Methods for Intercultural Communication Research

John Oetzel, Saumya Pant, and Nagesh Rao

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Summary and Keywords

Research on intercultural communication is conducted using primarily three different methodological approaches: social scientific, interpretive, and critical. Each of these approaches reflects different philosophical assumptions about the world and how we come to know it. Social scientific methods often involve quantitative data collection and research approaches such as surveys and experiments. From this perspective, intercultural communication is seen as patterns of interaction, and we seek to explain and understand these patterns through clear measurement and identification of key independent variables. Interpretive methods often involve qualitative data collection and research approaches such as interviews and ethnographic observation. From this perspective, intercultural communication and meaning is created through interaction, and we seek to understand these meanings by exploring the perspectives of people who participate as members of cultural communities. Critical methods often involve qualitative data collection and research approaches such as interviews and textual critique. From this perspective, intercultural communication involves inequalities that can be attributed to power and distortions created from (mis)use of this power. Critical scholars seek to unmask domination and inequality. Most scholars utilize one of these primary approaches given the consistency with their world views, theories, and research training. However, there are creative possibilities for combining these approaches that have potential for fuller understanding of intercultural communication.

Keywords: Methods, social science methods, interpretive methods, critical methods, quantitative, qualitative, intercultural communication

Introduction

Our worldview shapes what is “interesting” to a particular audience, what is considered a problem, what problem is interesting to study, and whether the goal of studying a problem is to analyze the problem, to analyze and solve the problem, or to analyze, solve, and implement the solution. Our worldview defines if an issue is a problem or not and if we need to come up with a solution. For example, behaviors associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are seen as a problem in the United States, and there are

medications to solve the problem. In India, the same set of behaviors among children is seen as what children tend to do, as normal and not as a problem.

Our worldview not only shapes what we see as an interesting problem to study but also the methodology we use to study the problem. The purpose of this article is to describe, and explore integration of, the three main methodological perspectives in studying intercultural communication issues: social scientific, interpretive, and critical. First, the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions underlying each of these methodological perspectives are explored. Then, for each methodological perspective, common methods and types of data collected and some exemplars are identified. Finally, we offer traditional integration of the three approaches and also alternate methodological perspectives to study intercultural issues from a non-Western lens.

Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology

Ontology is the study of the researcher's orientation to reality. In the social scientific perspective, the researcher views the world objectively in that there is a world outside of us that can be systematically studied. Researchers from this perspective use a deductive approach and are keen to explain and predict phenomena. Social scientific ontology provides clarity and direction due to its rigorous questioning of plausibility and reduction of subjectivity. In contrast and as a reaction to the social scientific perspective, interpretive researchers argue that the observer and the observed are subjective and the most important lessons are in how they co-create meaning. If the social scientists take a deterministic view of human behavior, interpretivists thrive in a person's free will. Critical theorists focus particularly on social injustices and inequalities in life. Researchers in this area explore how social structures create power inequalities and injustices. Thus, they believe that power differences are at the base of social transactions (Scotland, 2012). Any ontological investigation for a critical theorist will thus have to help unearth these inequities.

Epistemology looks at how we come to know a chosen phenomenon and thus how researchers study this phenomenon. Social scientists, interested in assessing objective reality (or at least reduced subjectivity), use a scientific method to collect empirical evidence. They focus particularly on causal relationships between phenomena and generally use quantitative approaches to collect data. The basis of their assessment and data collection is the premise that objects have an existence independent of the knower (Cohen et al., 2007). Interpretivists, who are interested in situational and contextual meaning, generally use qualitative methods to assess participants' sense of reality. They are not exploring one truth, but the play of multiple truths simultaneously. They do so by studying individual interactions and the historical and cultural contexts in which these individuals interact. Critical researchers use a variety of qualitative methods to explore, for example, how language is used to create power imbalances or how mass media is used to avoid critical thinking. Critical scholars are particularly sensitive to the overdependence on empirical and social scientific evidence. They do so as critical investigations are premised on the

fact that social/positional power determines what is considered knowledge (Cohen et al., 2007).

Axiology explores the values that guide a researcher's questions, the methods used to collect and analyze data, the interpretation of the data, and the implications of the findings. Social scientists study phenomena to find the truth, which, in turn, guides specific types of action. They are focused on exploring what is referred to as the value axiom, or how much a phenomenon being studied fulfills the requirements of the concept to which it belongs (Kelleher, 2013). Both interpretivists and critical theorists are interested in describing what exists, how the participants in the community interpret phenomena, with critical theorists particularly interested in reducing class imbalances and other forms of oppression. Interpretivists are axiologically determined to encourage the fact that observations drawn can always be disagreed upon and reopened to interpretation. With respect to control, social scientists wish to control as many variables as possible, narrowing down the causal pattern to the variables under study. Interpretivists seek active participation in the study to understand how they view reality. Critical theorists are particularly aware of the community members' need to take control of their own situations. With this brief overview in mind, we now explain the methodological approaches of the social scientific, interpretive, and critical perspectives; the types of data collected; some exemplars for each perspective; and some general concerns about each of the methods.

