Men Talk:
An Exploratory Study of Communication Patterns and Communication Apprehension of Black and White Males

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This article is the culmination of a two-part study that addresses (1) the nonverbal communication patterns of Black and White men in groups and (2) communication apprehension of Black and White men when communicating with each other. In part one, groups of acquainted same-race (racially homogeneous) males and mixed-race (racially heterogeneous) males were videotaped while communicating about issues of interest to most college-age men (i.e., dating, sexuality, AIDS). Nonverbal communication patterns were coded and compared between the same-race and mixed-race groups. Results indicated that Black and White males were significantly different in their display of adaptors in the same-race groups. In part two, 40 Black and 35 White males completed the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA). Results showed that Black and White men were significantly different only in the dyadic (interpersonal) context. General patterns of communication between the two races are discussed.

Keywords: Black men, White men, communication patterns, nonverbal communication, same-race groups, mixed-race groups, dyadic relationships

Black talk, White talk. Is there still a difference? If so, who takes the initiative to make adjustments when communicating with the other? It is often assumed that the
dominant culture, being the one in power, dictates social norms including those related to communication; therefore, if anyone makes an adjustment in communication patterns, it would be the cultural “underdog,” the group without power (Hall & Freedle, 1975; Hewitt, 1986; Johnson & Buttny, 1982; Kochman, 1981; Rich, 1974). Although this argument seems logical, more recent studies have suggested that in the case of Blacks and Whites communicating, factors other than race may have a strong influence on communication patterns. For example, Booth-Butterfield and Jordan (1989) found that both Black and White women converged their communication when changing from a racially homogeneous group to a racially heterogeneous group. This pattern suggests a change in behavior, and possibly a change in focus and attitude, from those found when earlier studies on interracial communication were conducted (see Cohen, 1972; Katz & Cohen, 1962; Katz, Goldston, & Benjamin, 1958; Katz & Lawrence, 1960).

In a time when community, governmental, and academic institutions are focusing on issues associated with culture and diversity, it is important not to lose sight of the basic yet pertinent issues of communication because it is through communication that norms and values of a culture are reflected, transformed, and delivered. By examining communication we might tap into how far we have come in our battle of racial and cultural equality and, equally if not more important, how far we have to go. Ultimately, studying this aspect of communication may promote understanding of ways to promote effectiveness in interethnic communication (Hecht, Ribeau, & Alberts, 1989).

EMPIRICAL RATIONALE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Interracial communication, particularly between Blacks and Whites, has been the focus of a plethora of research over the years. Much of the earlier research on the topic indicated that there are differences in communication patterns and styles between Blacks and Whites (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1987; Kochman, 1981; Pennington, 1979). When considering differences in Black and White communication patterns and styles, we must consider how at times in U.S. history there was blatant intolerance of behavior that was different from that of the cultural norm. Racial integration in school, business, and society contributed to how people of different races interacted with each other. One might reason that Blacks would feel powerless and tentative in their communication with Whites, and in turn Blacks would be perceived as less efficient and less competent than their White counterparts. Although it is apparent that communication differences still exist among Blacks and Whites in general and between Black and White males in particular, the type of differences we find today may deviate from those indicated at certain points in our history. Today, it would be interesting and useful to examine what communication patterns are occurring among and between White and Black males who are, for all intents and purposes, of equal status. To this end, this study examines communication of Black and White males as they interact in racially homogeneous and racially heterogeneous groups. More specifically, this examination seeks to identify how racial composition of a group and dyad affects communication patterns of acquainted and
unacquainted men. Accommodation Theory, Uncertainty Reduction Theory, and Communication Apprehension are used here to help explain anticipated behaviors.

**ACCOMMODATION THEORY**

The central notion of accommodation theory “… is that during interaction individuals are motivated to adjust (or accommodate) their speech styles as a strategy for gaining . . . the following goals: evoking listeners’ social approval, attaining communicational efficiency between interactants, and maintaining positive social identities” (Giles, Mulac, Bradac, & Johnson, 1987, p. 15). The theory’s original purpose was to clarify speech convergence and divergence and those affective and cognitive processes that define them.

Convergence is defined as “a linguistic strategy whereby individuals adapt to each other’s speech rates, pauses and utterance length, pronunciations, and so on” (p. 14), while divergence is “the way in which speakers accentuate vocal differences between themselves and others” (p. 14). It is apparent that both convergence and divergence involve the use of verbal and nonverbal communication. Studies show that we adjust or converge toward the linguistic style of the other interactant. Convergence occurs when the rewards are greater than the costs, when efficiency in communication is desired, and when there are no alternative strategies offered by social norms (Bourhis, 1985).

