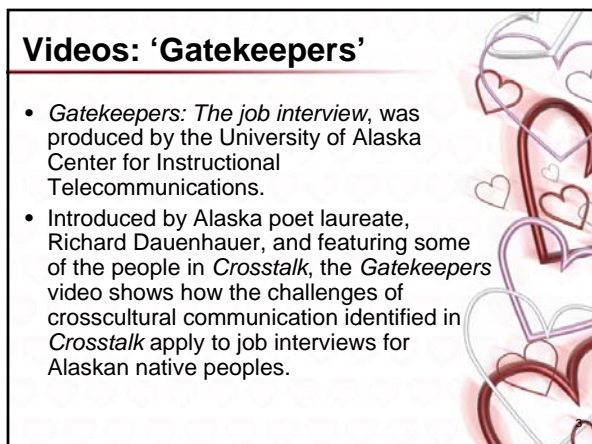


Videos: 'Crosstalk'

- *Crosstalk*, first broadcast on BBC television May 1, 1979, was a pioneering effort in applied sociolinguistics by John Gumperz. It was one of a series of ten programs entitled *Multi-Racial Britain*.
- *Crosstalk* confronted the issue of workplace miscommunication that comes from racial and ethnic stratification.

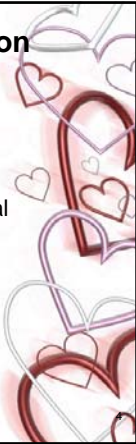


Videos: 'Gatekeepers'

- *Gatekeepers: The job interview*, was produced by the University of Alaska Center for Instructional Telecommunications.
- Introduced by Alaska poet laureate, Richard Dauenhauer, and featuring some of the people in *Crosstalk*, the *Gatekeepers* video shows how the challenges of crosscultural communication identified in *Crosstalk* apply to job interviews for Alaskan native peoples.

Crosscultural miscommunication

- People from different cultural backgrounds may . . .
 1. Have direct or indirect conversational styles
 2. Tell different stories in different narrative styles
 3. Indicate their stance or attitude in different ways



Direct or indirect style

- Conversational style includes . . .
 - how fast you talk
 - how loud you talk
 - the pitch of your voice
 - your intonation
 - and many other ways of speaking. . . at a certain point in interaction.



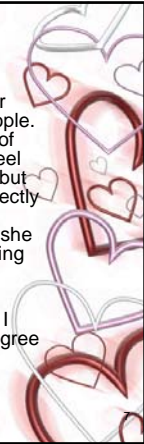
Direct or indirect style

- People react negatively to others whose degree of directness differs markedly from their own. For example, . . .



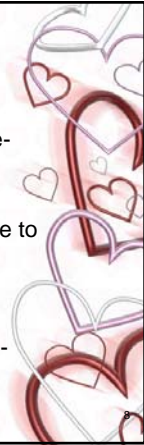
Direct or indirect style

- "I think that showing consideration for the other means to speak directly and sincerely with people. I think that going round and round shows lack of consideration. I feel hurt and cheated when I feel somebody close is trying to tell me something but does not say it. I think that to talk sincerely, directly is more civilized, more true. For example I'm always slightly annoyed with my wife when as she always does, she asks me if I would mind picking up the baby." – An Israeli husband
- "But that's a nice way to ask. I don't force him. I soften the request. I leave him the chance to agree or disagree." – His French wife



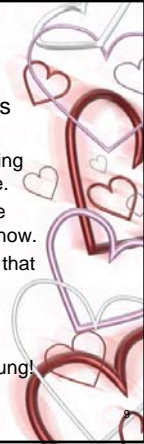
Direct or indirect style

- Politeness Theory explains . . .
 - The use of politeness to mitigate face-threatening acts.
- A face-threatening act is . . .
 - Any threat to a person's right or desire to be left to do as they wish.
- Examples of face-threatening acts include . . .
 - Requests, directives, and information-seeking acts.



Direct or indirect style

- Direct threats
 - Give me a ride home after the lesson.
 - Pay me the money you owe me.
 - Why don't you have children?
 - How much do you earn?
 - How old are you?
- Mitigated threats
 - I wonder if you would mind giving me a ride home.
 - I sure could use that cash right now.
 - Don't you think that kids are great?
 - Say nothing.
 - You look so young!