Social Science Methods

Social science research methods address questions related to both cross-cultural and intercultural communication. Much of the foundational work on intercultural communication research is based on comparisons of two or more cultures. Both forms of communication research try to enhance the comprehension of communication that are mediated by and through cultural context (Sponcil & Gitimu, 2010). These comparisons helped to identify how the normative and subjective aspects of culture vary across cultures and presumably provided information about what to expect when interacting with members from different cultures. This type of research is classified as cross-cultural. In contrast, intercultural communication is the exchange of messages between people from different cultural groups (Gudykunst, 2003A). Regardless of the interest in cross-cultural or intercultural communication, the social scientific perspective seeks to understand and predict the effect of culture on communication variables and the subsequent effect of communication on various outcomes. Thus, the methods of study are similar. This section reviews the three most prominent social scientific methods providing an example of each. Additionally, the types of data generated and methodological concerns are discussed.

Methods

There are three methods used by most social scientific researchers to study cross-cultural and intercultural research: (a) survey questionnaire, (b) experimental design, and (c) content analysis. The survey questionnaire is by far the most frequently used research

method (e.g., Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003; Rao, Singhal, Ren, & Zhang, 2001). It is typically a self-administered and self-report instrument that is distributed to large samples in multiple cultures. Most cross-cultural comparisons utilize self-report questionnaires because of the difficulty of collecting data from large samples in multiple cultures using other methods. Finally, self-report questionnaires are relatively easy to construct. Numerous cross-culturally valid scales exist, and methodological difficulties have been clearly identified (Gudykunst, 2003B). While not easy to overcome, methodological difficulties of survey questionnaires are manageable (see below for more detail). Survey questionnaires provide detailed description of cultural associations of communication behavior and outcomes and allow for comparisons to other cultures.

Hanasono, Chen, and Wilson's (2014) study of perceived discrimination, social support, and coping among racial minority university students is an example of survey research. The authors surveyed 345 students, half international students and half U.S. students, about their acculturation, experiences with discrimination, support, and coping needs. They found that the level of acculturation helped to explain students' need for support and how they coped with discrimination.

Experimental designs are highly regarded social scientific research because of the control of variables, which enables causal relationships to be examined. Culture is not a variable that lends itself well to experimental manipulation, and thus experimental designs are relatively rare in this line of research. Rather than experimental controlling culture, researchers typically use quasi-experimental designs manipulating the composition of groups or dyads to be intra- or intercultural (e.g., Cai, Wilson, & Drake, 2000; Oetzel, 1998). These experiments collect a combination of self-report information (e.g., cultural and individual variables) as well as videotaped interaction. Additionally, some researchers have used experimental conditions on survey questionnaires (e.g., Han & Cai, 2010). These studies utilize stimulus variables (e.g., contextual features) that ask participants to respond to specific situations.

Brinson and Stohl's (2012) study of media framing on attitudes toward Muslims, civil liberties, and counterterrorism policies is an example of experimental design. They used a Solomon four-group design involving 371 U.S. adults to compare the media framing of "domestic homegrown" and "international" terrorism of the London bombings in 2005. The authors used video segments from actual broadcasts on July 7, 2005, and edited them together to create an approximately 10-minute video for each of the two conditions. The authors found that media frames of homegrown terrorism produced greater fear than the international framing. Fear resulted in greater support for restricting civil liberties of Muslims and, under certain conditions, general negative feelings toward Muslims.

A third method used in social scientific research is content analysis of media sources. This method is utilized to identify patterns prevalent in the media (e.g., Dixon & Azocar, 2006; Klein & Shiffman, 2006). Additionally, some researchers survey participants for their reactions about media patterns. Content analysis, while time consuming, is convenient and inexpensive since the only access needed is a recording or transcript of the arti-

fact of study. It involves the use of a coding scheme to provide an "objective" description of the media and thus insights into cultural values and behaviors. The categorizations are then compared across cultures. When these categorizations are compared, it is done on the basis of frames, which are defined as a "schema of interpretation, collection of anecdotes, and stereotypes" (Cissel, 2014, p. 67). Once these frames are determined, the way in which individuals deal with their realities within and across cultures can be studied.

An example of such content analysis was the study of the coverage of the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan in two Belgian newspapers: *Le Soir* and *De Standard* (Perko et al., 2011). The time period of the study was from March 11, 2011, to May 11, 2011. Every article was coded by two independent coders. The authors had begun their study with a question as to how the framing of the question of nuclear power would appear in the two Belgian newspapers. They arrived at the conclusion that the reporting was mostly neutral. Further, since the Fukushima nuclear accident was in a country quite remote, the articles did not frame the issue as an example of a possible threat to their own country from nuclear power plants.

Data Analysis and Methodological Concerns

Data from these three methods are quantified to allow for statistical analysis. All forms of data must be reduced to categories that are independent from one another (exhaustive and exclusive categories). These can include frequency counts of behaviors, sequence of behaviors, and self-report information on numerical scales. Data are then analyzed with statistical software to determine associations between cultural (independent) and communication (dependent) variables (outcomes are dependent variables with culture and/or communication as independent). The nature of analysis depends on the numerical measurement of the variables, but frequent tests include *t*-tests, analysis of variance, correlation, and regression. Additionally, complex modeling of dependent variables can be undertaken using, for example, structural equation modeling and hierarchical linear modeling. The key concern with the statistical tests is accounting for variance in the dependent variables. The more variance explained means the "more important" a cultural factor is for communication behavior. Because of the vast number of factors that explain human behavior, intercultural researchers believe that as little as 5–10% of variance explained is meaningful.