There is a benefit to convergence since people prefer others to behave in a manner that is congruent with their own behavior (Vrij, Dragt, & Koppelaar, 1992). Collett (1971), for example, found that people prefer that members of out-groups use a style of nonverbal communication that is congruent with theirs. Results of a study by Manusov, Winchatz, and Manning (1997) indicated that, as behavioral congruence increased between participants (i.e., vocal behaviors), judgments about the conversation became more positive.

According to Hecht et al., (1989), “low power groups often shift to the mainstream style to accommodate cultural differences” (p. 387). In 1981, Stanback and Pearce argued that language is used by Blacks to accommodate Whites who are in authority positions. This accommodation is used to accrue benefits and to be accepted. Street (1982) found that higher social attractiveness was generated when subjects converged on paralinguistic cues such as pause and speech rate; Thakerar, Giles, and Chesire (1982) found that when low-status partners were paired with high-status partners, the former often assessed the speech rate and accent of the higher-status person and converged toward that perceived speech level for cognitive reasons (i.e., so that the receiver could better understand the message). Contrary to their predictions, Booth-Butterfield and Jordan (1989) found that both Black and White women engaged in mutual convergence during interracial interaction, suggesting a change in attitudes in perceptions of one’s own and others’ place in society.

Divergence is likely to occur when the desire for [one’s own] group identity is strong or when there is a desire to disassociate one’s self from others (Bourhis, 1985). Hecht et al. (1989) argued that “strong ethnic group identity can promote divergence as can peer group pressures” (p. 387). Several studies have identified
behavioral differences of Black and White communicators. For example, Vrij and Winkel (1991) found that Blacks gazed less frequently at their discussion partner, smiled and laughed more, made more speech disturbances, spoke slower, and with more pitch raises, and were livelier … than [W]hites” (p. 169). Differences have also been indicated in regard to dialect (Harrison & Trabasso, 1976; Jenkins, 1982); cultural perceptions (Collier, 2000), conversational rules (Collier, Ribeau, & Hecht, 1986), and style of interaction (Cogdell & Wilson, 1980; Garner, 1994; Gudykunst, 1986; Houston, 1994; Kochman, 1990a; 1990b). African-American communication style has been described as active and assertive (Garner, 1994; Hecht et al., 1992).

From another perspective, African Americans and European Americans have been found to differ in their ability to decode nonverbal behavior, with African Americans being more accurate than European Americans in judging facial expressions (Gitter, Black & Mostofsky, 1972a, 1972b; Gitter, Kozel, & Mostofsky, 1972). Photos of both African Americans and European Americans were used in the studies.

Chen (1997) conducted a study on communication adaptation between cultures. The communication adaptation patterns of dyads composed of either Americans communicating with other Americans (A-A) or Americans communicating with East Asians (A-E) were explored. Chen hypothesized that Americans would use more verbal adaptive strategies when communicating with East Asians than with other Americans and expected communication adaptation patterns to differ between intracultural dyads (A-A) and intercultural (A-E) dyads. Results indicated that, as predicted, there were fewer alignment strategies in A-A than in A-E dyads and that A-A and A-E differed in their use of communication adaptation patterns. Specifically, individual American East Asian partners relied on strategies that invited the partner to actively participate, thus inviting more involvement by the partner. Despite these behaviors, however, Chen concluded that A-E dyad affects American participation adversely, particularly with respect to responsiveness and perceptiveness. Chen adds “this finding demonstrates that intercultural interactions make special demands of communicators in cognitive processes, as well as in their communicative behavior” (p. 319).

In 1994, Martin, Hecht, and Larkey conducted a study comparing conversational improvement strategies from the perspectives of African Americans and European Americans and found that these perspectives differed. While African Americans emphasized strategies that required both interactants (Black and White) to be responsible for improvement, European Americans reported a focus on strategies requiring the other interactant to be more responsible. African Americans are more likely to use active conversational improvement strategies whereas European Americans are more likely to use passive strategies. Such differences in communication strategies may serve as barriers in overcoming what some see as problematic interactions between the two groups (e.g., Asante & Davis, 1989; Asante & Noor-Aldeen, 1984; Tzeng, Duvall, Ware, Neel, & Fortier, 1986). Consequently, Hecht, Larkey, and Johnson (1992) outlined three additional components besides differences in conversational improvement strategies that contribute to the problematic nature of interethnic communication—communication satisfaction, communication issues, and ethnic identity. Taken together, there is evidence that in order to improve
relationships between Blacks and Whites, we must first identify how each group perceives and uses communication.

