects were students in basic interpersonal communication courses, which suggests that their ages averaged 18 to 20. Colombian subjects were seniors at a large high school in Medellin, with ages of 17-20; Colombian university students participating in the study were two or more years older than the high schoolers. More mature subjects would be preferable, although this would add difficulty to the data collection. Perhaps future studies could use students from higher-level courses or in graduate programs. Of course, with older students in the U.S., one

would run the risk of their having studied interpersonal communication theory.

The measures also posed problems. Many had to be discarded due to low reliability. Logistical limitations prevented the substitution of new items at the time of the study. Of the measures retained, the Enmeshment and the Identification With Self measures are somewhat ambiguously worded and problematic conceptually. The Self item ("I am a type of person who could act as did the Target Person in this episode") might be improved by substituting "would" for "could". The Enmeshment item ("The Target Person could have acted in other ways that would have been appropriate in this episode") is also ambiguous, if one intends to differentiate subjects' evaluations of the Target from their judgments regarding how they themselves might have acted in the situation.

Correlations between the items retained were satisfactory, although none was above .65 ($p < .05$). The means were more disappointing. There were significant differences between conditions, but these were not as strong as hoped. The predicted three-level differentiation between conditions rarely appeared. The differences between conditions need to be exaggerated if Midwesterners are expected to make the desired differentiations. More than that may be needed to get clear results with Colombian subjects.

The pen-and-paper paradigm is, of course, not as realistic or complete a context for study of communication as are actual

interpersonal communication situations. It does allow for some control of variables, and relatively easy comparison between the responses of subjects. However, the problems with transcribed conversations must be acknowledged:

Transcribed episodes are incomplete records. Little nonverbal and paralinguistic material can be included; the reader must make many assumptions. Furthermore, actual conversation includes incomplete utterances, interruptions, and interjections, which readers are not accustomed to seeing in written conversations. If a way were found to include these elements in transcripts, they would detract from the flow of the written conversation, whereas in spoken conversation they need not. Written conversations often tend to condense spoken text. These distortions must be considered when evaluating the helpfulness of this or any study using transcribed episodes.

The episodes used in this study were for the most part not intended to represent full conversations, but rather the beginning of conversation. This may have confused some readers, who expected closure in the final statements. Future research might benefit by using full-length (brief) conversations, with clear beginning and end.

The lack of context may have confounded results, especially for the Latin Americans (see below regarding cultural differences in importance of context). The unsystematic scattering of Colombian scores may be due in part to the lack

of context in the episodes. A few sentences of introduction might have helped.

Some subjects may also have had trouble with the format of the transcribed episodes. However, other formats of presentation may make it more difficult for the subjects to focus on one person's (the Target's) performance. Giving the Target a name used throughout the questionnaire would have helped Colombian subjects especially.

Artificiality of the episodes may also have been a factor. Because of the means by which the episodes were created, they are not completely naturalistic. However, with naturalistic dialogues it is harder to control such variables as aligning actions. On the one hand, one desires to have episodes that are as naturalistic as possible. On the other hand, conditions must be extreme enough that subjects make the desired differentiations.

Implications for Theory

The patterns in the results can be explained concisely using constructs from CMM and from E.T. Hall. The CMM hierarchy of contexts will be used in conjunction with Hall's (1977) distinction of High Context (HC) and Low Context (LC) cultures.

The hypotheses regarding Aligning Actions, derived from

CMM, were supported more often than those regarding Information Sequencing, but the results did not support the hypotheses as strongly as hoped. Kansas subjects rarely made the three-tiered differentiations that Massachusetts subjects made. Generally Kansas subjects differentiated No Aligning from Aligning conditions, but did not distinguish between Satisfactory and Meta-Aligning conditions.

The procedures and materials used in the two studies were similar enough that it is unlikely that the differences can be attributed to methodological considerations. A more likely explanation is cultural differences between the East Coast and portions of the Midwest. As an example of these differences: Midwesterners seem to use fewer aligning actions in conversation, and consider them less important to comprehension. On the East Coast, it is considered a sign of sophistication to play with language, which includes clever use of aligning actions. Hence the differences in their evaluations of the episodes.

In contrast with the North American subjects, Colombian results rarely showed significant differences between conditions. Two types of explanations suggest themselves: problems with methods (the episodes were unclear for the Colombian subjects, the subject pool was too small, the measures were inappropriate or problematic), or cultural differences (Colombians have different criteria for evaluating competence, the episodes did not vary in ways that Colombians

understood). The methodological issues are discussed in the preceding section. The cultural issues are interesting, especially when explained using the theoretical constructs mentioned above.

The differences, both between the East Coast and the Midwest, and between the North Americans and the Colombians, will be explained by means of E.T. Hall's theoretical distinction of high- and low-context cultures. While this distinction has been used in a somewhat ethnocentric manner by some theorists, in this case we use it only in its application to communication. In high-context cultures, a shared context is assumed by speakers. A large part of conversation can be conceived as internalized in the speakers. It is not expected that one will have to make great adjustments in one's way of talking or understanding talk. Although one may switch codes or styles of talk, these are relatively defined. Statements may be made indirectly or through hints, with the expectation that the other will understand. A low-context conversation, however, would tend to be highly explicit, as context must be created and maintained throughout conversation. Hints or indirect statements may be missed if context is insufficient.

It would seem that a low-context culture like the urban United States would place more importance on aligning actions, as these serve the important function of creating and maintaining the context of speech. A high-context culture, on

the other hand, may place high value on rituals of conversation because they are part of the familiar context, but not consider them essential to comprehension or coherence because it is assumed that both speakers share a common context. I suggest that the American Midwest generally exhibits a higher-context culture (regarding conversation) than the East Coast, and that Latin America is composed of higher-context cultures than North America, generally speaking.

There are definitely cultural differences between Kansas and Massachusetts. Massachusetts students seem to enjoy demonstrating cleverness with language, considering it a sign of sophistication. In the Midwest, plain speaking is valued, and fewer aligning actions are used.

Massachusetts subjects are perhaps confronted with the low-context aspects (or the variety of subcultures) of our culture more than Kansas students². Subjects from the East Coast confront a multiplicity of cultures on a daily basis, each group with its own traditions and cultural styles. Besides that, they are confronted with the new trends and styles sooner than are Midwesterners, and receive them unmellowed by the filtering process that occurs as trends move inland. The cultural system, for them, is varied and continually in flux. Hence they rate the meta-aligning conditions very positively, as meta-aligning is more useful to their situation.

Kansas students, although their surroundings contain fewer relics older than a hundred years, live in cultural

surroundings that change much more slowly than those of either coast. Hence they perceive their culture as a relatively stable thing, and see less need to use aligning actions to tie their behavior to some system of reality. There is apparently less diversity in the Midwest, at least for the ordinary individual, than in the urban East. As their scores reflect, however, aligning actions are seen as having some importance, more so than for Colombian subjects, who did not differentiate between conditions with no aligning and with aligning.

It is interesting that low-context cultures like the United States, England, and urban Germany gave rise to such anti-context movements as Dadaism, New Music, and Punk. In the high-context cultures of the Latin and Oriental countries, these movements did not have the following they had in the countries mentioned above³. This lack of acceptance is understandable using Hall's LC/HC distinction: high-context cultures have a high respect for tradition and form.

Colombians use aligning actions, often more lavishly than do North Americans, but the actions seem to serve a primarily social function and are less essential to comprehension than in the United States. So the Colombians would not find the aligning actions as necessary, and would be more likely than North Americans to rate a conversation with no aligning actions as satisfactory. At the same time, the Colombians would not be particularly impressed with meta-aligned conversations, as

these tactics would be considered superfluous or redundant.

In fact, one of my Colombian informants expressed to me that he was quite impressed with the fast-paced dialogue in American shows like "Dallas" and "Falconcrest", especially in contrast to Colombian-produced TV dramas, which tend to be extremely wordy and melodramatic. When we discussed how the three levels of competence would look in Colombia, he created several model episodes. The minimally competent speaker in one episode spoke redundantly (according to Colombian standards), saying things that were obvious and asking questions to which he knew the answers. The optimally competent speakers used a fast-paced parallel exchange of information, with a minimum of explanation. This seems almost the opposite of Harris et al.'s pattern, although these and all other described and observed Colombian episodes showed clear coherence between statements.

Another important approach to the differences in scoring patterns is also related to the LC/HC distinction, and is invariably mentioned in works on Latin culture and values: Latins tend to emphasize relationships above other criteria. In business as well as casual social contexts, Latins seek to develop lasting friendships. In conversation with a stranger (see Study I), a Latin "sounds out" ("ubica") the other in order to see what sort of relationship will result. The initial conversation is the beginning of a relationship, not merely an isolated event. In terms of the CMM hierarchy of

contexts, we would say that Latins emphasize the relationship or contract level in conversation more than other levels.

For North Americans, however, friendship is more transitory; lasting bonds are rare. Latin American international students in the United States complain that North Americans are difficult to befriend. A Colombian friend of mine at the University of Kansas once expressed to me his shock that a person he had spoken with at length at a party the night before, hardly acknowledged his greeting when their paths crossed on campus.

This approach emphasizing bonds can also be seen in the contrast between Latin and North American business practices. In the traditional Latin business world, family and social ties have more influence than pricing or quality. North Americans, on the other hand, shop the market and are usually quite willing to drop alliances if a better deal appears⁴

Since North Americans are not as likely to form bonds of the same sort, superficial or immediate criteria in interaction such as the cleverness of the other's speech are highly important. A Colombian might forgive much clumsiness in speech if the person seems interesting or to have hidden potential, and shows sincere goodwill. However, if the person does not appear open to friendship, his clever speaking will be judged as a superficial or disrespectful gimmick. Based on this, it appears likely that Colombian subjects would be hard put to

make hard-and-fast judgments about a person based on a brief written transcript. A North American, however, used to focusing on the episodic level and not as much on the relational (or contractual), is not as uncomfortable making such a judgment.