There are four concerns for data analysis in social scientific research: (a) reliability, (b) measurement validity, (c) internal validity, and (d) external validity. Reliability is reproducibility. For the aforementioned methods, two types of reliability are relevant. First, internal consistency of measures is usually measured with Cronbach's alpha. Second, when completing content or interaction analysis, intercoder reliability (agreement between two or more coders) is important and measured with Cohen's K or Scott's pi (or the like). Reliability means a researcher has consistent measures, whereas validity focuses on accurate information.

Validity is a combination of measurement, internal, and external validity (depending on the goals in the study). Measurement validity focuses on the accuracy with which a scale (or coding scheme) is measuring what is supposed to be measured. Internal validity is the strength to which a researcher can conclude that the independent variable is associated with the dependent variable as hypothesized. Internal validity is established by eliminating rival explanations for statistical associations through statistical or experimental control of confounding (or nuisance) variables. External validity is the degree to which a study's results can be generalized to the larger populations from which a sample was drawn. In intercultural research, researchers are more concerned with measurement and internal validity than external validity.

While these general methodological concerns are true for all social science research, there are also unique concerns with cross-cultural/intercultural communication research (Gudykunst, 2003B; Levine, Park, & Kim, 2007). Gudykunst (2003B) outlined a number of concerns with cross-cultural research, but chief among the methodological issues is establishing equivalence. In order to make cross-cultural comparisons (and have valid measures for intercultural research), researchers need to ensure that the constructs and measures are equivalent on five levels. First, constructs must be functionally equivalent; that is, the construct must work the same way in the cultures under study. Second, constructs must be conceptually equivalent; that is, the construct must have the same meaning within the cognitive system of the members of cultures being examined. Third, linguistic equivalence for constructs refers having language that is equivalent. Linguistic equivalence is often established through translating and backtranslating of measures. Fourth, metric equivalence is established by ensuring that participants in different cultures do not respond to numerical scales in different ways (e.g., one cultural group may not use the extreme scores in a scale). Finally, researchers need to take care and establish that there is sample equivalence in the two cultural groups. The samples need to be comparable (e.g., similar age, gender, education, etc.). Fletcher and colleagues (2014) explore the steps needed to statistically ensure equivalence in measurement across multiple cultures. Establishing equivalence on these issues helps to eliminate rival explanations and further ensures that differences found are due to cultural differences. In addition to such methodological rigor, scholars from other orientations argue that it is also imperative for the researcher to be reflexive and aware of theoretical and methodological centeredness that can come from such systematic rigor (Asante, Miike, & Yin, 2008).

Interpretive Methods

Interpretive scholars are interested in unearthing multiple simultaneous truths, believe in a person's free will, acknowledge that the known and the knower cannot be separated, and believe that interpretation is based on one's persuasive abilities. Striving for meaning, interpretive scholars generally use a variety of qualitative methods to study specific intercultural phenomena. As a result of this, interpretivists examine theoretical limits by comparing results from multiple forms of research about the same phenomenon (Szabo, 2007). For this article, we focus on ethnography of communication and interpretive inter-

views as these are two common approaches. We then discuss the general methodological issues in collecting and analyzing interpretive data.

Methods

Ethnography of communication (EOC) is a method to study the relationship between language and culture through extensive field experience. The concept of the ethnography of communication was developed by Dell Hymes (Hall, 2002). It can be defined as the discovery and explication of the rules for contextually appropriate behavior in a community or group or what the individual needs to know to be a functional member of the community. EOC applies ethnographic methods to understand the communication patterns of a speech community (Philipsen, 1975). A speech community is a group of speakers who share common speech codes and use these codes based on a specific situation. From the presence or absence of certain speech codes, one can interpret the culture of a community with its shared values, beliefs, and attitudes. In his classic study, Philipsen (1975) explored the communication patterns of white males in a predominantly blue-collar neighborhood called “Teamsterville” in South Chicago. Philipsen lived in the community for several years and worked and interacted as a member of the community while also conducting his research. Results from this study explained when talk was appropriate, at what levels, and when action was more appropriate than talk. When two men were of similar backgrounds, of more or less equal status, and were close friends, they could talk to each other. There was less talk when the relationship was asymmetrical (e.g., father–son and husband–wife). The least amount of talk occurred when a “Teamsterville” was responding to an insult or trying to assert his power over someone. It is in these instances that action was more appropriate than words. If a man did talk during this interaction, he was seen as not masculine enough. Another interesting study was conducted by Radford et al. (2011). The study focused on applying EOC to the case of virtual reference context. Here, the researchers focused on the interactions that constitute the context in which the participants make verbal statements and coordinate them with other statements in order to closely analyze the relational barriers and relational facilitators. The interactions spanned a 23-month time period (July 2004–May 2006), and the transcripts of 746 live chats of this period were studied. The researchers were able to conclude from their study that when professional librarians chatted, they were more formal, less free with accepted online abbreviations, whereas students were more comfortable with using abbreviations and other turns of phrases. One of the conclusions the researchers drew was that if the librarians used more informal language they would appear more friendly and approachable.