Stereotypes

Effective communication between Blacks and Whites may be hindered by the stereotypes and uncertainty each brings to the communication context. In a study by Ogawa (1971), 35 White undergraduates were asked to list, based on their experiences and beliefs, the communication characteristics of Blacks and two other ethnic groups. The top four traits listed for Blacks were argumentative, emotional, aggressive, and straightforward. Among the characteristics attributed to Whites by Blacks were ignorant, boastful, aggressive, critical, conservative, and concealing (Rich, 1974). Ogawa argued that such stereotypes run counter to what are considered desirable (group) discussion traits” since “argumentative and emotional behavior is contrary to rational and deliberate discourse of small group discussion” (p. 280). Further he argues that stereotypes can block open-minded consideration by Whites of what Blacks say.

Leonard and Locke (1993) asked Black and White college students to indicate what traits best characterized the communication behavior of the other racial group. Whites described Blacks as manipulative, noisy and demanding, ostentatious, and boastful. Blacks described Whites as rude, aggressive, noisy, critical, and manipulative. Further, Sigelman and Welch (1993) found that, while Blacks see interracial relations as more problematic than do Whites, Whites perceived interracial relations as more congenial and smooth than do Blacks. In 1996, Ryan found that Blacks’ judgments of behaviors of Blacks and Whites were equally accurate, whereas, Whites were less sensitive to Black behavior than to White behavior. Interestingly, Blacks were “somewhat more accurate in their judgments of the outgroup (White group) than in judgments of their own group” (p. 1122). Whites were more accurate in judgments about their own group than they were in judgments of Blacks.

Doise, Deschamp, and Meyer (1978), along with Wilder (1984), indicate a tendency for Blacks to emphasize intragroup similarities and intergroup differences. Similarly, Brewer (1993) indicates that Blacks have a greater tendency than Whites to attribute greater similarity of attitudes between themselves and other Blacks than to members of their out-groups (e.g., Whites). According to Manusov, Winchatz, and Manning (1997):

Because behaviors are likely to be building blocks for an interaction’s climate, with each person’s cues influencing the form and character of the other’s, and because message behavior is the primary concern of communication scholars, understanding the ways that communicative cues with the stereotype-based expectancies in cross-cultural interactions seems critical.” (p.119)

Arguably, the best source of information about another racial group is experience. According to Sigelman and Welch (1993), when Whites lack that firsthand information they base their responses on whatever other information they may have at
their disposal” (p. 783). Often, this information includes reports from the media and long-standing racial stereotypes that, more often than not, are negative. Blacks, on the other hand, may have an easier time when it comes to gaining information about the other racial group when living in a White-dominated society (Sigelman & Welch, 1993).

Uncertainty and Anxiety

In the present study, Black and White men’s apprehension when communicating and/or anticipating communication with men of a different race (Black or White) is assessed. Gudykunst (1995) proposed what he called Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory to explain “effective communication” among different participants. Based on AUM, uncertainty and anxiety are potentially created in any “stranger” interaction. “Anxiety, feelings of unease, worry and apprehension, is the emotional equivalent of uncertainty and is often higher in interactions with someone of another group” (as quoted in Jaasma, 2002, p. 153). Gudykunst proposes that every individual has a minimum and maximum threshold for anxiety and uncertainty in a communication encounter. Uncertainty levels that are above or below one’s threshold will cause a person to either become too anxious to engage in communication with the person or group and instead stereotype the target, or not be motivated enough to sustain interest. Consequently, based on Stephen and Stephen’s (1996) Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) of Prejudice, among the four causal factors that lead us to stereotype and be prejudiced against outgroups is intergroup anxiety.

Recently, Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) introduced Intercultural Communication Apprehension (ICA), which focuses on fear or anxiety associated with communication or anticipated communication with someone from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds than one’s own. They see ICA as a form of situational communication apprehension. They developed the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension Scale (PRICA) to measure communication apprehension in the interethnic/intercultural context. Communication apprehension can inhibit uncertainty reduction and overall social behavior (assertiveness and responsiveness) in any context including group contexts in which the race or culture of the interactors differ. Neuliep and Ryan (1998) found that ICA was “positively correlated with uncertainty regarding one’s future behavior, the partner’s future behavior, and one’s own feelings about the partner” (p. 89). They also found an inverse relationship between communication apprehension and intercultural communication, namely assertiveness and responsiveness.