This interpretation is supported by studies comparing Japanese and American communication patterns. Nakane (1974) comments that having a basis for relationship with a stranger (finding that he taught at the university where she worked) gave her the means for starting a conversation with her; he was a member of her "in-group". As Nakanishi (1984) and Hall (1965) point out, in Japanese grammar, it is very awkward to speak to another at all before the relationship between you is established.

Nakanishi and Johnson (1985), Alexander, Pearce and Kang (1980), Wolfson and Pearce (1983), and Gudykunst (1982) have found significant differences in the ways North Americans and members of some Oriental cultures see the implications of elements in conversation (these studies dealt with self-disclosure) on their relationship with the other person, and vice-versa. While Latin Americans and Japanese are very different, both cultures have been classed as "high context" by E.T. Hall. These cultures and the North American culture make an interesting contrast in terms of how aligning actions are used in each.

The differences in conversational style between Colombians,

Japanese and Americans is interesting from a theoretical point of view. By all accounts, Japanese conversation includes the least amount of "small talk" of the three. Subtlety, brevity and silence are valued. In an indirect manner, one seeks to make one's point and accomplish one's goals. "Aligning" (or coordination) takes place through brief episodes; one finds little that resembles North American aligning actions in these conversations.

Okabe summarizes it as follows:

In American culture, communication is not established unless the words follow a certain route.... The listener proceeds toward understanding what the speaker says as he or she follows the coherent, linear route of the speaker. In a heterogeneous and egalitarian society very little is taken for granted in communication. As a result, the logical route should be solidly paved and the listener, too, must take care not to stray from its bounds. The Japanese language, on the other hand, tends to make a pointlike, dotlike spacelike thinking. The speaker organizes his or her ideas and thoughts in a stepping-stone mode: The listener is supposed to supply what is left unsaid. In the homogeneous society of Japan much commonality is taken for granted, so that the Japanese tend to value those modes of communication that leave much room for various

interpretations (Okabe, 1983, pp. 28-29).

Colombians, on the other hand, revel in ritual and formalities. Introductions and exchange of name and polite initial conversation can continue for a long time, with sometimes exaggerated displays of interest. However, the Colombian subjects differentiated less than North Americans between No Aligning conversations and those with Aligning. This suggests that, as for the Japanese, aligning at the relationship level is more important than aligning actions in conversation. It is essential to recognize the differences between these two High-Context cultures (a distinction which Gudykunst fails to make): Japanese use a minimum of words and self-description, while Colombians can be quite verbose.

Because of these types of differences, it may be valuable to think of aligning in broader terms than simply aligning actions. The aligning of a relationship is of a different level from alignment of a conversation, although the two may (and often do) take place simultaneously. If my findings and interpretations are accurate, it may be that aligning actions do not have the important function in other cultures that Stokes and Hewitt (1976) ascribe to them in ours ("Aligning actions. sustain the flow of joint actions by bringing individual acts into line with one another in problematic circumstances, and they sustain a relationship between ongoing conduct and culture in the face of recognized failure

of conduct to live up to cultural definitions and requirements" (Stokes and Hewitt, 1976, p. 844)). Nonetheless, aligning appears to be a valuable concept: cultures (or individuals) can be classified in terms of the level at which aligning takes place, and the means to alignment. Based on this study, we would conclude that in HC cultures (generality: Colombia and Japan), interactants align at the relationship level by means of episodes. Colombians may align at the message level more than do Japanese (see Nakanishi and Johnson, 1985). In contrast, interactants in LC cultures (generality: North Americans) tend to align primarily at the episode level by means of aligning actions (speech acts). "Aligning" is a more general term than "aligning actions", and may be useful.

Implications for Pedagogy

Meta-alignment, as exemplified in the episodes created for this study, is not the answer to all intercultural communication woes. Latin Americans try hard to understand foreigners. When they do not understand, the tendency (in my experience) is to invent some likely explanation for the incomprehensible action. At times they may attribute a foreigner's behavior to the foreigner's dislike of them, or to his/her rudeness (see Gorden, 1981). Meta-aligning may be useful when a conversation seems headed into incoherency, but not as a vehicle for clever conversation, unless the Latin

involved is bicultural, in which case the communication problem is probably smaller in the first place. Meta-aligning as portrayed in the model episodes would probably be seen as redundant or showing off (or as "talking too much") by Colombians.

The systemic nature of communication is a valuable concept. Communication should be seen as a cultural system, part of a larger system and coherent with it, not merely a collection of isolated skills. The particulars of conversational style are tied into the human relations system of Latin America. Formalities are important in that they reaffirm the cultural system and confer dignity on the occasion.

A typical conversation between strangers in a casual social setting in Colombia includes introduction (often with an intermediary), greetings, shaking of hands, and many polite questions and expressions of interest. These elements all show politeness and respect. To skip them need not, but can, express disinterest or disrespect. They can be commented on, if tact is employed and no disrespect to custom is implied.

The CMM hierarchy of levels is useful for classifying some of the differences between the cultures involved. The fact that North Americans were influenced relatively strongly by formal elements within the conversation suggests a focus on the episode and speech act levels. Latins emphasize relationships, or the contract level of the hierarchy, and thus may appear

more noncommittal when it comes to making judgments based on formal elements in a single, brief conversation. (This does not mean that Latins will not make snap judgments based on a single conversation in actual interaction; generalizability of this suggestion is limited to transcribed episodes of the type used for this study.)

For the North American making contact with Latin Americans, it is essential to recognize the relationship-level orientation. This can imply some basic changes in the North American modus operandi: one's orientation to time and the best use of meetings may need some adaptation, one may need to show more effusive interest in others than is one's custom, one may need to act more formally than usual in introductions or with acquaintances, and one may find oneself suddenly "inside" a group after becoming acquainted with just one member!

Future research

More women should have been included in the interviews, in order to strengthen the results dealing with gender differences. A sociolinguistic study of conversations between men, between women, and between men and women, would give data illuminating the differences and perhaps show aligning methods undiscoverable by the means used in the present studies. It is obvious that there are some well-known types of episodes of flirtation, gossip, and flattery; and it would be interesting to find the elements of conversation that allow one to

recognize the episodes for what they are.

An approach comparing North American and Japanese, Chinese and Korean subjects, focusing on conversational logics, has been used with encouraging results by Alexander et al. (1980), Wolfson and Pearce (1983), Nakanishi and Johnson (1985), Kang and Pearce (1984), and others. These studies have primarily compared perceptions of the implications (on the relationship between speakers, the speakers' life scripts, their subsequent acts, etc.) of self-disclosure in conversation. A study of this sort comparing Colombian and North American subjects would be fruitful; the differences between the cultures suggested in the previous sections need testing. I would expect significant differences in perceptions of the implications of particular types of speech acts for the relationship and for one's life script, given the hypothetical differences between the cultures. More crosscultural studies are needed, examining other aspects of CMM to test applicability across cultures.

Studies contrasting Japanese and Colombian communication patterns and logics would be extremely interesting, as to date studies have contrasted other cultures only with the U.S. The applicability and accuracy of Hall's classification of cultures as HC or LC need to be tested empirically, to find ways in which this insight can illuminate important differences between cultures and to test the limits of its applicability. The differences between different regions of the U.S. could be

studied economically and with useful application to intercultural communication.

A potentially fruitful area of study is the study of "native metacommunicative competence" (see Briggs, 1981). This approach emphasizes flexible observation methods, focusing on what natives consider to be competent communication. Briggs' study included flexible interviews, observation of the education of infants in communicative skills, and attention to the behavior of highly respected speakers. He found that, as he grew close to one of his interviewees (a respected old Mexican-American man), this friend took it upon himself to pass on the wisdom of his years, including his thoughts on public behavior. This sort of experience can open the researcher's eyes to other perspectives on speech, and help avoid the ethnocentrism in research decried by Ramsey (1979) and Asante and Vora (1983). Furthermore, it can give the researcher an idea of what is considered important in communication by members of different cultures. A systemic view of communicative competence requires such research for validation, because the systemic approach expects cultural differences in communication processes.

NOTES

1. A perfect example of extremely low-context information is found in Pearce and Cronen's (1980, pp. 39, 85) explanations of examples of double-binds and Zen koans. Writing for the lowest

common denominator, they assume that the double-bind examples need explanation, and they presume to explain in one sentence a Zen koan which a true student of Zen would insist is inexplicable in language.

2. The East Coast certainly is high-context in some aspects, containing as it does the oldest settlements of our nation; but it also contains a great diversity of cultures which have retained distinctives of behavior and lifestyle and even language.

3. While on a visit to France in 1983, I saw Punks in the streets of Toulouse, complete with dyed hair and bizarre outfits -- listening to disco-type dance music! While the aesthetics of commercialized Punk were imitated in the Latin world, the music and the philosophy were spurned.

4. A practical difference which may in part account for these contrasting approaches to initial conversations is the relative mobility of the North American lifestyle, as opposed to the stability of life in Colombia. In Colombia, if you meet someone similar or interesting to you, it is very likely that you will encounter that person again in the future, because you share an acquaintance, an interest, a vocation, or for whatever reasons run in the same circles. In Medellin, for instance, many similar businesses are clustered together: the funeral parlors along one boulevard, the hardware stores within a few blocks of each other, record stores in the downtown malls, used book stalls along one pedestrian street. The upper classes patronize certain clubs and restaurants; the middle class have their favorite haunts. One chain of four department stores is a very likely place to encounter friends, because the stores are extremely popular for their reasonable prices and their vast selection.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire -- Study I

Spanish version

Introducción: Quisiera su ayuda para examinar los patrones de una conversación típica entre dos desconocidos que se encuentran por primera vez; por ejemplo, entre dos personas que se conocen en una fiesta.

