Interethnic Communication: Current Research
Young Yun Kim, ed.
International and Intercultural Communication Annual, Vol.X,

Over the past decade, volume titles of the *International and Intercultural Annual* of the Speech Communication Association reflect the development of this field in themes related to communication theory, methodology and applications. This anthology is the first to draw together research in interethnic relations focusing entirely on communication, a process defined for the purposes of this book as "sending, receiving and interpreting verbal and non-verbal messages...between members of different ethnic groups within societal boundaries." The range of interdisciplinary work in this volume suggests both the importance of studying interethnic communication and the limitations of dominant research approaches.

This anthology contains eleven articles which apply largely empirical research methods drawn from psychology, sociology and anthropology to specific cases of (with one exception) interethnic communication in the United States. The first four articles analyze differences in message-decoding patterns in interethnic exchange, focusing on the implications of different patterns of cognitive and affective orientations. In "Stereotypes and Interaction Conventions of Eskimos and non-Eskimos", Stephen McNabb identifies and analyzes variables of Alaskan interaction and communication, concluding that non-native stereotypes and judgment of Inuit character are the result of "faulty inferences about the meanings of communication conventions."

Rosita Daskal Albert analyzes the greater importance placed upon attributions of shame by Hispanics in comparison with Anglo-Americans in an article drawn from research on teacher and student responses to story episodes. Tzeng, et.al. use semantic differential ratings of Blacks' and Whites' affective attributions associated with intergroup distances to substantiate ingroup separation and favoritism and interethnic alienation. Stella Ting-Toomey reports on the nature and frequency of gender-related styles in the conflict communication of Black and White college students.

The second section of the book contains five articles on research related to language and verbal and non-verbal behaviour in interethnic interaction. Howard Gilles and Patricia Johnson analyze the language behaviour of Welsh-speaking adolescents to determine that perceived threat and ethnic commitment are factors related to their use of Welsh during interethnic interaction. In the most imaginative article in the anthology, William Starosta and Larry Coleman develop a rhetorical analysis of Jesse Jackson's 1984 "Hymietown" speech and the process of apology, arguing that "Jackson attempted to overcome a gaffe by means of a 'degradation ritual' in order to show himself as honoring widely accepted American values." Working through research framed in the tradition of
ethnography of speaking, Thomas Kochman analyzes the structure regulating Black verbal dueling strategies, concluding that their cultural placement within boundaries of play and non-play differs from Whites’ and contributes to conflict in social interaction. Donald Rubin expands the ethnographic method to the setting of the school, comparing classroom and community speech to suggest that certain patterns of classroom questioning operate to the disadvantage of non-mainstream ethnic students. A second ethnographic study of the school focuses on dance in Judith Hanna’s interesting analysis of dance/play among Black children as expressions of ethnic identity in dealing with White children.

The final section of this anthology contains two articles which discuss ethnicity in the development of interpersonal relationships. William Gudykunst uses uncertainty reduction theory to analyze ethnicity as a factor influencing the patterns of self-disclosure and attributional confidence in interpersonal relationships between persons of the same and of different ethnic groups. William Hammer applies a multivariate analysis to determine that attitude and ethnic similarity are important factors influencing social penetration during initial social interactions.

Taken together, these articles contain little that is inspiring or even surprising for the reader. The volume moves toward broadening the dominant research framework of interethnic communication by including ethnographic studies and rhetorical analysis along with the heavy emphasis on quantitative research. But in general, the efficacy of the research results demonstrates that quantitative methods of interethnic analysis face a decided challenge from the perspectives put forth in critical analysis and cultural studies. These approaches inform from different premises. But the focus they place on context and history and discourse contributes a vital perspective to the study of signification, intersubjectivity and interaction. Current research in interethnic communication is much more varied and insightful than this anthology suggests.

Gail Valaskakis
Concordia University

*Inside Seven Days - The Show That Shook the Nation*

Eric Koch
Newcastle: Prentice-Hall, 1986

Are you teaching communications? If so, you’re probably looking for stimulating books on Canadian broadcasting for your additional reading lists.

There’s no need to look any further. Include *Inside Seven Days - The Show That Shook the Nation*. Author: Eric Koch. Introduction by Peter Desbarats. Published by Prentice-Hall/Newcastle in 1986. Available from the author at 59 Standish Avenue, Toronto M4W 3B2. Price $10.00 (hardcover) - half the original cost.