

Rynkiewich Chapter 3 Interaction Paper

1. Communication is the complex, ongoing interaction between people "... constructing meaning in the midst of dialogue, then deconstructing the meaning, and then building it up again."

2. Chapter 3 explores the development and theories of communication, more specifically, the transmission and reception of meaning. Words, symbols, and even physical movements convey meaning but the cultural context of people will determine what is being said. From birth, immersion in a particular culture shapes the brain's perception of reality as language and meaning are influenced by what they are exposed to. The brain retains what is useful and disregards what is not, further cementing one's culturally contextualized "point of view" of the world and those they interact with. Even within a common language, proximity and distance create new meanings and dialects with the language, further supporting the idea that word meaning is arbitrary. The only viable way to truly understand people from other cultures who speak a different language is to spend a lot of time living with them. It is the only way to create shared context.

3. One statement in the chapter stood out to me the most and it is found on page 62, "The wonder is not that we communicate so well, the wonder is we communicate at all (attributed to Samuel Johnson)." It is a simple but profound observation of human interaction. We can produce sounds and gestures that express concepts in from our minds. They come out of us and other people can interpret and understand these concepts. Whatever was in our minds have now manifested into a force that has the potential to change someone's life. Not only can we communicate with others, but God does the same with us. The omnipotent master of the universe communicates with all peoples, taking into account their cultural context, and revealing his immutable character to all. This is quite extraordinary and should humble us to appreciate the culture of people unlike us because God certainly does.

4. Questions:

a) When we consider communication, specifically sharing the gospel, how do we do this with people with disabilities that make it difficult for them to understand and communicate?

b) Knowing that communication works best when cultural context is shared, is it enough to simply translate a Bible into a country's language and give it to the people without taking the time to live and learn with them?