COURSE TITLE: Intercultural Communication

COURSE IDENTIFICATION: COMM 35852

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Joelle Cruz

COURSE COMPLETED: Spring 2014

ASSIGNMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Every week, the class was assigned to write a journal about a particular theory or idea that we found interesting while completing our required readings. I chose to elaborate on Conversational Constraints Theory and why it is important in the Communication field.

REFLECTION: I enjoyed writing this journal because it allowed me to focus and research the importance of conversation, as well as what to do and what not to do in a professional setting. As I am nearing the end of my college career, I must present and market myself as a natural professional in order to gain a good reputation and respect in a potential organization that I hope to work for. I have this chosen piece because it allowed me to reflect on a significant concept that has to do with Organizational Communication and I believe I demonstrated a well-written journal that displays what I have learned and gained from this research topic.
Conversational Constraints Theory

Intercultural Communication

Ramona Jabbour
would say sticking to the norm is probably the central problem with communication and all aspects of this society. People are used to doing, acting, thinking a certain way because their parents taught them to or because everyone else is doing it that way. In my opinion, there should be no such thing as a norm in conversation or in everyday interaction. There are limitations and restrictions that I respect politically and economically but to act or speak upon a certain situation or conversation because it is the “normal” thing to do, is what I disagree with. As a part of the social science approach, I am going to explain my reaction to the conversational constraints theory, binding with the communication accommodation theory.

From my notes, the conversational constraints theory is defined as how and why people make particular conversation choices; whether it may be the subject of the conversation or the objective of the conversation. Communication as a whole is a significant factor in everyday life. How people make particular conversation choices can be answered by how the conversation itself is carrying along. For example, if I were to discuss my summer vacation plans and the person I am conversing with suggests that I take a trip to Europe; they would have gotten that idea from an experience of traveling to Europe over the summer or it could have been just a random suggestion.

As I stated in the introduction, why people make particular conversation choices has to do with following the norm. It may depend who one is speaking to, but occasionally a conversation is carried this certain way because of it may be the polite way to go about it or it is just how everyone else goes about it. For example, if someone were to judge me based on the color of my skin, I would personally confront them by asking “what made you judge me differently than a white girl?” The answer to why the person judged me based on the color of my
skin would be because it is how their parents reacted to someone that is ethnically different or it is what their friends do. The objective of the other person was to either speak low of me in some way or that they did not know what else to do because they were raised to handle the situation a certain way. My objective would be to wonder why this person had looked at me differently or spoken low of me because of my ethnicity. Treating people of different races, specifically in the United States, has been such an issue in history and in the present time. Acting upon the norm can have a great effect on how people are treated and why they make these choices in conversation, thus being based on the communication accommodation theory.

Communication accommodation theory is defined as how and why people accommodate speech and nonverbal communication. The previous example created a real-life experience that happens every day, all around the world, just because it is the normal way to react or speak upon people or ideas that are different from the norm. The listener and the speaker both have objectives they want to achieve when having a conversation. The listener analyzes the speakers address immediately to see if they are offending them or communicating with them casually. The speaker always takes into account of the listeners feelings when speaking to them. Speakers have a goal they want to achieve whenever they start a conversation.

Not one person in this world is the same. People react differently to situations and speak differently, whether it be what they said or how they said it. Conversational constraints theory binds greatly with the communication accommodation theory because of how and why people choose what they speak about it and the type of communication used. From my own personal experiences, I have always kept an open mind about any situation I am in. It is important never to assume someone’s objective when they are speaking to you. Always listen first and ask questions
or respond. An important quote I will include to conclude will be from Conor Oberst and how he briefly points out that there will never be a common ground in this realistic world.

“With science and reason throughout history, what people believed turned out to be false. So I like to keep an open mind to all perspectives and learn and become more fully realized as a person. I just feel we’re never going to know what the full picture is.”