1. Para comenzar esta conversación, qué diría una u otra de las personas?

(Por ejemplo, un saludo: ¿Cómo estás? etc.)

De cuál otra forma se podría comenzar esta conversación?

2. Qué temas se tratarían en los primeros cinco minutos?

(Por ejemplo, la familia, el tiempo, el deporte, etc.)

¿Qué otros temas se podrían tratar?

3. Si Ud. o los dos quisieran que la relación se volviera más profunda, ¿qué temas se introducirían (y cuando) después de los primeros cinco minutos?

4. (El investigador copia los temas en tarjetas pequeñas.) ¿Me puede Ud. poner estos temas en una secuencia apropiada? Es decir, en la secuencia en que las personas normalmente los comentarían.

Esta parte de la entrevista debe ser grabada:

5. Puede Ud. recordar alguna primera conversación que siguió la secuencia ya mencionada?

¿Quién inició la conversación? ¿Qué dijo?

A.

Cuál fue la respuesta?

B.

Qué siguió?

A.

B.

A.

B.

etc. (Quince turnos, si es posible)

6. Si quisiera que la relación se desarrollara mucho más rápidamente, podría cambiar la secuencia de temas?

En qué orden los pondría entonces? (Utilizar de nuevo las tarjetas)

Hay otras secuencias posibles?

Cómo haría para cambiar la secuencia, o para introducir un tema más íntimo o personal, de una manera fluida y natural? Qué diría Ud.?

7. Puede Ud. recordar una conversación con alguna persona hasta entonces desconocida en que algunas de estas técnicas o estos cambios se usaron? (Una conversación que no fue típica, que trató temas más profundos o íntimos que los normales.)

Cómo comenzó la conversación?

A.

Qué siguió?

B.

A.

etc. (Quince turnos, si es posible.)

Questionnaire -- Study I

English translation

Introduction: I would like your help in examining the patterns in a typical conversation between two strangers meeting for the first time; for example, between two people who meet at a party.

1. To begin this conversation, what would one or the other person say?

(For example, a greeting: Hi, how are you? etc.)

How else could this conversation begin?

2. What topics would be discussed in the first five minutes?

(For example, family, the weather, sports, etc.)

3. If you or both of you wish the relationship to become deeper, what topics would be introduced (and when) after the first five minutes?

4. (The researcher copies the topics onto small cards.) Can you put these topics into an appropriate sequence? That is, in the order in which people would normally bring them up.

(This part of the interview should be recorded:)

5. Can you remember a first conversation that followed the order you just mentioned?

Who started the conversation? What did s/he say?

A.

What was the answer?

B.

What followed?

A.

B.

A.

B.

etc. (Fifteen turns if possible.)

6. If you or both of you want the relationship to deepen much more quickly, could you change the order of topics?

What order would you put them in now?

(Use the cards again)

Are there other possible sequences?

How would you go about changing the order, or introducing a more intimate or personal topic, in a smooth and natural manner? What would you say?

7. Can you remember a conversation with a stranger in which some of these changes were made? (A conversation that wasn't typical, in which you talked about deeper or more intimate topics than the usual.)

How did the conversation begin?

A.

What followed?

B.

A.

B.

etc. (Fifteen turns if possible.)

APPENDIX

SCALES IN ENGLISH

1. I think the Target Person communicated in a very competent manner in this episode.

Strongly Agree : Slightly Agree : Neither : Slightly Disagree : Strongly Disagree

2. I could predict with great certainty that the Target Person's actions would have the results they did.

Strongly Agree : Slightly Agree : Neither : Slightly Disagree : Strongly Disagree

3. The Target Person could have performed different acts that would have been appropriate in this situation.

Strongly Agree : Slightly Agree : Neither : Slightly Disagree : Strongly Disagree

4. This is a highly productive interchange between Persons A and B.

Strongly Agree : Slightly Agree : Neither : Slightly Disagree : Strongly Disagree

5. This episode could never happen around here (in this city or region).

Strongly Agree : Slightly Agree : Neither : Slightly Disagree : Strongly Disagree

6. I think it would be difficult to talk to the Target Person.

Strongly Agree : Slightly Agree : Neither : Slightly Disagree : Strongly Disagree

7. How well can you predict the Target Person's behavior?

Extremely Well : Reasonably well : Neutral : A little : Very little : Not at all

8. I am a type of person who could do what the Target Person did in this episode.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

9. The Target Person enjoys participating in this episode very much.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

10. I would be pleased to have the Target Person as a friend.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

11. The Target Person was probably satisfied with his/her performance in this episode.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

12. The Target Person probably felt compelled to act as s/he did; there were no alternatives for him/her.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

13. How well can you predict the Target Person's emotional states?

Extremely Well : Reasonably Neutral : A little : Very : Not at all

14. I could never establish a personal friendship with the Target Person.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

15. The Target Person acted as any normal person would under the circumstances.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

16. The Target Person is offensive to me.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

17. The Target Person could not only predict how the episode would go, s/he could also experiment with new strategies without causing confusion.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

18. The Target Person understood this episode very well.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

19. This episode is one the Target Person very much desires to have occur.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

20. The Target Person feels stuck in this episode.

Strongly Agree : Agree : Slightly agree : Neither : Slightly disagree : Disagree : Strongly disagree

21. What emotion do you think the Target Person would have by the end of this dialogue? Why?

SCALES IN SPANISH

1. Yo creo que la Persona B se comunicó en una manera muy competente en este episodio.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- acuerdo des- acuerdo

2. Yo pude prever con gran certeza, que la conducta de la Persona B iba a dar los resultados que en efecto tuvo.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- acuerdo des- acuerdo

3. La Persona B ha podido actuar de una manera diferente, lo cual hubiera sido apropiado en esta situación.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- acuerdo des- acuerdo

4. El intercambio entre las personas A y B es muy productivo.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- acuerdo des- acuerdo

5. Este episodio jamas pudiera suceder por aqui (en esta ciudad o region).

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- acuerdo des- acuerdo

6. Creo que seria dificil conocer a la Persona B.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- acuerdo des- acuerdo

7. ¿Qué tan bien puede preverse la conducta de la Persona B?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
Perfec- Bien Algo Neutral Algo Mal Muy
tamente bien bien mal mal

8. Yo soy una persona quien podría hacer lo que hizo la Persona B en este episodio.

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
Muy de De Algo de Neutral Algo en En Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

9. La Persona B goza mucho de participar en este episodio.

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
Muy de De Algo de Neutral Algo en En Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

10. Me gustaría mucho tener como amigo/amiga a la Persona B.

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
Muy de De Algo de Neutral Algo en En Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

11. A lo mejor la Persona B quedó satisfecha con su actuación en este episodio.

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
Muy de De Algo de Neutral Algo en En Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

12. Es probable que la Persona B se sintió obligada a actuar como lo hizo; no habían otras alternativas para ella.

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
Muy de De Algo de Neutral Algo en En Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

13. ¿Qué tan bien pueden predecirse los estados emocionales de la Persona B?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
Perfec- Bien Algo Neutral Algo Mal Muy
tamente bien bien mal mal

14. Jamás podría yo establecer una amistad con la Persona B.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo Neutral desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

15. La conducta de la Persona B fue la que hubiera sido la de cualquiera persona normal bajo estas circunstancias.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo Neutral desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

16. La Persona B me parece ofensiva.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo Neutral desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

17. No sólo podía la Persona B prever el desenlace del episodio, sino que podía experimentar con nuevas estrategias sin causar confusión.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo Neutral desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

18. La Persona B entendió este episodio muy bien.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo Neutral desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

19. La Persona B tiene muchos deseos de que este episodio ocurra.

Muy de : De : Algo de : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo Neutral desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

20. La Persona B se siente empantanada o atascada en este episodio.

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
Muy de De Algo de Neutral Algo en En Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

21. A juicio suyo, ¿qué emoción tendría la Persona B al terminarse este diálogo? (Escriba su respuesta legiblemente en una o varias oraciones.)

Informed Consent Form

The Department of Communication Studies supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided so that you may decide whether or not you wish to participate in the present study.

This study is concerned with your understanding of "competence" in initial interactions between strangers. You will be asked to fill out a set of scales after each. Your responses will be kept confidential, and your name will not be associated with the results of the study in any way (except that I will inform your instructor that you have participated in one of my studies so you will receive proper class credit).

Your participation is solicited, but is strictly voluntary. Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study. We appreciate your cooperation very much.

Sincerely,

Timothy Goring, Kenneth Johnson
Principal investigators
Phone: 864-3633

My participation is voluntary.

class: _____

instructor: _____

Instructions

On the following pages you will find two dialogues, each followed by two pages of questions. Please read the first dialogue, answer the questions that follow, then do the same with the second dialogue. Note: In the questions, "episode" means "conversation".

The majority of the questions will have the following form. Please read the statement or question and put an "X" in the appropriate space.

Example: The Target Person is very relaxed in this episode (conversation).

Strongly Agree Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Disagree Strongly
agree agree disagree disagree

Please focus on the Target Person, signalled with two asterisks (* Person A * or * Person B *), as the questions refer to this person.

Read the dialogues from left to right.

Formulario de Consentimiento

El Departamento de Estudios de la Comunicación de la Universidad de Kansas apoya la costumbre de proteger a las personas que suministran datos para la investigación científica. Se comunica la información que sigue para que Ud. pueda decidir si desea participar en el presente estudio o no.