Interpretive interviews are a second common approach. The purpose of the interpretive interview is to uncover insider meanings and understandings from the perspective of the participants (Denzin, 2001). According to Denzin (2001), the characteristic of interpretive interviews is that they allow us to understand the society in which we live, which is referred to as an interview society. Typically, these interviews are one-on-one and face-to-face interviews designed to elicit in-depth information. The interviews can focus on narratives, topics, perspectives, and opinions and often are conducted in a semi-structured

manner (although unstructured interviews are sometimes conducted). One of the reasons why the semi-structured and/or narrative form is used is to allow for deeper and embedded meanings that might elude a more inquiry-based approach. An example of interpretive interviews is Baig, Ting-Toomey, and Dorjee's (2014) study of meaning construction of the South Asian Indian term *izzat* (face) in intergenerational contexts. The authors interviewed six younger (aged 31–40) and six older (aged 55–72) South Asian Indian American women about face concerns in their intergenerational family communication situations. The authors found that family *izzat* is of primary importance in these contexts and that the motif of respect is central to the meaning of *izzat*. They also identified differences in the younger and older facework strategies.

Data Analysis and Methodological Concerns

The primary focus of analyzing interpretive research data is rather nicely summarized by Carbaugh (2007):

> It is important to emphasize the interpretive task before the analyst: while engaging in a communication practice, an analyst seeks to understand what range of meanings is active in that practice, when it is getting done. The analyst sets out to interpret this practice, what is being presumed by participants for it to be what it is, that is, to understand the meta-cultural commentary imminent in it. What all does this practice have to say? (p. 174)

Thus, the interpretive scholar analyzes data in order to describe and interpret.

Carbaugh (2007) identified two concerns in analyzing interpretive data—the framework used to analyze the semantic content of cultural discourse and the vocabulary used to formulate these contents. A researcher's analysis of the content of the communication exchange also includes a meta-analysis of the subject, the object, the context, the history, and the stories revolving around the exchange. Carbaugh (2007) noted that "these cultural meanings—about personhood, relationships, action, emotion, and dwelling, respectively—are formulated in cultural discourse analyses as radiants of cultural meaning" (p. 174). These radiants of cultural meanings focus on personhood and identity, relating and relationships, meanings about acting, action and practice, meanings about emotions and feelings, and meanings about place or context.

Reliability and validity are explicated differently in interpretive research compared to social science research. If social scientific scholars are interested in consistency for reliability, interpretive scholars see reliability as the quality of the information obtained; does the data give us a richer, clearer understanding of the phenomena (Golafshani, 2003)? Lincoln and Guba (1985) used the term "dependability" in place of reliability to assess the quality of a research project. For validity, it is important to assess the quality based on the specific paradigm used to conduct the qualitative research. Further, while many scholars argue that validity is not a critical concept for interpretive research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that the "trustworthiness" of the data is similar to validity in social

science research. Do the community of scholars conducting interpretive research view the data as meaningful, useful, and following the research protocols appropriately?

After having considered these general considerations, we now consider three specific data analysis approaches using in interpretive intercultural communication research including grounded theory, constant comparative analysis, and thematic analysis. Other data analytic approaches for data analysis include narrative analysis, conversational analysis, EOC, and interpretive phenomenological analysis. Grounded theory is a continuum of practices that are inductive and iterative aimed at recognizing categories and concepts in texts in order to integrate them to formal theoretical models (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). They begin with the observations, experiences, and stories, and through a process of coding, analysts identify a theoretical model to fit the data. Another important approach that interpretive scholars use is that of constant comparative analysis (CCA). CCA has often been used as a part of grounded theory, but it is now being used separately to analyze cross-cultural and intercultural communication. CCA is used to balance the etic perspective (participant as outsider) with the emic perspective (participant as insider) to ensure balance between cultural readings and theoretical frameworks. CCA ensures that all data in the relevant set are compared with all other data in the same set to make sure that no data are dismissed on thematic grounds (O'Connor et al., 2008). Further, CCA tries to accommodate the most relevant theories though they may appear disparate. A final prominent approach is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a flexible and yet rigorous approach of identifying and analyzing patterns or themes of meaning from data. Braun and Clarke (2006) identify a six-step process for conducting thematic analysis.

Critical Methods

From the critical perspective, relationships between cultural groups are often characterized by dominance and resistance. Communication between groups is based on certain understanding of culture and ethnicity that is fixed, reified, and essentialized and is informed by certain cultural assumptions that tend to be rooted in Euro-American traditions and worldviews (Asante et al., 2008). Hermans and Kempen (1998) argued that dominant approaches to knowledge favor static conceptualizations of culture. It is the creation of these static categories in which the Western understanding of the rest of the world dominates the intercultural relations that results in the reification of culturally homogeneous "ethnic" and racial groups. Consequently, this orientation undermines ways in which the self is understood in different cultures.

Critical and feminist scholars have consistently raised questions about power imbalance between researchers and researched in the field, suggesting that if researchers fail to explore how their personal, professional, and structural positions frame social scientific investigations, researchers may inevitably reproduce dominant gender, race, and class biases (Fairclough, 1995; Lazar, 2005). This section illustrates postcolonial ethnography and critical discourse analysis as approaches for intercultural discovery from the critical lens.