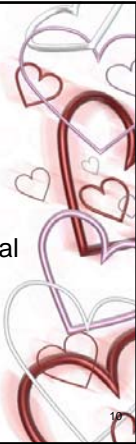
Direct or indirect style

- The degree to which face-threatening acts are mitigated depends on three things . . .

D: Participants' perception of the social distance between them

P: The relative power of participants

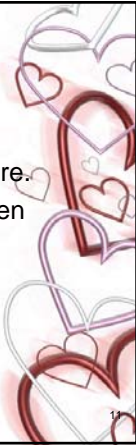
R: The rank of imposition of the act



Direct or indirect style

D People's perceptions of social distance, power, and rank of imposition vary from culture to culture.

- Compare the social distance between . . .
 - You and your grandfather
 - You and your kid sister
 - You and your roommate
 - You and your professor



Direct or indirect style

P Compare the power differential between . . .

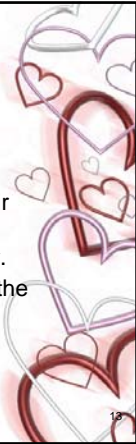
- You and your employer
- You and your TA
- You and your mom
- You and the soldiers under your command



Direct or indirect style

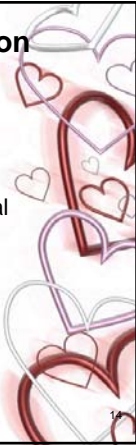
R Compare the rank of imposition of these acts . . .

- You want a classmate to lend you their notes.
- You want to move in with your partner.
- You want your roommate to clean up the kitchen.
- You want your dad to give you some money to buy textbooks.



Crosscultural miscommunication

- People from different cultural backgrounds may . . .
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Narratives

What is a 'narrative'?

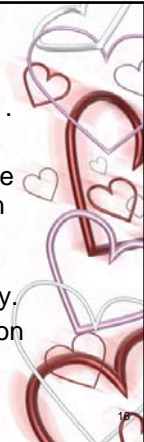
- An oral story told to serve personal and relational purposes other than giving information and entertaining.
- Oral stories are not the same as written stories.
- Oral stories are co-constructed by conversational partners . . . by invitations and by response tokens.



Narratives

Three characteristics of narratives . . .


1. The talk concerns a particular time when the narrator experienced an event.
2. The narrator believes the event being told about to be newsworthy.
3. The narrator conveys an evaluation of the event.



Narratives

- Consider one of Mr. Aziz's narratives in his conversation with the social worker.

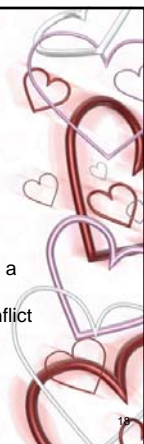
1. What time did the event take place?
2. Why is the event newsworthy?
3. How does Mr. Aziz evaluate the event?



Narratives

- What purposes do narratives serve?

1. To make an argument – to support a particular point of view
2. To perform a face-threatening speech act
3. To present the self in a particular light
4. To altercast the conversational partner as a particular type of person
5. To position the narrator in an ongoing conflict
6. To express a morally questionable or devalued opinion



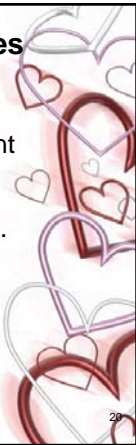
Mr. Aziz's narratives

- Consider one of Mr. Aziz's narratives in his conversation with the social worker.
 - What is the function of Mr. Aziz's narrative?



Cultural differences in narratives

- **Story content:** People from different cultural backgrounds believe that certain topics make appropriate narratives, but certain others do not.
- What topics do you believe make appropriate or inappropriate narratives?



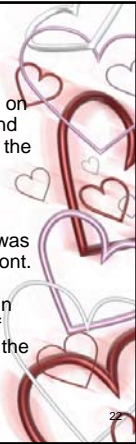
Cultural differences in narratives

- **Narrative style:** People from different cultural backgrounds believe that certain ways of telling a story are more appropriate than others.
- Remember Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*?