Race and Gender Studies

Male communication patterns have been characterized as less expressive and accommodating than females’ communication (Tannen, 1990). Although African American communication has been a focus of many research studies in the last several years, fewer studies have focused on interracial communication between Black and White males. Since many African Americans essentially have to communicate in two cultures, code switching is a way of life for them, which most are able to engage
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in smoothly without much conscious thought. This behavior has been referred to as “playing the game,” a way of coping and surviving in both worlds. European Americans, for the most part, do not share in this strategy of survival possibly because there is less need for it. With these differing perceptions of reality between Blacks and Whites, tension and ineffective communication may result.

Given the perceptual and experiential differences pointed out by previous research, will males similar in status and background show differences in nonverbal communication patterns in racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups? Further, will they report different levels of communication apprehension when communicating with males of a different race? To examine communication patterns of Black and White males, the following questions were posed:

RQ1: Will White or Black males exhibit more behavioral change when racially homogeneous and racially heterogeneous groups are compared?
RQ2: Will Black males in racially heterogeneous and homogeneous groups exhibit more behaviors associated with emotion, involvement, expressiveness, and relaxation than White males in racially heterogeneous and homogeneous groups?
RQ3a: Will Blacks and Whites exhibit different nonverbal behavior patterns (head nods, adaptors, laughter, talk time) in racially homogeneous groups?
RQ3b: Will Blacks and Whites exhibit different nonverbal behavior patterns (head nods, adaptors, laughter, talk time) in racially heterogeneous groups?
RQ4: Will Black or White males report higher communication apprehension when communicating in mixed-race contexts?

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

This study is exploratory, patterned in part after the Booth-Butterfield and Jordan (1989) study described earlier. In that study, groups of acquainted racially homogeneous and heterogeneous (Black and White) females were observed communicating. In the present study, groups of racially homogeneous and heterogeneous males were examined to determine if there is a difference in communication patterns of Black and White males and what communication dynamics occur in racially heterogeneous and racially homogeneous male groups.

Data were collected in two parts for this study. Part I is the video/group portion of the study. Part II is the survey portion of the study. In Part I, acquainted groups of racially homogeneous college males were recruited from basic public-speaking courses and from a summer orientation course at a large Midwestern university. Acquainted/intact groups were selected for two reasons: first, in order that established patterns of interaction could be observed; second, to decrease the likelihood of confounding the results of the data in racially homogeneous groups by integrating anxiety that may be due to initial interaction. Acquaintance was based on being classmates in a class composed of 30 students or fewer for at least one semester. Initially, acquainted individuals were brought together as a racially homogeneous
(same-race) group. The two racially homogeneous groups were brought together a second time as a racially heterogeneous (mixed-race) group. This method was used for two separate groups of acquainted Black males and two separate groups of White males. Data were analyzed across racial groups so that the total N for Black males was seven (including one group of four and one group of three) and the total N for White males was eight (including two groups of four males).

In Part II a convenience sample of 84 males, (40 Blacks, 35 Whites, and nine who identified themselves as “other” race) volunteered to complete a modified version of the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA; McCroskey, 1978). Students enrolled in a senior-level interracial/intercultural communication course at a large southern university were given the opportunity to earn extra credit by recruiting at least two males (Black or White) to complete the modified version of the PRCA (revised for this study). In addition to the PRCA, the survey asked the participants to indicate their race, gender, and classification (e.g., freshman, sophomore, etc.). Students were given two weeks to return the completed scale to their professor and were subsequently given a maximum of two extra-credit points for having the surveys completed.

**PROCEDURES**

Part I (the video/group portion) of the study took place in two stages. In the initial stage, each racially homogeneous group met separately to watch a video on love relationships entitled “The Human Animal,” hosted by Phil Donahue, or on AIDS entitled “Time Out,” hosted by Irvin “Magic” Johnson and Arsenio Hall. These videos were chosen because they were topics likely to be of interest and importance to college students and thus elicit interaction from participants. The videos ranged from 30 to 45 minutes respectively. After reviewing the video, the group engaged in discussion moderated by a Black male in the Black homogeneous groups and a White male in the White homogeneous groups. The intent was to keep each group homogeneous by gender and race so that results would not be confounded by these variables. The purpose of the moderator was to facilitate discussion when necessary (i.e., if the discussion among the group lagged or faded). The discussion focused on the group’s perception of the content of the video, their feelings/fears about AIDS/relationships, and their knowledge about the topics prior to and after viewing the video. Participants were seated in a semi-circle oriented toward each other with the moderator in front. The video camera was visible to the participants but not positioned in close proximity, to minimize its effect on the group’s communication.