Additionally, we introduce the role of self-reflexivity and consciousness-raising in the context of methodological concerns from the critical perspective.

Methods

A variety of approaches to critical issues exist such as critical race theory, decolonizing and indigenous methodologies, engaged methodologies, and performative methodologies (Willink, Gutierrez-Perez, Shukri, & Stein, 2014). In this article, we explore two prominent methods to illustrate some of the key elements to critical approaches given that we cannot cover all of them: postcolonial ethnography and critical discourse analysis.

Postcolonial ethnography seeks to disrupt and restructure established academic practices and modes of knowledge development and dissemination (Pathak, 2010). It attempt to do this by pointing out that gender roles, academic institutions, racial binaries, and other power structures are not apolitical. Postcolonial ethnography seeks to question the reification and valorization of supposed objective, scientific, and disembodied knowledge formations. Instead they seek to find alternate and embodied knowledge forms that accommodate the subjective and the personal.

While postcolonial and third world feminist scholars point to myriad ways in which relations of domination infuse ethnography, they also offer some guidance for negotiating power inherent in the practice of fieldwork (Spivak, 1999). This guidance takes the form of feminist geopolitics, which involves not only questioning hegemonic structures and dominant power structures but also offering alternatives to those structures (Koopman, 2011). Postcolonial scholars argue that the practice of ethnography among marginalized groups is historically tainted by ethnocentric biases in traditional ethnographic practice and research (Collins, 1990). Further, as philosopher Sandra Harding (1998) emphasized, ethnocentricism is structured into the institutional and academic practices so as to produce relationships oppressive to indigenous cultures in the so-called first world as well as third world countries.

An example of postcolonial inquiry is that of an ethnographic encounter (Irani et al., 2010). As a part of this inquiry, the company that the researchers studied, Ddesign, had to develop prototypical home water purification filters (Irani et al., 2010). The site of their study was various villages in India where they were supposed to study the feasibility of home water purifiers among the economically deprived households of the villages. The researchers later were told that when Ddesign first started their study, they had notions of privations in the lives of the householders. During their study, they found that the reality was quite different from their preconceptions. They realized that the definitions of privations that the company personnel had were not applicable to the people or to their living conditions. In fact, the researchers were told by the company personnel that the villagers had a very different worldview from that of the personnel. Thus, the researchers and the company personnel realized that one group’s notions of well-being and happiness were not necessarily applicable to another group no matter how universal those notions might be.

A second approach is critical discourse analysis (CDA). The creative combining of different approaches of lived experience, texts or discourses, and the social and political structures of power has resulted in popularity of cultural studies as a critical site for different modes of enquiry. According to Fairclough (1995), "many analysts are becoming increasingly hesitant in their use of basic theoretical concepts such as power, ideology, class, and even truth/falsity" (p. 15). In recent social scientific research, there has been a turn toward language or, more specifically, toward discourse. According to the feminist critical scholar Michelle M. Lazar (2005), discourse is a "site of struggle, where forces of social (re)production and contestation are played out" (p. 4). Critical discourse analysis is known for its overtly political stance and deals with all forms of social inequality and injustice. It includes the study of processes premised on the acts and discursive interactions of individuals and groups on which both the local and international contexts bring to bear their limits in the production of legislation, news making, and other such products of discursive interactions (van Dijk, 2008).

An example of critical discourse analysis in intercultural communication research is Chen, Simmons, and Kang's (2015) study of identity construction of college students. The authors contextualize their study in an era of "postracial" utopia resulting during the Obama administration. They coin the term "Multicultural/multiracial Obama-ism (MMO)" to reflect this era and the prominent frame of colorblindness and multiculturalism prominent in media discourse. They examined 65 student essays about three cultural identities that stood out in a particular context. They analyzed the essays using CDA and found three frames that support this construction of postracial utopia: meritocracy, identity as self-chosen, and equality of opportunity despite privilege. They critique these frames and identify implications for teaching about intercultural communication and identity in the classroom.

Data Analysis and Methodological Concerns

Key methodological issues in the critical approach are the role of reflexivity, consciousness-raising, and limitations/possibilities of the reflective approach. A sociology-of-knowledge approach to critical scholarship reveals the role of reflexivity as a source of insight (Cook & Fonow, 1984). Reflexivity means the tendency of critical scholars to reflect upon, examine critically, and explore analytically the nature of the research process. To some extent, this tendency toward reflection is part of a tradition of attention to what Kaplan (1964) referred to as "logic-in-use" or the actual occurrences that arise in the inquiry, idealized and unreconstructed. Feminist and critical epistemology carries this tradition of reflection further by using it to gain insight into the assumptions about gender and intercultural relations underlying the conduct of inquiry. This is often accomplished by a thoroughgoing review of the research setting and its participants, including an exploration of the investigator's reactions to doing the research.

One of the ways in which reflexivity is employed involves the concept of consciousness-raising, a process of self-awareness familiar to those involved with the women's movement. Underlying much of the reflexivity found in feminist scholarship is the notion found

in the earlier work of scholars such as W. E. B. DuBois (1969) and Paulo Freire (1970) that consciousness of oppression can lead to a creative insight that is generated by experiencing contradictions. Under ideal circumstances, transformation occurs, during which something hidden is revealed about the formerly taken-for-granted aspects of intercultural relations.