Esta investigación busca conocer su concepto de la "competencia", es decir, aptitud o capacidad, en las primeras conversaciones entre personas desconocidas. Se le pedirá leer dos diálogos y llenar unos formularios averiguando su opinión sobre la actuación de una de las personas en cada diálogo.

Su participación es solicitada, pero será completamente voluntaria. No vacile para hacer cualquier pregunta sobre el estudio. Su nombre no será asociado de manera alguna con los resultados de la investigación. Le agradezco mucho su cooperación.

Atentamente,

Timothy Goring
Apdo. Aéreo 50042
Tel. 280-0983

Mi participación es voluntaria.

Firma del participante

dirección:

Instrucciones

A continuación encontrará dos diálogos, seguidos por tres páginas de preguntas. Favor leer el primer diálogo, responder a las preguntas que siguen, y luego hacer lo mismo con el segundo diálogo. Nota: en las preguntas, "episodio" quiere decir "conversación".

La mayoría de las preguntas tendrán la siguiente forma. Favor leer la oración o pregunta y poner una "X" en el espacio apropiado.

Ejemplo: La Persona B se siente muy relajada en este episodio (o conversación).

Muy de : De : X : Neutral : Algo en : En : Muy en
acuerdo acuerdo acuerdo desacuerdo des- desacuerdo
acuerdo

Favor enfocarse en la Persona B, como las preguntas se refieren a esta persona.

No Aligning, Low-to-low Self Disclosure

Confederate
Person A

Target
* Person B *

1. Hi. My name is George. What's yours? My name is Pamela.
2. The next question is, are you from around here? I'm from New York.
3. New York. That's pretty far from here. I have a son in Boston. We go through New York when we visit him. I'm a volunteer at Lawrence Memorial Hospital.
4. That's interesting. I paint for relaxation. I also enjoy playing tennis. Now you know the "real me"! (Laughs) I enjoy playing with my children.
5. Yeah, that's sure important for kids. My parents used to take me on skiing trips to Colorado. Those were good times. I've only been skiing once.
6. I guess there's not that much snow in New York. I like hunting for antiques.
7. Me too. I collect (this is crazy, I know) but I collect old football souvenirs and stuff. Mostly from the Chicago Bears games. They are a lousy team, but they used to give away a lot of old pennants and pictures and things like that. What do you collect? Oh, I don't know -- I just like hunting for antiques.
8. (Laughs) How long have you been away from New York? I know this is a dumb question, but what else can a guy ask a strange lady? Not very long. Since Christmas. We spent New Year's at Fort Lauderdale.
9. Nice place to be in the winter. I'd just love to spend a year or two travelling around the country meeting people. I have a dog, three cats, and a parakeet.

10. Having a menagerie makes it
sort of hard to travel, I guess.
Oh, I gotta go now. Nice
meeting you, Pamela.

Yeah, it does. Bye.

No Aligning, Low-to-high Disclosure

Confederate
Person A

Target
* Person B *

1. Hi. My name is George. What's yours? You love animals too?

My name is Pamela. I have a dog, three cats, and a parakeet.

2. They must keep you busy. I like the flea market. I love hunting for antiques.

I collect old football souvenirs and stuff. Mostly from the Chicago Bears. They are a lousy football team.

3. I don't know much about football. (Pause) I get nervous meeting people for the first time.

I'd love to spend a year or two travelling around the country meeting people.

4. I find it difficult to make small talk.

There's nothing better than a good book to raise my spirits. One of my favorite authors is Norman Mailer.

5. Yeah, I've read a couple of his books. But I can get lost in my own daydreams.

I talk to my plants, and I think it makes them bigger.

6. I've read a lot of the recent literature on that subject. The scientific studies indicate that talking to plants doesn't have any effect. I tend to believe them. I may be stubborn, but it's only because I'm right. (Laughs)

Plants are like people; they thrive on love.

7. I find it difficult to respond rationally when I'm criticized. Do you?

I just cut my hair and I can tell my husband really hates it. But I think my husband is terrific.

8. You're very lucky. My wife and I stay together for the sake of the children.

I also love playing with my children. My son is the brightest kid in his class.

9. It sounds like you have a marvelous family. Not everyone has it as good as you. For instance, my daughter who is in

Oh, I do. I read my horoscope every day and follow it faithfully.

high school uses drugs. It's awfully hard to spend the afternoon in the house with her when she's high. I hope you can truly appreciate what you have.

No Aligning, High-to-low Disclosure

Confederate
Person A

Target
* Person B *

1. I'm waiting here for my son. He was arrested last night for possession of marijuana.

My daughter -- she's in high school -- uses drugs. I think she's pregnant.

2. Oh, I'm sure that's painful for you and your husband. I wonder why people stare at me wherever I go around here.

I often wonder why people don't like me.

3. There are times like these when I feel I've wasted my life. (Pause) Gee, this is really awkward. I don't usually act this depressed around strangers. Let's change the subject.

I wish my husband would feel free to cry as an emotional release.

4. I'd like to lighten this conversation a little. I mean this sounds like a soap opera. You know? I may be stubborn about talking myself in and out of moods, but it's only because I'm right. (Laughs)

I think I got married much too young.

5. Most men are insecure. (Laughs)

The first time I saw my father cry I didn't understand it.

6. Yeah. I can recall some shocks like that. I guess no amount of education can prepare a person for the real world. you know?

My husband and I got married earlier than we'd planned because I was pregnant.

7. Yeah. It's hard not to dwell on those things. There's nothing better than a good book to raise my spirits. One of my favorite authors is Norman Mailer.

We stay together for the sake of the children.

8. That's an important consideration. I enjoy playing with my children.

My husband makes too many demands on me. I never have time to play with my children.

9. I know what you mean. It's

awfully hard to find time. I'm We were never a close family
a volunteer at the hospital. I
try to make time, though.

Satisfactory Competence, Low-to-low Disclosure

Confederate
Person A

Target
* Person B *

1. Hi. My name is George.
What's yours?

Hi. Pamela.

2. The next question is -- are
you from around here?

No, I'm from New York. Are
you?

3. Yeah, I'm a native. New
York. You're pretty far from
home. I have a son in Boston.
We go through New York when we
visit. Beautiful. But this is
home.

This is a nice place. I'm a
volunteer at the hospital.
Since I started I've met lots
of nice people here.

4. Yeah. The people here are
great. I bet your work is
interesting. I'm not that
generous with my own personal
time. I paint for relaxation.
I also enjoy playing tennis.
Well, now you know the real me!
(Laughs)

It's not a question of
generosity, it's just doing
what I like. I enjoy playing
with my children, too. I have
two daughters, six and ten.

5. That's nice. Yeah, it's
sure good to play with your
kids. My parents used to take
me on skiing trips to Colorado.
Those were great times.

I've only been skiing once.
My parents spent a lot of time
with us kids, though. I think
that's real important.

6. I guess there's not that
much snow in New York. But
you're right, it's not what you
do, it's just that you do
something with your kids.

I like hunting for antiques.
My girls love to go too. We
usually stop for lunch
somewhere. It's a lot of fun.

7. I love antiques too. I
collect (this is really crazy)
but I collect old souvenirs and
stuff. Mostly from the Chicago
Bears games. They are a lousy
football team but they used to
give away a lot of old pennants
and pictures and things like
that. What do you collect?

(Laughs) Oh, I don't know. I
just like the hunting. You
know -- outings. We often
don't buy anything. But we
get a lot of ideas.

8. (Laughs) How long have you
been away from New York? I know

Not very long. Since
Christmas. We spent New

this is a dumb question but what else can a guy ask a strange woman?

9. Nice place to be in the winter. I'd love to spend a year or two traveling around the country meeting people.

Year's in Fort Lauderdale.

Me too. It's hard for me to travel, though. We have a dog, three cats, and a parakeet! (Laughs)

Satisfactory Aligning, Low-to-high Disclosure

Confederate
Person A

Target
* Person B *

1. Hi. My name is George. Now you're supposed to tell me your name.

Nice to meet you. Mine is Pamela. This is quite a place, isn't it? I love animals. I have a dog, three cats, and a parakeet.

2. They must keep you busy. I like the flea market, myself. I love hunting for antiques.

Me too. I collect (this is crazy, I know) but I collect old football souvenirs and stuff. Mostly from the Chicago Bears games. They are a lousy football team but they have a great bunch of loyal fans.

3. I don't know much about football. (Pause) This place is expensive. The way things are going in this country there will probably be a depression soon.

Boy, you're right there. I've been looking for a job for months. The only thing I can find is typing. Typing is one of the most boring jobs!

4. I never type anymore. Let's see. I'm 39, and I haven't even owned a typewriter in seven years.

Maybe you ought to hire me! (Laughs) You know, I've tried to teach my children that race, religion or social class shouldn't affect their relationships with people, but I hate being poor.

5. Sorry I can't hire you. I'm just as broke as the next person. You're right, though. People who are prejudiced are stupid. (Did I say that?)

I think they're insecure. Most men are insecure. At least the ones I've known.

6. Really. I have this weird thing. I mean, I have had these psychic experiences. And people think you're really weird, and they just leave. You know?

Oh, I bet. My weirdness is my nose. I mean, when I mention how I think I have an ugly nose, people get embarrassed. I don't know why.

7. I don't know. I guess this sounds strange, but there are times when I feel I have wasted

Oh, it's not crazy. Sometimes I wish I were single again.

my life trying to please others.
I usually don't tell that to
strangers.

8. Yeah, I know what you mean.
I wonder why people stare at me
wherever I go. I mean maybe
they think it's strange for a
father to come here alone.