Stage two of the video/group portion of the study took place one to two days after stage one. The members of each racially homogeneous group were brought together to form a racially heterogeneous group. The discussion again was on AIDS and relationships but was expanded to include misconceptions college students have about the syndrome and about communicating within intimate love relationships. Both moderators were present for this stage of discussion, and again their purpose was to keep the discussion going within the group.
INSTRUMENTS

A modified version of McCroskey's (1974) PRCA was used to measure communication apprehension. The original scale is a 24-item, Likert-type measure ranging from (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree. Respondents are asked to indicate to what degree they agree or disagree with the items pertaining to their level of apprehension when communicating or anticipating communication in four contexts: dyadic, meeting, group, and public.

The scale was modified for the present study to ascertain Black and White men’s self-reported apprehension about communicating with other males of a different race (specifically, Black or White). An example of an item modified for this study is (original item #6): “I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.” The modified item #6 reads as follows: “I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions with males who are of a different race than me.” In the directions, participants were given the following information: “Imagine yourself communicating with other males who are about your age, approximately half of which are the same race as you, the others are of a different race (Black or White). With this scenario or with a similar real-life experience in mind, please respond to the following statements by indicating how you felt/would feel communicating with the other males.” Reliability for the scale in this study was .91.

CODING CATEGORIES AND CODER TRAINING

This study focuses on nonverbal behaviors to determine communication patterns of Black and White males in groups. The dependent variables here were those examined in Booth-Butterfield and Jordan’s (1989) study on Black and White female communication patterns in groups. As in that study, several steps were undertaken to assure valid measurement of the variables.

Raters were trained by observing six minutes of a tape of racially heterogeneous women talking in a group. The individual was the unit of observation, and each individual was observed for a six-minute period on the following behaviors: talk time, smiling/laughing, adaptors, touch initiation, and interruptions. Each of these behaviors is described below.

Talk Time was the amount of time the individual held the floor over the six-minute period. According to Dillard and Spitzberg (1984), more talk time is associated with dominance and social skill. Given that the participants in this study were essentially of equal status (all undergraduate students who were approximately the same age), we were interested in determining which racial group would hold the “conversational floor” longer. We were also interested in finding out which racial group would show more behavioral change in talk time when moving from racially homogeneous to racially heterogeneous groups.

Smiling/laughter was operationalized as the duration of time participants retracted their lips upward, usually revealing the teeth, whether or not the behavior was accompanied by audible sounds (Dillard & Spitzberg, 1984). This category was tallied as the amount of time the behavior occurred during the interaction.
Adaptors are nonverbal movements associated with discomfort and/or anxiety (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). These movements might include swinging or shaking the leg or foot, self-touching/stroking behavior, playing with an object such as a pen or paper clip, etc. Adaptors were measured by counting each onset occurrence of a behavior.

Touch can indicate immediacy, status, and expressiveness (Hall, 1984; Knapp & Hall, 1997). This category was tallied as the total number of times the participant touched another participant during the interaction.

Interruptions indicate dominance and/or comfort with an individual or group (Bormann, 1975; Dindia, 1987; Kochman, 1981). Interruptions are defined as simultaneous speech used for other than support or backchannel cues that break or attempt to break into another’s turn. The participant was credited with an interruption each time he engaged in the behavior during the observation period.

**Measurement**

As in the training, a six-minute segment of each group was coded (minutes three-nine). Six-minute segments rather than the entire (approximately 40-minute) interaction was coded. This procedure allowed all groups to be observed during the same time segments of the interaction; thus, the length of observation for each group was identical. According to Wiemann (1981), the initial minutes of interaction of a group are often not representative of real interaction; therefore, minutes three through nine were observed and coded in order to produce more representative data.

Two coders were trained to code participants’ communicative behaviors. The coders were trained in use of digital stop watches, code sheets, and communicative behavior recognition by watching six-minute segments of females communicating in groups. Training continued until consistent levels of agreement were reached by all coders, after which coding of the actual videotapes began.

The coders observed the tapes, focusing on one participant at a time (see Jablin & Sussman, 1979, for explanation of a similar method). That is, the coders observed the tapes focusing on participant #1; then observations were made on participant #2; and so on until all participants were observed and behaviors coded for the same segment of the video tape. Thus, the tapes were reviewed once for each participant-interaction (N = 30). Intercoder reliability was assessed using Pearson correlation. Obtained reliability for talk time, interruptions, touch, and laughter/smiling was 100%. Reliability on adaptors and head nods was .93 and .91, respectively.

