

indeed, but among the most prominent are *extroversion*, *self-monitoring*, and *cognitive complexity*. While the literature on the role of such variables in communication skill is extensive and very often produces statistically significant effects, it is important to note that these relationships tend not to be large, rarely accounting for more than 10% of the variance in actual behavior (as opposed to self-reports of behavior, responses to hypothetical scenarios, etc.).

In contrast to relatively enduring person factors, *state variables* refer to characteristics of persons that change over comparatively short time spans (i.e., days, hours, or even minutes). Among such state variables is the individual's level of *physiological arousal*—a factor that is particularly interesting because some evidence suggests that the relationship between arousal and proficiency is curvilinear: Performance improves with increasing arousal up to some point, but beyond that, still higher levels of arousal result in performance decrements. Other examples of state variables include various moods and emotions, most prominently *social anxiety*—the nervousness and “butterflies” accompanying social interaction that have been shown to be associated with a variety of behavioral manifestations generally taken to be less competent or skillful. In contrast, positive moods tend to be associated with greater creativity and increased social engagement. Still other state variables related to social proficiency include stress, drug ingestion (e.g., “alcohol myopia”), and lack of sufficient sleep.

John O. Greene

See also Cognitive Theories; Communication and Language Acquisition and Development; Competence Theories; Facework Theories; Impression Management; Intercultural Communication Competence; Learning and Communication; Social and Communicative Anxiety

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COMMUNICATION THEORY OF IDENTITY

The *communication theory of identity* (CTI) was developed by Michael Hecht and colleagues; the theory emerged in the 1980s as part of a shift from considering identity a central element of human existence to identity as a social phenomenon. While earlier views emphasized the Western notion of “self” as a single, unified identity, this broader conceptualization argues that humans are inherently social beings whose lives revolve around communication, relationships, and communities and who operate from *multiple and shifting identities*. As a result, identities and *identification* are key processes through which people and groups orient themselves to each other and the world around them.

From this beginning, a *framed or layered perspective* emerged in the early 1990s that described

identity as multifaceted, including personal, enacted, relational, and communal frames. Hecht and colleagues were studying interethnic communication with the expectation that identity would influence these processes and they, in turn, would lead to outcomes such as satisfying communication. However, the data did not fit this model. Instead, identity and communication influenced outcomes jointly. The need to explain these findings and emerging research on media representations of identity led to an examination of research conceptualizing identity as a social process and the CTI view of identity as consisting of four frames.

The *personal frame* encompasses what has traditionally been thought of as self and self-concept—the ways an individual conceives of self. The *enacted frame* is the performance or expression of identity. CTI argues that the enactments themselves are a frame of identity—that communication *is* identity and not just caused or influenced by it. As a result, managing or negotiating identity is a central process. Next, the *relational frame* of identity refers to identities that are invested in relationships, exist in relationship to each other, and are *ascribed* in and through relationships. For example, being a parent requires a child, and who we are is established and defined through identities that are ascribed to us by others. Identities also exist as characteristics of communities (*communal frame*). Media tell us, for example, what it means to be successful. Communal identities are held in common by groups rather than individuals. Finally, these identity frames are said to *interpenetrate* or intertwine with each other. For example, one's view of self as a man or woman (personal identity) is juxtaposed to how others see us as men or women (relational identity), as well as how one's communities (communal identity) define these social positions.

While the CTI has many other aspects, the conceptualization of identity as social, the interpenetration of the four frames, and the management of these identities form the core of the theory. One implication is that at any time we are likely to be experiencing multiple, intersecting identities, some of which are group based, or communal. People rarely operate out of a single identity; rather multiple identities guide their thoughts and behaviors. This precept had not been well represented in research, and as a result, ethnic communities were

often seen as homogeneous. CTI-related research, in contrast, examined diverse ways of experiencing these identities. For example, studies by Hecht and Sidney Ribeau examined different labels used by members of the African American community and how these labels manifested themselves in relationships, behaviors, and thoughts.