9. Then I guess it's a good
place for me. I'm feeling
pretty sorry for myself. My son
was arrested last night for
possession of marijuana.

Well, I don't think it's that
unusual. Who cares anyway? I
sometimes come here when I
don't really like myself very
much.

Oh, how terrible for you! I
can sympathize. My daughter,
who is in high school, uses
drugs. It's scary the things
they can get into these days.

Satisfactory Competence, High-to-low Disclosure

Confederate
Person A

Target
* Person B *

1. I'm here waiting for my son. He was arrested last night for possession of marijuana.

Oh, I can sympathize with you. My daughter who is in high school uses drugs.

2. I wonder why people stare at me wherever I go around here. You don't have to answer that.

Well, you look very upset. Don't worry about it. I don't really like myself very much sometimes.

3. There are times like these when I feel I've wasted my life. I feel awkward telling you this.

Yeah. I probably shouldn't be saying this, but I wish I were single again.

4. Oh, I've had psychic experiences like that before! (laughs)

(Laughs) This sounds odd, I guess, but you're a stranger and you'll tell the truth. I think I have an ugly nose and I'm thinking about plastic surgery. What do you think?

5. Well, I think people who judge a person by his or her physical characteristics as well as people who are prejudiced are stupid.

Yeah, or maybe they're just insecure. At least all the men I've ever known are.

6. Well, I'm no expert but I am 39 years old and I've been around enough to know that most people are prejudiced against something.

You're right. I've tried to teach my children that race, religion, or social class shouldn't affect their relationships with people.

7. Maybe I'm just pessimistic, but I think the way things are going in this country there will probably be a depression soon -- not just economic but emotional. You know?

I sure do. There's just not much joy left. I mean I just do housework. It's so boring! Like ironing. Ironing is one of the most boring jobs.

8. Yeah. I always put it off until I have to do it. I can't stand staying at home much. I go shopping a lot. I like hunting for antiques.

Me too. I collect (this is crazy, I know) but I collect old football souvenirs and stuff. Mostly from the Chicago Bears games. They are a lousy football team, but they have a great bunch of

loyal fans.

9. That sounds like fun. My name is George. What's yours? This has been a strange conversation. I don't usually talk about myself like this to strangers.

Pamela. Souvenirs aren't all I collect. I have a dog, three cats, and a parakeet.

Metaaligning, Low-to-low Disclosure

Confederate
Person A

Target
* Person B *

1. Hi. My name is George. What's yours?

Hi, George. Pamela. I think your next question is supposed to be "Are you from around here?"

2. Okay. "Are you from around here?"

Oh, what an interesting question! No, as a matter of fact I'm from New York. Let's see --it's my turn -- are you from around here?

3. How did you guess? Yeah, I'm a "native". You're pretty far from home. I have a son in Boston. We go through New York when we visit him. The New York countryside is beautiful, but this is home.

It's nice here, but not enough to spend the next five minutes talking about it. Let's see. Let me tell you something about me, then you tell me something about you. I'm a volunteer at a local hospital.

4. Oh, we've got a lady here with a missionary complex! I'm not so generous with my time. I paint for relaxation. And I play tennis -- a lot of tennis.

You're easy if you were impressed with my volunteer work. I also spend a lot of time playing with my kids. How about that!

5. Wow. Superwoman! I bet you love that image! It's sure important, though. My parents used to take me on skiing trips to Colorado. Those were great times.

Boy, have you got me pegged! I do a lot of stuff like that. But, you know, I don't do any more than my mom did with us kids. I just find myself doing what she did -- and that's a tough act to follow!

6. Yeah, you're right. It's not just what you do, it's just that you do something with your kids. Having good parents helps us to be good parents.

Sure. I don't want you to get the wrong idea about me. I'm just as selfish as you are. My weaknesses are just different. Mine is antiques. I just love to hunt for antiques!

7. Thank God, you're normal! I was beginning to wonder for a minute. As a matter of fact, I love antiques too. I collect

Normal! Oh no, I hope you don't think I'm normal! I was just beginning to think you were until you told me about

souvenirs from football games. Mostly from the Chicago Bears. They're a lousy football team but they used to give away a lot of pennants and pictures.

8. Well thanks, I think! How long did you say you've been away from New York?

9. I know exactly what you mean. I'd love to spend a year or two travelling around the country meeting people.

your ridiculous definition of antiques. (laughs) I was relieved!

I didn't say. But not very long. We spent Christmas break in Fort Lauderdale -- a very crowded and lonely place to be at Christmas.

You would have a great time -- you have a great style. Me? I have a dog, three cats, and a parakeet, besides the kids. Can't you just see me travelling around with that menagerie?

Metaaligning, Low-to-high Self Disclosure

Confederate
Person A

Target
* Person B *

1. Hi. My name is George.

Hi, George. Let's skip the small talk and find out what each other is really like, okay? I love animals -- I have a dog, three cats, and a parakeet. What about you?

2. Okay. I hate animals but I love to go antique hunting. How's that?

We're doing good so far. I collect old football souvenirs and stuff. Mostly from the Chicago Bears' games. They are a lousy football team but they have a great bunch of loyal fans.

3. Strike football. I don't know and don't want to know anything about it. Let's see -- oh, I've got a topic we can try. I think the way things are going in this country there will probably be a bad depression soon. Can we get an argument started with that one?

Sorry, but I agree with you one hundred percent. I've been looking for a job for months. The only thing I can find is typing! Typing is one of the most boring jobs!

4. Oh, no -- we agree again! I never type anymore. I haven't typed in -- let's see, I'm 39 now -- I haven't typed a thing in seven years. Oops -- I just told you how old I am. Don't believe what I said about that!

Oh, don't worry, I haven't believed anything you've said so far! (Laughs) Hey, maybe you should hire me! (Laughs) You know, I've tried to teach my kids that race, religion or social class shouldn't affect their relationships with people, but I hate being poor!

5. Sorry I can't hire you. I'm just as broke as the next person. Anyway, I couldn't hire someone who didn't believe me when I said "You start work at 9:00 Monday". They might not show up! (Laughs) That's good about teaching your kids about prejudices. I think people who are prejudiced are stupid.

Yeah, we agree again. A lot of men I know are prejudiced. I think it's because they're insecure. Most men are insecure -- at least the ones I've known -- what are you insecure about? How's that for a personal question?

6. That is some question!
Yeah, as a matter of fact, I
have had psychic experiences.
You know? They're scary.
Sometimes I think I'm going
crazy.

7. (Laughs) Oh, I don't know.
I think most everybody is
paranoid about something like
that. People are so concerned
about what others think of them.
There are times when I feel like
I've wasted my life. You know,
pleasing other people.

8. (Laughs) It is, huh? Let
me see if I can tell you
something more embarrassing than
that. Oh, I know -- I wonder
why people stare at me wherever
I go.

9. Boy, you're right. We did
get carried away, didn't we?
You don't like yourself

This is a weird conversation!
Psychic experiences, huh?
I've heard that if you think
you're going crazy you're
probably not! (Laughs) Let's
see -- you've told me about
your insecurities, I guess I'm
supposed to tell you about one
of mine. Do I want to? What
the hell, why not? I'm
insecure about my nose -- I
mean it's right out there for
everyone to see and it's so
ugly! Is that personal enough
for you?

Wouldn't it be nice to do it
all over again knowing what we
know now? Sometimes I wish I
were single again -- hey, I
shouldn't have said that.
Tell me about your own
paranoia -- that's more fun!
(Laughs)

Oh, come on, really? Do you
really think people are always
staring at you or did you just
say that to stay in the
competition? I guess I'll
never know, will I? You know
what we've done -- we've been
so busy competing for who'd
say the most personal thing
that what we say isn't really
personal anymore! I've had a
good time though, better than
most first meetings. Do you
think we could take each other
seriously now? Let's try. I
will tell you something very
personal but very true and
let's see if we can stop the
game part, okay? Okay.
Sometimes I don't really like
myself very much.

How terrible for you. I can
sympathize. My daughter who
is in high school uses drugs.

sometimes. That's funny. I was just thinking about how you probably do like yourself -- you seem very self-confident. First impressions are deceptive. Most people think I'm self-confident too. But some things really get to me too. Like my kids -- my son was arrested last night for possession of marijuana.

It's hard to feel like a successful parent when they do stuff that's so opposed to what you've taught them. Sometimes it helps to take less responsibility for their decisions at their age.

Metaaligning, High-to-low Disclosure

Confederate
Person A

Target
* Person B *

1. I'm here waiting for my son. He was arrested last night for possession of marijuana.

Oh, I can sympathize with you. My daughter who is in high school uses drugs.

2. I wonder why people stare at me wherever I go around here. You don't have to answer that.

I know I don't have to answer it but I would be glad to. I think it's because you look very upset. But don't worry about it. I don't like myself very much sometimes.

3. There are times like these when I feel I've wasted my life. I feel awkward telling you this.

You do? Yeah, it could feel stupid to tell someone you just met that you've wasted your life, but if that's the way you feel, why not say it? I mean I probably shouldn't be saying this but I wish I were single again.

4. Oh, I've had psychic experiences like that before! (Laughs) You're right. It's weird to talk about personal problems to a stranger.

Right, people just don't usually talk about intimate stuff. Like what if I tell you something very embarrassing about myself like -- I think I have an ugly nose, really, I do. And I'm thinking about plastic surgery. Is that awkward?

5. I guess it would be if somebody just came up to me and said, "I hate my nose," but since you were making a point it's not awkward. Are you really thinking about plastic surgery? I mean, what do you care about what other people think? I think people who judge a person by his or her physical characteristics as well as people who are prejudiced are stupid.