One of the trained coders recorded one behavior each: laughter/smiling, talk time, or adaptors, and the other coder recorded two behaviors: touch and interruptions. The tape was then rewound, and the same participant was coded on another behavior. This was repeated until each participant group member was coded on all behaviors between both coders. At the end of each segment, each coder completed a five-point, bipolar, semantic, differential-type scale indicating the degree to which each participant was perceived on the following behaviors (1) emotion-unemotional (5); (1) involved/animated-impersonal (5); (1) expressive-dispassionate (5); and (1) at ease-tense (5).
RESULTS

The data were analyzed using ANOVA and descriptive statistics for each research question. For the video/group portion of the study, only one relationship reached the .05 significance level. The following findings should be viewed as descriptive in nature. Research question 1 addressed whether Blacks or Whites would exhibit more behavioral change when racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups were compared. Differences in communication patterns were determined by examining the following variables: head nods, adaptors, interruptions/talk-overs, touch, laughter/smiling, amount of time talked, and degree of emotion, involvement, expressiveness, and relaxation (see Table 1 for means and standard deviations). Although different patterns were found in the way Blacks and Whites communicate on most variables, these differences were not statistically significant. There were no instances of touch recorded for any of the groups. In terms of general description of behaviors, both Blacks and Whites exhibited fewer head nods, adaptors, interruptions, laughter, and talk time when communicating in racially heterogeneous groups than in racially homogeneous groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Homogeneous Black (Mean)</th>
<th>Homogeneous White (Mean)</th>
<th>Heterogeneous Black (Mean)</th>
<th>Heterogeneous White (Mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head nods</td>
<td>3.00 (2.31)</td>
<td>5.00 (4.14)</td>
<td>1.14 (1.21)</td>
<td>1.75 (1.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptors</td>
<td>13.71 (7.13)</td>
<td>22.75 (9.25)</td>
<td>11.29 (6.73)</td>
<td>18.63 (10.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrupt</td>
<td>1.33 (1.15)</td>
<td>1.00 (1.41)</td>
<td>.43 (.79)</td>
<td>.13 (.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughter</td>
<td>14.48 (14.51)</td>
<td>15.53 (10.10)</td>
<td>7.41 (5.78)</td>
<td>10.68 (5.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk time</td>
<td>53.24 (39.75)</td>
<td>74.78 (40.33)</td>
<td>32.50 (42.42)</td>
<td>21.01 (23.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Emotion</td>
<td>3.00 (1.00)</td>
<td>2.63 (.74)</td>
<td>2.86 (.90)</td>
<td>3.38 (.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Involvement</td>
<td>2.14 (1.21)</td>
<td>1.88 (.83)</td>
<td>2.00 (1.15)</td>
<td>2.88 (1.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Expressive</td>
<td>2.71 (.95)</td>
<td>2.25 (.89)</td>
<td>2.43 (1.27)</td>
<td>2.88 (1.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Ease</td>
<td>1.86 (.90)</td>
<td>2.00 (1.31)</td>
<td>1.71 (.95)</td>
<td>2.63 (1.06)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Lower means = higher degree of behaviors associated with item.

Research question 2 asked, will Black males in racially heterogeneous and homogeneous groups exhibit more behaviors associated with emotion, involvement, expressiveness, and relaxation than White males in those groups? Results were not significant at the .05 level. General behavior patterns indicate that Blacks in homogeneous groups, were perceived as being more at ease than Whites in homogeneous groups. Blacks were perceived as exhibiting more emotion, involvement, expressiveness, and ease than Whites in the heterogeneous groups (see Table 1).
Question 3a asked, will Blacks and Whites exhibit different nonverbal behavioral patterns in racially homogeneous groups? The only behavior that reached significance was adaptors. Blacks and Whites differed significantly in displaying adaptors in racially homogeneous groups ($F[1,13] = 4.37, p = .05$). General patterns showed that Whites exhibited more head nods, adaptors, laughter, and talk time than Blacks; while Blacks engaged in more interruptions than Whites.

