



## Understanding Intercultural Communication (Second Edition)

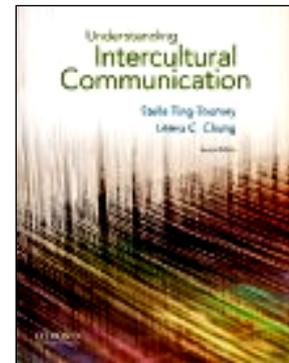
**Authors:** Stella Ting-Toomey and Leeva C. Chung

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*Understanding Intercultural Communication (Second Edition)* is an introductory textbook for students, teachers, researchers, and practitioners to acquire fundamental but essential knowledge of intercultural communication. It is a comprehensive introduction to concepts important to increase knowledge, appreciation, and skills related to intercultural communication. Stella Ting-Toomey, the principal author, is considered a top figure in the field of intercultural communication. She is renowned for her work on face-negotiation theory, mindfulness and facework.

At 326 pages, this book is tightly structured around the main theme of intercultural communication with theories and practices based on various concepts of communication between cultures. Cases from international news and real-life personal stories are inserted to help illustrate intercultural flexibility, as the authors mentioned that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is no one best way to promote intercultural communication practices.

The book is divided into three parts: Fundamental concepts in intercultural communication; Crossing cultural and communication boundaries adaptively; and Managing challenges in intercultural relationships flexibility. The details of each part are as the follows.

*Part One: Fundamental Concepts in Intercultural Communication.* This part contains four chapters paving the way to a basic understanding of intercultural communication, starting from giving reasons why intercultural communication should be studied. Also, the concept and the definition of culture are provided.

Culture with an iceberg metaphor is clearly stated, which is very useful for students, not only at the undergraduate level, but also for adult students at the Ph. D. level. They can make use of this concept in their course-work and also when they conduct their research studies.

*Part Two: Crossing Cultural and Communication Boundaries Adaptability.* This part is composed of three chapters. They are about culture shock; verbal communication and culture; and nonverbal communication implications across cultures.

Ting-Toomey and Chung stimulate the reader to have an awareness of cultural differences and to increase cultural sensitivity when communicating across cultures and/or in intercultural settings. As such, this section of the book provides the reader with some helpful self-report or self-assessment tools, e.g. a scale to assess a person's social and personal identities, and a scale to assess a person's social support circle. The latter helps explain the degree of difficulty a person can adjust himself or herself to a new environment during the transitional phase.



*Part Three: Managing Challenges in Intercultural Relationships Flexibility.* The final part of the book contains five chapters. They are about causes of biases against outgroups; effective intercultural conflict management; challenges in intercultural-intimate relationship; global identity and communication issues; and intercultural communication ethics.

These chapters are clearly necessary for knowledge, practices, and skills for communicating effectively in intercultural settings. This final section starts from explaining biases against outgroups, which are initiated by ethnocentrism and stereotypes. A discussion of racism and discrimination is also included, based on various theories and approaches. Guidelines for reducing prejudice and discrimination are offered as well. The rest of this last portion explains cultural factors influencing intercultural conflicts. Ways to manage intercultural conflicts are elaborated on. They are such things as facework management, mindful listening, cultural empathy, mindful reframing, and adaptive code-switching.

The book ends with a chapter explaining intercultural communication ethics issues seen through multiposition lenses: absolute position, relativism, universalism, and meta-ethics contextualism position.

All in all, this book covers major topics and concepts leading to significant and substantial points of understanding for those who are interested in intercultural communication. They can obtain knowledge, ways of appropriate practices, and necessary insights into intercultural communication through reading this book.

For graduate students, this book will prove very helpful when students need basic but essential concepts to read and analyze academic articles involved with intercultural communication. More than that, students at the Ph.D. level can use this book as a stepping-stone or as a facilitator providing assistance for them to synthesize what they are reading and analyze real scenarios in intercultural communication.

### **About the Reviewer**

*Sucharat Rimkeeratikul* is an associate professor and the director of the Master of Degree Program in Career English for International Communication (CEIC) of Language Institute, Thammasat University. She completed her Ph.D. in Interpersonal Communication and Master's Degree in Language and International Trade from Eastern Michigan University, USA. She graduated with a B.A. in English from Liberal Arts, Thammasat University. Her interests involve communication apprehension, anxiety in L2, intercultural communication and ESP.