Yeah, maybe they're just insecure. At least all the men I know are. Now there's another thing. I just said something you might very well disagree with. People don't usually do that the first time they meet.

6. That's true, but I don't disagree with you. I'm no expert but I am 39 years old and I've been around enough to know that most people are prejudiced

You're right. I've tried to teach my children that race, religion, or social class shouldn't affect their relationships with people.

against something. And even if I did disagree with you it would be okay.

7. (Laughs) Well, I'd like you if I liked upstanding American citizens. I like the counter-culture type myself. (Laughs) Maybe I'm pessimistic, but I think the way things are going in this country there will probably be a depression soon -- not just economic but emotional. You know?

8. Good idea. I'll start. I like hunting antiques.

9. That sounds like fun. My name is George, by the way. What's yours? I mean, we've been talking all this time. This has been a strange conversation. I don't usually talk like this to strangers.

Doesn't that sound like I'm an upstanding American citizen? See, I do want you to like me -- I'm telling you something good about myself! (Laughs)

I sure do. There's not much joy left. I mean I just do housework. It's so boring! Ironing is one of the most boring jobs. Boy, is this conversation getting me depressed! I mean, drugs, ugly noses, prejudices, and everything. I suggest we talk about something fun.

Me, too. I collect (this is crazy) but I collect old football souvenirs and stuff. Mostly from old Chicago Bears games. They are a lousy football team, but they have a great bunch of loyal fans.

I've had fun talking to you. And talking about talking. I think that's what we just did, isn't it?

No Aligning, Low-to-low disclosure

Persona A

* Persona B *

1. ¿Qué tal? Me llamo Jorge.
¿Cómo te llamas tú?

Me llamo Pámela.

2. Mi próxima pregunta es,
¿vives por aquí?

Soy de New York.

3. New York. Eso queda lejos de
aquí. Tengo un hijo en
Pennsylvania. Pasamos por New
York cuando le hacemos visita.

Soy voluntaria en un hospital.

4. ¿De veras? Yo pinto en óleos
para relajarme. También me
fascina jugar tenis. Ahora me
conoces del todo. ¿Qué opinas?

A mí me gusta jugar con mis hijos.

5. Muy bien! Eso es muy
importante para los niños. Mis
padres solían llevarme de esquí.
Pasábamos muy bueno en esos
paseos.

Yo he esquiado una sola vez.

6. Bueno, no se puede saber lo
que es el esquí después de un
solo viaje.

Me gusta buscar antigüedades.

7. A mi también, ¿sabes? Vas a
creer que soy loco, pero yo
colecciono mementos futbolísticos,
principalmente de los Chicago
Bears. Son un equipo muy
mediocre, pero en tiempos atrás
regalaban muchas cositas como
tarjetas y banderitas. Y ¿qué
cosas coleccionas tú?

Mm, no sé. A mi me gusta buscar
antigüedades.

8. ¿Cuándo fue la última vez que
estuviste en New York? Esa
pregunta es muy tonta, pero ¿qué
mas puede uno preguntarle a una
dama recién conocida?

No hace mucho. Desde Semana Santa
para acá. Pasé el puente en Cape
Cod.

9. Cape Cod es muy lindo en
tiempo de verano. Me gustaría
pasar todo un año viajando por el
país, conociendo la gente.

Oye, tengo un perro, tres gatos, y
un canario.

10. Seria muy difícil viajar con semejante zoológico! Bueno, debo marcharme. Mucho gusto en conocerte, Pamela.

Si, es cierto. Hasta luego.

No Aligning, Low-to-high Disclosure

Persona A

* Persona B *

1. Hola! Me llamo Jorge. ¿Cómo te llamas tú? ¿A ti te gustan los animales también?

Me llamo Pámela. Claro que sí. Tengo un perro, tres gatos, y un lorito.

2. Ave María! Eso te mantiene ocupada. A mí me gusta el mercado de pulgas. Me encanta buscar antigüedades.

Yo colecciono mementos futbolísticos. Especialmente de los Chicago Bears. Ellos son un equipo muy mediocre.

3. A mí me dan nervios conocer gente por primera vez. Yo no sé nada del fútbol.

A mí me gustaría mucho pasar un año viajando por el país conociendo gente.

4. Para mí es muy difícil hacer conversación trivial.

No hay como un buen libro para levantar los ánimos míos. Uno de mis escritores predilectos es Norman Mailer.

5. Yo he leído algunos de sus libros, pero yo me pierdo en mis propias fantasías.

Yo hablo a mis matas, pues creo que las hace crecer más.

6. He leído algo sobre ese tema. Los estudios científicos muestran que hablar a las matas no tiene efecto alguno. Creo que eso es cierto. Soy terco, pero ¿qué le hace si tengo razón? (se ríe)

Las matas son como las personas. El amor les abona.

7. A mí me es difícil responder en una manera racional cuando me critican. ¿Tú eres igual en ese sentido?

Acabo de hacerme motilar, y me doy cuenta que a mi esposo no le gusta. Pero mi esposo es muy especial.

8. Estás de buenas. Mi esposa y yo permanecemos juntos sólo por los niños.

Me fascina jugar con mis hijos. El muchacho es el niño más inteligente de su grupo.

9. Parece que tienes una familia de ataque. Muy pocos pueden decir lo mismo. Por ejemplo, la hija mía que está haciendo secundaria usa drogas. Es muy difícil pasar una tarde en la casa con ella

Claro que sí! Yo leo mi horóscopo todos los días sin falta, y lo sigo al pie de la letra.

cuando está trabada. Espero
que sepas apreciar lo que
tienes.

No Aligning, High-to-low Disclosure

Persona A

* Persona B *

1. Estoy esperando a mi hijo. Anoche lo detuvieron por poseer marihuana.

Una hija mía, la que está haciendo secundaria, ella también fuma marihuana. Creo que está encinta.

2. Eso debe ser muy doloroso para ti y tu marido. Me pregunto por qué la gente por aquí me mira raro.

Yo a menudo me extraño porque la gente me tiene bronca.

3. Hay veces, como ahora, cuando siento que he desperdiciado mi vida. (pausa) Ave Maria! Esto sí es pesado! Yo generalmente no me pongo tan deprimido delante de los demás. Cambiemos de tema, pues!

Ojalá mi esposo se echara a llorar para desahogarse.

4. Vamos a hacer esta conversación menos pesada, pues hasta ahora esto ha sido como una telenovela, ¿sabes? A lo mejor soy muy terco por crearme complejos para luego salirme de ellos, pero es porque tengo razón. (se ríe)

Yo me casé demasiado joven.

5. La mayoría de los hombres son inseguros.

La primera vez que ví a mi padre llorando, yo quedé muy extrañada.

6. Claro. Yo recuerdo algunos choques de esos. Creo que no existe una educación que pueda preparar a una persona para el mundo real. ¿Crées tú?

Mi esposo y yo nos casamos ligero porque yo estaba esperando.

7. Claro. Es muy difícil dejar de pensar en cosas así. Pero nada mejor para levantar los ánimos de uno que un buen libro. Uno de mis autores predilectos es Norman Mailer.

Nos mantenemos juntos apenas por los hijos.

8. Ese criterio es muy importante. A mi me gusta jugar con los hijos míos.

Mi esposo me exige demasiado. Yo nunca tengo tiempo para jugar con los hijos.

9. Eso. Es muy difícil encontrar el tiempo. Yo soy voluntario en un hospital, pero sin embargo me las hago para buscar el tiempo.

Jamás hemos sido una familia muy integrada.

Satisfactory Aligning, Low-to-low Disclosure

Persona A

* Persona B *

1. Hola! Me llamo Jorge.
¿Como te llamas tú?

Qué hay. Pámela.

2. Mi próxima pregunta es,
¿eres de por aquí?

No. Soy de Nueva York. ¿Y tú?

3. Yo soy nativo. Pero tú
estás muy lejos de la casa.
Tengo un hijo en
Pennsylvania. Siempre
pasamos por Nueva York cuando
lo visitamos. Es un estado
lindo, pero Massachusetts es
mi casa.

Bueno, Massachusetts es
agradable. Yo soy voluntaria
en un hospital. Desde que
comencé ese trabajo, he
conocido mucha gente querida.

4. Claro. La gente de aquí
es muy buena. Me imagino que
tu trabajo es interesante.
Yo por mi parte no soy tan
generoso con mi tiempo. Yo
para relajarme pinto en
óleo. También me gusta jugar
al tenis. Bueno, ya conoces
todo lo de mí. (se ríe)

No es cuestión de
generosidad. Es nada más
hacer lo que me gusta.
También disfruto jugando con
mis hijas. Tengo dos niñas,
de seis y de diez.

5. De ataque! Es bueno
jugar con los hijos. Mis
padres me llevaban a
esquiar. Pasabamos muy bueno
en esos paseos.

Yo hice esquí una sola vez.
Pero mis padres sí pasaban
mucho tiempo con nosotros.
Creo que eso es muy
importante.

6. No se puede conocer mucho
del esquí en un solo viaje.
Pero tienes razón; no es la
actividad en sí, sino que se
haga algo con los hijos.

A mi me gusta buscar
antigüedades. A mis hijas les
fascina también. Casi siempre
cuando estamos comprando
cositas, almorzamos juntas en
alguna parte. Pasamos
riquísimo así.

7. A mi también me encantan
las antigüedades. Vas a
creer que estoy loco, pero
colecciono viejos mementos
futbolísticos y cosas así.
Especialmente de los partidos
de los Chicago Bears. Ellos

(se ríe) Ah, realmente no sé.
A mí me gusta es el buscar,
¿sabes? Muchas veces no
compramos ni un botón! Pero
nos formamos muchas ideas.

son un equipo muy mediocre, pero en tiempos atrás regalaban muchas banderitas y láminas y cosas así. ¿Tú coleccionas algo?