Question 3b asked, will Blacks and Whites exhibit different nonverbal behavioral patterns in racially heterogeneous groups? The results revealed that Whites exhibited more head nods, adaptors, and laughter while Blacks engaged in more interruptions and talked for a longer period of time. None of these behaviors, however, were statistically significant.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics: Communication Apprehension by Race and Context (Survey)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.46</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>11.48</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12.05</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>3.74</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dyadic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>12.15</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11.62</td>
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Research question 4 asked, will Black and White males report differences in communication apprehension when communicating in mixed-raced contexts? For Blacks, Whites, and other-race males, the means and standard deviations for communication apprehension were 44.28(10.77), 40.77(12.12), and 136.11(323.71), respectively. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the three groups was significant \( F(2,81)=3.365; p < .05 \). The four contexts of communication apprehension, group, meeting, dyadic, and public, were, respectively, \( F(2,81)=4.644; p < .05 \); \( F(2,81)=6.258; p < .05 \); \( F(2,81)=7.604; p < .01 \); and \( F(2,81)=4.536; p < .05 \).

Post hoc tests of multiple comparisons (Tukey HSD) showed that Blacks and Whites differed significantly only in the dyadic context (see Table 3). It is apparent from these post hoc procedures that the significant \( F \) values for the remaining three CA contexts were a product of the race category identified as “other”; a category with only nine males.

**DISCUSSION**

The research questions in this study addressed (1) whether Black and White males communicate differently from each other and if these differences are evident when moving from racially homogeneous to racially heterogeneous groups, and (2) whether Black and White males would report differences in communication apprehension when communicating with males in racially heterogeneous contexts. Based on the results of this study, we can assert that differences in overall communication

<table>
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<th>CA Contexts</th>
<th>Race</th>
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<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
patterns do exist, but the differences are minimal at least based on the conservative statistical differences tests applied here. We may, however, glean some knowledge from the general behavioral patterns. For example, an interesting phenomenon occurred in regard to research question 1, which examined a comparison in communication patterns between racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. Both Blacks and Whites exhibited fewer nonverbal behaviors (i.e., head nods, adaptors, interruptions, smiling/laughter, and talk) when communicating in mixed-race groups than in same-race groups. Beyond the fact that a certain amount of adaptation and change is to be expected when moving from a small group of same-race acquaintances to a larger group where about half of the members are strangers of a different race; the consistent direction in change for both racial groups is worth noting. Based on accommodation theory, the general patterns of behavior indicate convergence occurred by both Blacks and Whites when communicating in mixed-race groups. This finding also corresponds to the findings of Booth-Butterfield and Jordan (1989) where Black and White women showed a similar trend of convergence in mixed-race groups.

No instances of touch were recorded for either group. This finding is not surprising considering how both Black and White men in the U.S. American culture are socialized not to touch other males except in very specified contexts. Further, cultural socialization compounded with the nature of the discussion, which addressed dating, sex, and AIDS, may have contributed to a certain level of self-consciousness resulting in participants being “touch avoidant” with each other.

What was not expected was that there would be fewer adaptors displayed in racially heterogeneous groups than in racially homogeneous groups. One would expect that merely moving from an acquainted to an unacquainted group would increase discomfort and anxiety, as manifested through adaptors. This was not the case in this study. Perhaps the pattern is a consequence of the heterogeneous group meeting occurring subsequent to the homogeneous group meeting. Homogeneous groups may have been more of a novelty with participants who were not certain of what to expect at the first meeting. Once the heterogeneous groups met, the novelty may have worn off, so to speak, resulting in a decrease in the display of adaptors. It is important to note that White males displayed more behaviors associated with adaptors than did Black males in both racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. Further, this was the only variable on which statistical significance was reached in the video/group portion of the study.

Although other differences emerged that were not statistically significant, they are nonetheless helpful in identifying general behavioral trends. For example, Whites engaged in more head nods and laughter than did Blacks in both racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. Further, Whites engaged in less talk time than did Blacks in both groups. The second research question addressed whether Black males would exhibit more behaviors associated with emotion, involvement, expressiveness, and relaxation than White males. All groups were assessed on the four items. Whites showed more emotion, involvement, and expressiveness than Blacks in the racially homogeneous group while Blacks were perceived as more relaxed than Whites in the homogeneous group. Further, Blacks were perceived as more emotional, involved, expressive, and at ease than Whites in the racially hetero-
geneous group. It appears from these findings that, when compared to Whites in the homogeneous group, Blacks were not perceived as involved in the discussion, although they were perceived as “comfortable” with the situation. When the same Blacks moved to the racially heterogeneous group, they became more involved and relaxed than they had been in the racially homogeneous group. Whites, on the other hand, showed more involvement and comfort with the situation in the racially homogeneous group than in the racially heterogeneous group.