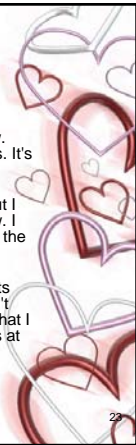
J.D.Salinger on narrative style

- Holden Caulfield describes a course he flunked on 'Oral Expression.' If a student gave a speech and strayed from the point, the teacher insisted that the other boys yell "Digression!" at him.
- The interruptions especially intimidated a shy, nervous student named Richard Kinsella, who was giving a speech about his father's farm in Vermont. Richard *did* digress, telling about his uncle who had polio. Kinsella was interesting and excited in his story, but the boys cut him off with shouts of "Digression!" and the teacher gave him a D+ in the course.



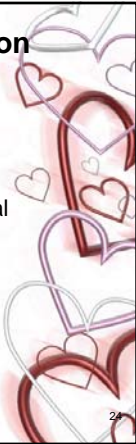
J.D.Salinger on narrative style

- Holden says . . .
"That digression business got on my nerves. I don't know. The trouble with me is, I like it when somebody digresses. It's more interesting and all."
"Oh, sure! I like somebody to stick to the point and all. But I don't like them to stick too much to the point. I don't know. I guess I don't like it when somebody sticks to the point all the time."
"What I mean is, lots of time you don't know what interests you most till you start talking about something that doesn't interest you most. I mean you can't help it sometimes. What I think is, you're supposed to leave somebody alone if he's at least being interesting and he's getting all excited about something. I like it when somebody gets excited about something. It's nice."



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Stance indicators

- “Is Cassie interested in me, or is she just a friendly person?”
- “Does Mike believe what I just said?”
- “Why is Mae treating me as if I’m an idiot?”
- “Is David antagonistic or open-minded toward gays?”

Stance indicators

But an individual’s stance indicators must be compared with a baseline.

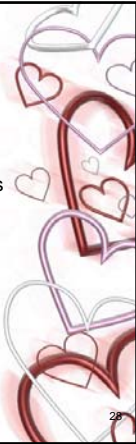
- “He may look like he’s excited, but he’s always that way. He’s just hyper.”
- “She really liked your idea. I know that she didn’t look that way, but she has a very understated style. For her, she was like bubbling over.”

What are stance indicators?

- Clues used to infer what another person’s attitude—their stance—is likely to be.
- Stance indicators include . . .
 - Particular words or phrases, choice of one speech act over another, hand and facial gestures, tone of voice, absence of talk

Stance indicators

- Middle class, white Americans express interest and involvement by . . .
 - Talking faster
 - Pausing less frequently and for shorter times
 - Speaking louder
 - Expanding their pitch range
 - Orienting their body directly toward another
 - Leaning forward
 - Gazing more frequently at the other
 - Giving more smiles and nods
 - Increasing ordinary touches



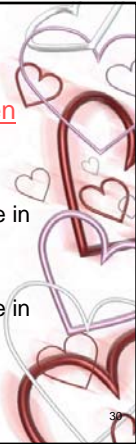
Stance indicators

- Cultural differences exist in the baseline for expressions of interest and involvement.
- Greeks and Italians have more involved conversational styles than northern Europeans (e.g., from Germany or Sweden)
- To assess a conversational partner's level of involvement, you have to know that other well.



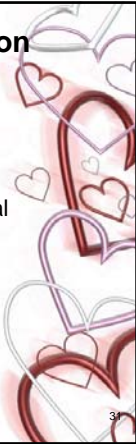
Mr. Aziz's stance indicators

- Consider the conversation between Mr. Aziz and the social worker.
 - What stance indicators do you notice in the social worker's communication?
 - What stance indicators do you notice in Mr. Aziz's communication?



Crosscultural miscommunication

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Learning activity

The links below are to two clips from the movie *Crosstalk*.

- [Mr. Bull at the Bank](#)
- [Mr. Sandhu at the Bank](#)

1. Transcribe both conversations using the CA conventions in Table 5.1 of Everyday Talk.
2. How do Mr. Bull, Mr. Sandhu, and the bank teller indicate their stance in these conversations?