This research also suggested some of the ways in which *identity management* can be problematic. Not only is there a tendency to see members of a group as homogeneous, but the potential conflicts that emerge from competing enactments of identities must be skillfully *negotiated*. For example, the work of Michael Hecht and Sandra Faulkner on Jewish American identity described not only the ascriptions others make to group members but also multiple and fluid communal identities, members' own insider/outsider status, the "closetable" nature of this potentially stigmatized identity, and how all these factors get negotiated inside and outside the group. Specific strategies for revealing identity align along an explicit-implicit dimension that is influenced by the relationship type (especially the presence of romance) and in the greater societal context of isolation and "otherness." In closer relationships and more supportive contexts, identities may be overtly discussed and negotiated (e.g., how all members will get to celebrate their own holidays and even aid in these enactments), as opposed to the more covert practices that go on when discrimination and prejudice are rife. These findings demonstrate the power of the theory to focus on the dynamics of identity—how it changes and evolves.

Another line of work focusing on these dynamics was initiated by Eura Jung in his 2004 dissertation on *identity gaps*, which are defined as disconnects between and among the various frames that challenge identity management. Since communication and human relations are inexact, there are often discrepancies among how we see ourselves (personal identity), how others see us (relational identity), and how we express ourselves (enacted identity). These identities also may differ from communal representations, especially when communal representations are stereotypic. These gaps have proven problematic for effective communication, as well as mental health, across different groups and situations. For example, Jung and Hecht found that Korean immigrants who come from a homogeneous society into a racially

segmented and hierarchical U.S. society often experience gaps in identity, especially when they occupy “middle person status” between higher status Whites and lower status Blacks and Latinos in inner cities. These gaps have been shown to produce depression. These gaps also have proven problematic in grandparent–grandchild relationships, as shown in work by Jennifer Kam.

CTI also has directed work on youth identity and health. As a guiding force in Michael Hecht and Michelle Miller-Day’s *Drug Resistance Strategies Project*, begun in the late 1980s, CTI has been used to study Latino identity and substance use as well as to develop an evidence-based, multi-cultural, middle school substance abuse prevention curriculum called “*keepin’ it REAL*.” The prevention curriculum was infused with the identities of the audience through its basis in *narrative* and narrative performance. The *principle of cultural grounding*, an approach to health-message design developed by Michael Hecht and Janice Krieger, emerged from this work and guides prevention message construction. These messages may address different frames, but it is argued that focusing on indigenous narratives about identity and the identities most salient to these narratives is essential to effective health messages.

Since 2000, CTI has been guiding a number of new lines of research that demonstrate its encompassing and expansive view of identity. Culture has often been defined in terms of nationality, race, and ethnicity; CTI encourages a broader definition consisting of multiple frames of identity. For example, on a communal level, rurality is defined by population density and/or proximity to dense population areas. These definitions have not been useful in public health campaigns except in noting that rural communities tend to be underserved. As a result, Janice Krieger is exploring the construct *rural identity* as it reflects the other frames. *Online communities* also are sources of identity and locations for identity expression. CTI research by Jennifer Warren has demonstrated how different aspects of identity influence online health information seeking by lower income African American women and is being used to develop smoking interventions targeted at members of this ethnic group. From the social-networking sites to health information seeking on the Web, identities are implicated in the online

world. Finally, identities have proven useful when *targeting* health messages to groups or *tailoring* them to individuals. Messages designed to include identity representations and to appeal to salient identities are proving effective in health campaigns. The multifaceted nature of CTI makes it ideal for understanding the new global village, with its electronic and face-to-face connectivities and emerging sense of multiple identities.

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See also Co-Cultural Theory; Cultural Contracts Theory; Cultural Identity Theory; Health Communication Theories; Identity Theories; Social Construction of Reality; Social Interaction Theories; Symbolic Interactionism

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COMMUNICATIVE ACTION THEORY

Jürgen Habermas, the contemporary German philosopher and social theorist, formulates what are arguably his most important ideas in his theory of communicative action. This account of social