Consciousness-raising is employed in various ways by the critical scholar. The first way is through attention to the consciousness-raising effects of research on the researcher. Consciousness-raising is also involved in discussions of ways in which the research process influences subjects of the inquiry. Some authors view the research act as an explicit attempt to reduce the distance between the researcher and subjects (Collins, 1990). These approaches have provided critical and feminist researchers with a way to tap collective consciousness as a source of data and have provided participants in the research process with a way to confirm the experiences that have often been denied as real in the past. The applications of critical consciousness-raising and reflexivity can be seen in discourses surrounding terrorism and counterterrorism. This application can be seen in the study by Schmid (2013) about radicalization, deradicalization, and counter-radicalization. Schmid has observed that the usual causes such as poverty, social inequality, oppression, and neglect by the West have not been empirically tested satisfactorily, yet they are believed to be the primary causes of radicalization. The study provides three levels of analysis that can be used to understand how “radicals” are born and how that complex construction can be interrogated: the micro level, dealing with the individual level in terms of identity and self-reflection; the meso level, which deals with the socio-political milieu surrounding the individual; and the macro level, which refers to the larger society and governance that affect the individual. Further, these three levels of analysis can also be used to see how the continuum from radical to political undesirable and terrorist can be studied.

Finally, there are limitations and possibilities of reflective practice. Critical researchers use self-reflection about power as a tool to deepen ethnographic analysis and to highlight the dilemmas in fieldwork. The call for reflective practice has also been informed by critiques of postcolonial theorists who argue for self-reflexive understanding of the epistemological investments that shape the politics of method (Mohanty, 1991). Cultural studies scholars have also questioned the call to reflective practice, arguing that taken to the extreme, “constant reflexivity” can make “social interaction extremely cumbersome” (Hurtado, 1996, p. 29). In contrast, the call to “accountability” is said to offer a more collective approach than the “individual self assessment of one’s perspective” that the term “reflexivity implies” (Hurtado, 1996, p. 29). However, from point of ethnographic practice, it is seldom clear to whom one should be “accountable,” and therefore the term reflective practice seems to be appropriate.

Reflective practice indicates both individual self-assessment and collective assessment of research strategies. Hurtado (1996) emphasized that a “reflexive mechanism for understanding how we are all involved in the dirty process of racializing and gendering others, limiting who they are and who they can become” (p. 124) is a necessary strategy to help dismantle domination. Such reflective strategies can also help ethnographers bring to the

surface “their own privilege and possible bias” as well as “addressing the difference between different constituencies” (Hurtado, 1996, p. 160) within the communities they study.

Integrating Social Science, Interpretive, and Critical Research Methods

Each set of methods presented in this chapter has strengths and limitations. They address specific purposes that collectively are all important for the field of intercultural communication. Moreover, integrating the research methods provides richer insights than using any method by itself. However, these integrations still may have limitations in exploring non-Western contexts. Thus, this section explores integrations of the methods and alternative methods for intercultural inquiry.

Integrations of Methods

The integration of research methods involves using different types of methods at different phases (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this manner, the methods are used one after another (or concurrently) depending on the research question associated with the larger research program. Four phasic designs are most prevalent: a) qualitative/interpretive methods used to create a quantitative (social science measure); b) qualitative (interpretive and critical) methods used to embellish quantitative findings (Big Quant, Little Qual); c) quantitative methods used to embellish qualitative findings (Big Qual, Little Quant); and d) social science, interpretive, critical methods used conjointly. Space limitations prohibit us from providing examples of all of these approaches, so we detail two of them.

Zhang and colleagues (Zhang & Oetzel, 2006; Zhang, Oetzel, Gao, Wilcox, & Takai, 2007) provide an example of how to create a cross-culturally valid measure of a construct. Their purpose was to measure teacher immediacy. Teacher immediacy is the psychology closeness that is communicated from a teacher to a student. There exist different measures of immediacy, but Zhang and Oetzel (2006) argued that prior Western measures were not applicable in Chinese classrooms (i.e., they did not have conceptual equivalence). To address this issue, they first conducted open-ended interviews with Chinese students to identify themes associated with the meanings of immediacy. This phase of the research involved interpretive research methods as they put primacy on emic meanings. In the second phase, they used the emic meanings to create an operational measure of three dimensions of teacher immediacy (instructional, relational, and personal). This measure was administered to college students, and the data were analyzed with confirmatory factor analysis. The results dimensions were found to be internally consistent and had construct validity as they correlated with existing scales in expected directions. Zhang et al. (2007) then continued the development of the scale by administering the scale to college students in four national cultures: China, Japan, Germany, and the United States. With these data, the authors used confirmatory factor analysis to see if the three-dimensional model of teacher immediacy held up in each culture. They found cross-cultural support

for the model and also the construct validity of the scales. Thus, their thorough testing from the interpretive phase to the social scientific phase led to the development of a teacher immediacy scale that has valid dimensions in at least four national cultures.