8. (se ríe) ¿Cuándo fue la última vez que estuviste en Nueva York? Sé que ésta es una pregunta tonta, pero ¿qué más puede uno preguntarle a una dama recién conocida?

9. Cape Cod es muy lindo en tiempo de verano. Me encantaría pasar un año entero viajando por el país conociendo gente.

No, no hace mucho. Desde la Semana Santa para acá. Pasé el puente en Cape Cod.

A mi también. Pero me es difícil viajar, pues tengo un perro, tres gatos, y un lorito.

Satisfactory Aligning, Low-to-high Disclosure

Persona A

* Persona B *

1. ¿Qué hay? Me llamo Jorge. Ahora tienes que decirme como te llamas tú.

Qué hubo! Me encanta conocerte. Me llamo Pámela. Este lugar es muy especial, ¿no es cierto? Me fascinan los animales. Tengo un perro, tres gatos, y un lorito.

2. Ellos deben mantenerte ocupada! A mí me gusta el mercado de pulgas. Me encanta buscar antigüedades.

A mí también. Vas a creer que estoy loca, pero colecciono viejos mementos futbolísticos y cosas así. Especialmente de los partidos de los Chicago Bears. Ellos son un equipo muy mediocre, pero en tiempos atrás regalaban muchas banderitas y láminas y cosas así. Y tienen una multitud de hinchas muy leales.

3. Del fútbol no sé nada. Este lugar es muy carero. Si las cosas continúan así en este país, vamos a terminar en una gran depresión.

En eso tienes toda la razón. Yo hace meses estoy buscando trabajo. El único trabajo que me ofrecen es la mecanografía. Y hacer mecanografía es el trabajo más harto que hay!

4. Yo nunca toco una máquina de escribir. A ver. . . tengo 35 años y ni siquiera he tenido máquina de escribir desde hace siete años!

Tal vez debes ocuparme a mí! (se ríe) Sabes que he querido enseñar a mis hijos que sus relaciones con los demás no deben ser afectados por cosas como raza o religión o clase social, pero la verdad es que me fastidia ser pobre.

5. Lástima que yo no te pueda ocupar. Estoy mas pelado que un diablo. Pero tienes razón. La gente que tiene prejuicios es estúpida. (¿Yo dije eso?)

Lo que creo es que son inseguros. Casi todos los hombres son inseguros, por lo menos los que yo he conocido.

6. Eso! Yo tengo una cosa muy rara. Yo he tenido estas experiencias psíquicas. Y cuando la gente se da cuenta

Ya lo creo! Lo que yo tengo de raro es mi nariz. Cuando yo comento que yo creo que tengo esta nariz tan fea, a la

de eso, cree que uno está corrido de teja, y se van. ¿Sabes?

7. Bueno, no sé. Estoy seguro que esto suena raro, pero hay veces cuando pienso que he desperdiciado la vida tratando de complacer a los demás. Yo generalmente no digo eso a desconocidos.

8. Si, yo también! A mí me extraña que la gente me mira tan raro por todas partes. Tal vez creen que es algo extraño que un padre de familia venga aquí solo.

9. Entonces es el lugar preciso para mí. Yo estoy sintiendo mucha lástima por mí mismo. A mi hijo lo detuvieron anoche por estar andando con marijuana.

gente le da es pena! No sé por qué.

No, eso no es raro. Hay veces que yo me muero de las ganas de ser soltera otra vez.

Bueno, yo no creo que eso es tan extraño. ¿Y a quién le importa? Yo a veces vengo acá cuando siento fastidio por mí misma.

Ay! Yo sé lo que estás sintiendo. Una hija mía, la que esta haciendo secundaria, fuma marijuana. Es espantoso lo que hace la juventud de esta época!

Satisfactory Aligning, High-to-low Disclosure

Persona A

* Persona B *

1. Estoy aquí esperando a mi hijo. Anoche lo detuvieron por andar con marijuana.

Ay! Yo sé lo que estás sintiendo. Una hija mía, la que está haciendo secundaria, también usa drogas.

2. ¿Por qué será que la gente me mira tan raro cuando ando por aquí? Ah! no tienes que responder nada!

Bueno, parece estar muy trastornado. Pero tranquilo, no te preocupes. Yo realmente siento fastidio conmigo misma a veces.

3. Hay veces cuando siento que he desperdiciado mi vida. Me siento raro contándote esto.

Bueno, a lo mejor no debería decirlo, pero yo quisiera volver a ser soltera.

4. Hmm! A mí me han dado visiones similares! (se ríe)

(se ríe) Esto a lo mejor suena raro, pero tú eres desconocido para mí, y me sabrás decir la verdad. Yo creo que tengo una nariz horrible de fea, y estoy pensando mandarme a hacer una cirugía plástica. ¿Qué opinas tú?

5. Bueno, yo creo que tanto las personas que le juzgan a uno por sus facciones físicas como los que tienen prejuicios son unos ignorantes.

Bueno, puede que sean inseguros. Todos los hombres que yo he conocido lo son.

6. Bueno, no soy ningún experto, pero tengo 35 años y he recorrido lo suficiente para saber que todo el mundo tiene prejuicios contra algo.

Claro, eso es cierto! Yo he querido siempre enseñar a mis hijos que las cosas como raza o religión o estatus social no deben afectar a sus relaciones con la gente.

7. A lo mejor yo soy muy pesimista, pero a mi manera de ver, este país va a terminar en una gran depresión muy pronto, no solo en el sentido económico, sino moral también, ¿crées?

Yo sí. Uno casi no encuentra motivo de alegría ya. Yo me ocupo a toda hora con los destinos de la casa. Qué hartera, como planchar por ejemplo! Planchar es uno de los oficios mas aburridores que hay!

8. De eso no sé nada. Yo no me aguanto en la casa tres minutos. Yo me la paso haciendo compras. Me encanta buscar antigüedades.

A mí también me encantan las antigüedades. Vas a creer que estoy loca, pero colecciono viejos mementos futbolísticos y cosas así. Especialmente de los Chicago Bears. Ellos son un equipo mediocre, pero en tiempos atrás regalaban muchas banderitas y láminas y cosas así.

9. Eso debe ser muy divertido. Yo me llamo Jorge. ¿Cómo te llamas tii? Yo por lo general casi nunca hablo de mí mismo así con desconocidos.

Me llamo Pámela. Y colecciono cosas mas raras todavía. Tengo un perro, tres gatos, y un lorito.

Metaaligning, Low-to-low Disclosure

Persona A

* Persona B *

1. ¿Qué hay? Me llamo Jorge. ¿Como te llamas tú?

¿Qué hubo, Jorge. Soy Pámela. Creo que tu próxima pregunta a continuación debe ser, "¿Eres tú de por aquí?"

2. Muy bien. ¿Eres tú de por aquí? (se ríe)

Ay, qué pregunta más fascinante! No, realmente soy de New York. Vamos a ver, ahora me toca a mí. ¿Tú eres de por aquí?

3. ¿Cómo lo supiste? Claro! Soy nativo. Pero tú estás lejos de la casa. Tengo un hijo en Pennsylvania. Pasamos por New York cuando le hacemos visita. Pero para mí, Massachusetts es la casa.

Si, Massachusetts es muy bonito, pero no tanto como para gastar los próximos cinco minutos hablando de ello. Vamos a ver. Yo te voy a decir algo acerca de mí, y luego tú me vas a decir algo acerca de ti. Soy voluntaria en un hospital.

4. Ave María! Me tocó una mujer con un complejo misionero! Yo no soy tan generoso con mi tiempo. Yo para relajarme pinto en óleos y juego mucho tenis. Pero mucho!

Eres muy impresionable si te impacta mi trabajo voluntario. Yo además paso mucho tiempo jugando con mis hijos. ¿Y qué opinas de eso?

5. Ay! La mujer biónica! Me imagino que estás enamorada de esa imagen! Pero jugar con los hijos sí es importante. Mis padres me llevaban mucho a esquiar. Eso sí era divertido!

Ah, me ubicaste muy bien! Yo si hago muchas cosas así. Pero la verdad es que no soy tan diligente con mis hijos como lo fue mi mamá conmigo. Yo nada más me encuentro haciendo lo que hacía ella. Y eso fue un ejemplo muy difícil de seguir!

6. Claro, tienes razón. No es la actividad en sí que importa, sólo que uno haga algo con los hijos. Tener buenos padres hace que uno lo sepa hacer a su tiempo.

Eso. No quiero que me interpretes mal. Yo soy tan egoísta como tú. Es que las debilidades mías son diferentes. A mi me enloquece andar buscando antigüedades.

7. Siquiera es normal! Me preguntaba si eres humana. La verdad es que a mí también me gustan mucho las antigüedades. ¿Y sabes qué colecciono? Mementos y cosas así de los partidos de fútbol. Especialmente de los Chicago Bears. Son un equipo muy mediocre, pero en tiempos atrás regalaban muchas banderitas y láminas.

8. Bueno, muchas gracias, hombre! ¿Cuándo dijiste que estuviste en New York la última vez?

9. Sé exactamente lo que estás sintiendo! A mí me fascinaría pasar un año o dos, paseando por el país conociendo gente.

Normal! Espero que no creas que yo soy normal! Yo estaba pensando que tú lo eras, hasta que me dijiste cuál es tu concepto loco de lo que son las antigüedades! (se ríe)
Yo de hecho me descansé!

No dije. Pero no hace mucho. Desde la Semana Santa para acá. Pasé el puente en Cape Cod, un lugar muy concurrido y muy solitario para pasar temporada.