An example of integrating critical, social scientific, and interpretive methods into the same research program can be seen in the work on whiteness ideology (Nakayama & Martin, 1999). The project culminated in an edited book that included chapters using the various research methods. Whiteness ideology is the worldview that certain groups have privilege over others. It is labeled whiteness because whites tend to be the privileged groups in most societies. This research group's work primarily focused on ethnic groups in the United States, but some international contexts were examined and other scholars have since examined international contexts we well (e.g., Collier, 2005). One part of the project examined the labels that white people in the United States prefer through a survey (Martin, Krizek, Nakayama, & Bradford, 1999). Another part of the project involved two of the team members' integrated interpretive and critical methods to understand how whiteness is used as strategic rhetoric (Nakayama & Krizek, 1999). The volume included other scholars writing from different perspectives as well, and the editors attempted to bring together these various perspectives into a "coherent" picture about whiteness ideology. These scholars asked different questions and used different methods to investigate the same phenomena. Collectively, the research program told a richer and fuller story than any single study could have told. This example illustrates how different research methods can be used concurrently to advance understanding about intercultural phenomena.

Alternative Approaches to Studying Intercultural Communication

Intercultural research using the social scientific, interpretive, and critical methods have offered remarkable insights on a variety of intercultural phenomena. Each of these traditional approaches, however, uses a Euro-Western lens that is predominantly textocentric, privileging text, writing, and the lettered word in comparison to oral stories and visuals (Conquergood, 2002; Kim, 2002). We offer here two participatory approaches that, in some sense, hand over the power of the data to the participants. From these approaches, the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of the participants are more important than those of the researchers. Singhal, Harter, Chitnis, and Sharma (2007) explained that participation-based methodology allows for lateral communication between participants, creates a space for dialogue, focuses on the people's needs, enables collective empowerment, and offers cultural-specific content. In contrast, they note that nonparticipatory methods allow top-down vertical communication, generally focus on individual behavior change, consider the donors' and researchers' goals of greater importance than community needs, and offer cultural-general information. This section discusses three participatory approaches: theater, photography, and community-based participatory research.

Participatory Theater

Based on the dialogic theorizing of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970) and its application by Augusto Boal in his performative intervention, “Theater of the Oppressed” (1995), participatory theater can offer researchers an epistemology different from other research methods that rely on data from interviews and focus groups. This approach provides different kinds of data, discursive narratives that can be used to highlight some of the significant generative themes of the research participants.

The Theater of the Oppressed was developed in an effort to transform theater from the “monologue” of traditional performance into a “dialogue” between audience and stage. Boal (1995) experimented with many kinds of interactive theater. His explorations were based on the assumption that dialogue is the common, healthy dynamic between all humans and when a dialogue becomes a monologue, oppression ensues. Participatory theater is a research tool that produces generative and local knowledge, starting with the use of the body, the container of memory, emotions, and culture (Kaptani & Yuval-Davis, 2008). Theater has the ability to provide a useful connection to specific places as well as people. The encounter between the researcher and the researched in the theater space is outside the redundancy of everyday life. As a result, the researcher can see herself and her interactions between and with the researched in a way that is more distant than in everyday life, thus possibly making it easier to become reflexive.

Boal (1995) developed various forms of theater workshops and performances which aimed to meet the needs of all people for interaction, dialogue, critical thinking, action, and fun. For example, Forum Theater constitutes a series of workshops in which the participants are transformed from a passive audience into the double roles of actors and active audience. They construct dramatic scenes involving conflictual oppressive situations in small groups and show them to the other participants, who intervene by taking the place of the protagonists and suggesting better strategies for achieving their goals. One of the popular research tools used in Forum Theater is role-playing. Role-playing serves as a vehicle for analyzing power, stimulating public debate, and searching for solutions. Participants explore the complexity of the human condition and situate this knowledge in its cultural moment. The aim of the forum is not to find an ideal solution but to invent new ways of confronting problems. A second key tool is discussion. Following each intervention, audience members discuss the solution offered. A skilled facilitator encourages an in-depth discussion with the participants to generate ideas that will help to address issues under investigation.

Participatory Photography

Similarly, Paolo Friere is a pioneer in participatory photography. In 1973, Freire and his team asked people living in a slum in Lima, Peru, to visualize “exploitation” by taking photographs (Singhal et al., 2007). One child took a photograph of a nail on a wall. While the photograph did not resonate with adults, many of the children strongly supported it. When asked to explain, it was learned that many of the boys in the neighborhood were shoeshine boys in the city. Since the shoeshine box was heavy and they could not carry it

to the city, they rented a nail on the wall in one of the city shops. These shop owners charged the boys more than half of each day's earnings as rent. The children expressed that the photo of the nail was the strongest symbol of exploitation. Friere and his team then used this photo to generate a discussion about exploitation and how the community members wished to address it.

Participatory photography, otherwise known as "photo voice" or "shooting back," gives power to the participants, through photographs, to shape their own stories (Wang, 1999). Participatory photography has been used in a variety of contexts (slums, hospitals, schools, villages, etc.) and in different parts of the world (Singhal et al., 2007). For example, Briski and Kauffman (2004), in their Oscar-winning film, *Born into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids*, taught the children of commercial sex workers how to take photographs. These children, then, took photos to depict their harsh reality. These powerful images became the foundation of this moving film. Another example is the work of Loignon et al. (2014) in Canada about the relation between impoverishment and lack of access to primary health care. The researchers recruited four family medicine residents and two medical supervisors to pursue their study. There were eight participants who came from economically underprivileged backgrounds trained in photographic techniques and photo voice philosophy. The researchers were able to realize the importance of primary health care professionals developing greater interpersonal and social acuity. They also realized that their patients were co-participants in the processes of diagnosis, prognosis, and medication. Finally, the researchers were also able to realize that they would be able to develop a greater competency by actually investing a part of their training time in the socioeconomic milieu of the patients they are to serve.

The implications of using participatory photography are significant. This method works best when the participants are given general directions and allowed to play with ideas. It is important for the participants to share their visual stories with the researchers. It is, however, critical for fellow participants in a community to share their stories with each other. The challenge of using photography is that it is, by nature, an intrusive process (Singhal et al., 2007). With terminology like "aim," "shoot," and "capture," there can be a colonizing mentality in photography. It is particularly important that the participants be sensitive and reflective about how they take photographs of people and objects. While this may be difficult to accomplish across cultures, it is important to seek the permission of the participants before taking their photographs.

Community-Based Participatory Research

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a collaborative process where researchers and community members work together at all stages of the research process to address issues that are of importance to the community (Wallerstein et al., 2008). Rather than a top-down approach to health and social issues, CBPR focuses on a collaborative and bottom-up approach to identifying and defining problems and developing and implementing solutions (i.e., research "with" rather than "for" or "on"). CPBR is a preferred approach for researchers working with indigenous communities, other communities of color, or other communities facing disparities, which experience similar issues of mistrust

for past research issues and social/health inequities. CBPR has goals of developing culturally centered research and interventions, building trust and synergy among partners, building the capacity of all members of the research team, changing power relations among communities and outside entities, developing sustainable change, and improving the social and health conditions of the community (Wallerstein et al., 2008).

CBPR is not a method, rather a philosophy of research. CBPR projects can include social scientific, interpretive, and critical approaches and often involve mixed methods. The specific methods meet the needs of the community and the research problem being addressed. The methods should follow key principles of CBPR, including: a) the project fits local/cultural beliefs, norms, and practices; b) the project emphasizes what is important in the community; c) the project builds on strengths in the community; d) the project balances research and social action; and e) the project disseminates findings to all partners and involves all partners in the dissemination process (Israel et al., 2008).

An example of CBPR is a project in Mysore, South India, addressing stigma and discrimination among men who have sex with men (MSM), many of whom were sex workers (Lorway et al., 2013). The project involved a collaboration of researchers and a sex workers collective in a long-term systematic process of knowledge production and action. The research approach involved training 10 community members as researchers who conducted interviews with MSM to understand their experiences. There were 70 in-depth interviews conducted in four days. Data analysis was completed with thematic analysis. The results provided a rallying point against stigma as the community cultivated its understanding of this concept and they mobilized to increase access to sexual health services.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to explore multidisciplinary methodological approaches to intercultural communication research. If our worldview shapes our reality, what we study and how we study phenomena is greatly influenced by our cultural frameworks. We described the traditional approaches to studying intercultural communication, namely, social scientific, interpretive, and critical perspectives. We identified the key ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions of each of these perspectives, offered an exemplar for each kind of perspective, types of data collected, and the methodological concerns in each framework. We then explained traditional ways to integrate the social scientific, interpretive, and critical perspectives, offered examples, and explicated the strengths of such integrations. We finally offered three alternative methodological approaches (participatory theater, participatory photography, and community-based participatory research) where the participants shape the scope of the study, interpret the meaning of the data, and offer practical implications for the study.

Historiography

The early history of intercultural communication, including some discussion of research methods, has been covered well by Leeds-Hurwitz (1990) and Moon (1996). Leeds-Hurwitz reviewed the early foundation of intercultural communication, which can be traced to the work of Edward T. Hall in the Foreign Service Institute in the 1950s and 1960s. The focus in the earlier years was on descriptive linguistic analysis of micro communication practices (e.g., proxemics, kinesics, and verbal practices) of multiple cultures. These early roots of intercultural communication were influenced by anthropological study of culture (i.e., ethnography).

The 1970s saw the development of the field of intercultural communication, with a focus on culture as race, gender, nationality, and socioeconomic status (Moon, 1996). The research at this time also reflected the social issues of the 1970s. Methods of research were diverse but predominantly included social scientific and interpretive methods.

The late 1970s and the 1980s saw a change where the focus of culture became nationality and a large emphasis was placed on cross-cultural comparisons. There was a pursuit to develop and apply Western theories to non-Western contexts. Methodologically, the 1980s was dominated by social scientific approaches.

The 1990s brought some backlash against social scientific approaches from interpretive scholars. There was also a rise of critical scholarship which critiqued the social scientific research methods. A number of critical approaches were identified and were especially used to develop theoretical approaches for understanding intercultural communications.

The 2000s brought more balance and integration of the research approaches. The *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* was founded in 2008. The three editors of this journal to date (Tom Nakayama, Shiv Ganesh, and Rona Halualani) issued editorial statements about the scope of the journal respecting and including diverse methodological approaches.

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John Oetzel

Waikato Management School, The University of Waikato

Saumya Pant

Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad (MICA)

Nagesh Rao

Partner, Siya Consulting