A ti te iría muy bien! Tienes un estilo fabuloso. ¿Yo por mi parte? Tengo un perro, tres gatos, y un lorito. ¿Cómo quedaría yo viajando con ese zoológico?

Metaaligning, Low-to-high Disclosure

Persona A

* Persona B *

1. ¿Qué hay? Me llamo Jorge.

Hola, Jorge. Pasemos por encima de la conversación trivial y busquemos conocernos de verdad. ¿Sí? A mi me fascinan los animales. Y ¿tú qué tal?

2. Ah! Me fastidian los animales pero me encanta buscar antigüedades. ¿Qué tal eso?

Bueno, hasta ahora vamos bien. Yo colecciono mementos futbolísticos, y cosas así. Principalmente de los partidos de los Chicago Bears. Son un equipo muy mediocre, pero tienen un gran grupo de hinchas leales.

3. Olvidemos el fútbol! Casi no lo conozco, y no me interesa. Vamos a ver. . . Ahh! He encontrado un tema que me gusta y podemos ensayar. A mi manera de ver, este país va para una gran depresión muy pronto. ¿Podemos generar una discusión sobre ese tema?

Lo siento. Pero estoy de acuerdo contigo en un 100%. Yo hace meses estoy buscando trabajo, pero lo único que encuentro es mecanografía. Y hacer mecanografía es el oficio más hartito!

4. Ay no! De acuerdo otra vez! Yo jamás he vuelto a tocar una máquina de escribir. No he sacado una carta desde. . . vamos a ver. . . tengo 35 años. . . no he sacado una carta a máquina en siete años. Epa! Acabo de revelar mi edad! No vayas a creer lo que dije acerca de eso.

No te preocupes. No te he creído nada hasta ahora. (se ríe) Tal vez tú debes ocuparme a mí! (se ríe) Sabes que yo he querido enseñar a mis hijos que lo que es raza, religión, o estatus social, no debe afectar sus relaciones con la gente, pero a mí me mata ser pobre!

5. Lástima que no te pueda ocupar. Soy más pobre que un diablo. De todas formas no podría ocupar a ninguno que no me creyera, cuando digo "Arrancas desde las nueve de la mañana el lunes." A lo mejor no se presentaría! (se

Hombre, de acuerdo otra vez! Muchos hombres que yo conozco tienen prejuicios. Creo que es porque son muy inseguros. La mayoría de los hombres son inseguros, por lo menos los que yo he conocido. ¿Cuál es la inseguridad tuya? ¿Cómo te

ríe) Pero eso es bueno, enseñar a tus hijos acerca de los prejuicios. Creo que la gente que tiene prejuicios son unos ignorantes.

6. Esa pregunta está de ataque! ¿Qué opinas? Yo he tenido experiencias psíquicas, ¿sabes? Eso si es miedoso! Hay veces que creo que me estoy enloqueciendo.

7. (se ríe) Ni tanto! Yo creo que todo el mundo es paranoide sobre alguna cosa asi. La gente se preocupa tanto por lo que otros piensan de ellos. Hay veces que yo creo que he desperdiciado la vida, ¿sabes? como pasándola en darle gusto a los demás.

8. (se ríe) Que más divertido, eh? Vamos a ver si puedo rebuscarte algo más penoso aún. Ah, ya sé! Yo me mortifico viendo que la gente me está mirando raro, no importa donde esté.

parece esa pregunta personal?

Esta conversación sí es rara! Que experiencias psíquicas? Dicen que si uno cree que se está enloqueciendo, lo cierto es que no. (se ríe) Vamos a ver. Me has contado acerca de tus inseguridades. A lo mejor yo debo contarte acerca de alguna de las mías. ¿Que si quiero? Qué cuentos! ¿Por qué no? Soy muy insegura acerca de mi nariz. Se extiende por delante para que todo el mundo la vea, y es tan fea! ¿Cómo te parece eso de íntimo y personal?

¿No sería rico poder hacerlo todo de nuevo, pero sabiendo lo que ya sabemos? Hay veces que me muero con las ganas de ser soltera otra vez. Uup! No debía haber dicho eso. Dime mas acerca de tu propia paranoia. Eso es más divertido. (se ríe)

Ah, no me digas! ¿De veras? ¿Tú verdaderamente creés que la gente vive mirándote, o te inventaste eso para permanecer en la competencia? A lo mejor nunca sabré, ¿verdad? Lo que pasa es que hemos estado tan ocupados compitiendo sobre quién podía revelar el dato más personal que lo que estamos diciendo ha pasado de ser personal. Pero me he sentido muy bien aquí, mejor que en la mayoría de los primeros encuentros. ¿Creés que seríamos capaces de tomarnos en serio ahora? Hagamos el esfuerzo. Le voy a

decir algo muy personal, pero muy de verdad, y vamos a ver si podemos dejar eso de los juegos, ¿sí? Bueno. Hay veces que realmente siento fastidio por mí misma.

9. Hombre, tienes razón. Nos dejamos llevar por la corriente, verdad? Tú a veces sientes fastidio contigo misma. Eso para mí es de risa. Yo he estado pensando acerca de cómo debías sentir gusto contigo misma, pues tú pareces tan segura de ti misma. Yo sé que las primeras impresiones engañan. Mucha gente cree que yo también tengo mucha confianza de mí mismo. Pero hay muchas cosas que me quitan la tranquilidad. Por ejemplo, mis hijos. Anoche, detuvieron a mi hijo por andar con marijuana.

Qué tan horrible para ti! Sé lo que tienes que estar sintiendo. Una hija mía, la que está haciendo secundaria, usa marijuana. Es difícil sentirse uno adecuada como madre cuando hacen cosas tan contrarias a lo que uno les ha enseñado. Creo a veces que sería mejor asumir menos responsabilidad por las decisiones de ellos en la edad en que están.

Metaaligning, High-to-low Disclosure

Persona A

* Persona B *

1. Estoy esperando a mi hijo. Anoche lo detuvieron por posesión de marijuana.

Ay, yo sé como es eso! Una hija mía, la que esta cursando secundaria, usa drogas.

2. No sé por qué la gente me mira raro cuando ando por aquí. Ahh! No tienes que contestar esa bobada.

Sé que no tengo que contestar, pero tengo mucho gusto. A lo mejor es porque pareces estar trastornado. Pero no te preocupes por eso. Yo realmente no me estimo mucho a veces.

3. Hay veces como ahora cuando siento que he desperdiciado la vida. Me siento pesado diciéndote eso.

¿De veras? Claro. Te puede hacer sentir estúpido contar a alguien que acabas de conocer que has desperdiciado la vida. Pero si te sientes así, por qué no decirlo? Es decir, yo no debo decir esto, pero quisiera ser soltera otra vez.

4. Yo he tenido visiones similares! (se ríe) Tienes razón. Es raro hablar de problemas personales con un extraño.

Correcto. La gente generalmente no habla sobre las cosas íntimas. Por ejemplo, ¿qué tal si te dijera algo muy embarazoso sobre mi misma como: Yo creo que tengo una nariz muy fea, realmente. Estoy pensando en una cirugía plástica. ¿Qué tal eso de pesado?

5. Creo que sí lo sería si alguien de buenas a primeras llegaba y decía "Odio mi nariz!" Pero como tú lo decías como ejemplo, no es pesado. ¿Estás pensando de veras en cirugía plástica? ¿Qué importa lo que piensan los demás? Yo creo que los que juzgan a una persona por sus características físicas son estúpidos. Igual que los que tienen prejuicios.

Si, puede que sean inseguros. Al menos todos los hombres que yo conozco lo son. Ya salió otra cosa -- acabo de decir algo con lo que tú puedes estar en desacuerdo. Por lo general la gente no hace eso la primera vez que se conocen.

6. Eso es cierto. Pero no estoy en desacuerdo contigo. Experto no soy, pero tengo 35 años y he recorrido lo suficiente para saber que la mayoría de las personas tienen prejuicios contra algo. Y aun cuando estuviera en desacuerdo conmigo, ¿eso qué tiene?

7. (se ríe) Bueno, yo te admiraría si admirara a los demócratas zanahorios. A mí en realidad me gusta más el tipo rebelde. (se ríe) A lo mejor soy muy pesimista, pero yo creo que por el rumbo que está siguiendo este país, vamos a terminar pronto en una depresión, no solo económica sino moral. ¿Crées?

8. Muy bien. Yo arranco. A mí me gusta buscar antigüedades.

9. Eso parece divertido. A propósito, yo me llamo Jorge. ¿Cómo te llamas tú, pues? Hemos conversado todo este rato; ha sido una conversación muy rara. Yo por lo general no hablo así con recién conocidos.

Tienes razón. He tratado de enseñar a mis hijos que cosas como raza, religión, y clase social no deben afectar sus relaciones con la gente. Ya ves qué tan demócrata soy! ¿Vés? Yo quiero que me admires. Estoy diciendo algo bueno acerca de mí misma.

Yo sí creo. Ya la alegría esta muy escaza. Yo por ejemplo me encierro con los oficios domésticos. Es tan aburridor! Por ejemplo, planchar. Es uno de los oficios mas cansones que hay! Ahh! Esta conversación me está deprimiendo. Que drogas, que narices feas, que prejuicios y todo! Hablemos de algo mas divertido, hombre!

A mí también. Vas a creer que estoy loca, pero me fascina coleccionar mementos futbolísticos, especialmente de los Chicago Bears. Son un equipo mediocre, pero tienen una multitud de hinchas muy leales.

Me he divertido conversando contigo. Y conversando acerca del conversar. Creo que es eso lo que hemos hecho, ¿cierto?

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