The comfort and involvement of Whites in racially homogeneous groups were further indicated by the results of research questions 3a. Whites were found to talk, laugh/smile, and exhibit more head nodding than Blacks in the racially homogeneous group. It also follows that Whites in the racially homogenous group exhibited more adaptors since the results of the second research question showed that Whites were perceived as “less at ease” than Blacks. Blacks interrupted more than Whites in racially homogeneous groups. Kochman (1981, p. 26) describes this behavior as “coming in.” He suggests this is typical of Black communication style, which is likely to be competitive. Because of the “competition” for turns, interruptions or talk-over occurs during conversation.

The results of research question 3b somewhat correspond to the second research question. When communication patterns of Blacks and Whites in the racially heterogeneous group were examined in question 3b, we found that Whites again exhibited more head nods, engaged in more adaptors, and laughed/smiled more than Blacks. Blacks interrupted more than Whites and talked for a longer period of time than Whites. As in research question 2, Whites displayed more adaptors, an indicator of anxiety or discomfort, and talked less, an indicator of less verbal involvement. These results are consistent with those reported in a study by Gudykunst (1983), where respondents indicated that they prefer to talk less during intercultural initial encounters than in intracultural initial encounters. Whites did, however, engage in more head nodding than Blacks, which on one hand may be taken as a sign of nonverbal involvement and support but may also be associated with a lower degree of comfort when communicating in these contexts. The overall pattern of behavior change by Whites when moving from racially homogeneous to racially heterogeneous groups does not correspond with the findings of Gudykunst. In that study, White respondents indicated that they perceived there would be no difference in their display of nonverbal activity in initial intercultural and intracultural encounters. In the present study, some nonverbal activity change did occur.

The level of communication apprehension was not assessed in the video/group portion of this study; however, anxiety might have played a part in the display of behavior (or lack thereof) when comparing racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. Specifically, White males displayed more adaptors than Black males in racially homogeneous groups.

Communication apprehension was assessed in a separate sample composed of Black, White and Other-race males. Results showed that these groups differed on CA overall and on CA in each of four contexts: public speaking, meeting, group, and dyadic. Interestingly, Blacks and Whites differed significantly from each other only on CA in the dyadic context. It appears, based on these results, that anxiety
plays a part in the communication of Blacks and Whites when they are in what we might label as the most intimate context: one-on-one. In larger contexts (i.e., groups, meeting and public), anxiety may not play as great a role, or at least Black and White males do not differ significantly in their levels of CA in those contexts. It is important to note that the group of males tested had generally lower CA levels than we would expect to find in the general population. The mean CA score for all racial groups was 52.65, $SD = 105.18$, indicating that, on average, individuals within the groups have extremely low CA. Further, the maximum overall CA score of any one group was 69, an indication of moderate communication apprehension.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the main contributions this study makes to the literature besides descriptions of overall nonverbal communication patterns of Black and White males is the lack of statistical significance on most behaviors compared. The implication for these findings is significant in and of itself in that they challenge us to raise the following questions: Have Blacks and Whites converged to the point where significant communication differences no longer exist? Are the styles of Blacks and Whites that were described by researchers such as Kochman no longer relevant, at least when it comes to those who have achieved a certain level of formal education? Have we closed the book on the arguments we've raised for decades regarding not being able to understand or relate to one another because we come from different worlds with different communication styles, patterns, and perspectives? Given that the only behavior tested in part one of this study on which Black and White males did show significant difference was the display of adaptors, it might follow that over time both Blacks and Whites have adapted and converged their communication to the point where they are no longer “strangers” to each other’s styles and nuances. The lack of significant differences found between the groups might also be accounted for by group members’ perceived equality. The participants in the video/group portion of the study were all college students of about the same age who were either sophomores or juniors; thus, the “status” and education level among the members in both the racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups were equal. These two characteristics, plus the fact that they were all of the same sex, might have created a perception of homophily and lower uncertainty even in racially heterogeneous groups. This explanation corresponds to the results of a study by Lee and Gudykunst (2001), which found that “…the lower the uncertainty individuals have when interacting with members of different ethnic groups, the more attracted they would be to members of those groups” (p. 383). The greater implication is that we may be able to get beyond these differences and focus on the development of better and stronger relationships with each other, focusing less on how we are communicating and more on what we are communicating.

There are limitations to this study. First, the power was low, which may have contributed to most of the relationships not being detected in both parts of the study. We suggest that more groups be observed in order to increase power and better ascertain clear and more consistent communication patterns. Second, given the out-

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comes of this study, specifically in the display of adaptors and CA, it would be helpful to assess participants’ communication apprehension in both the racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups by assessing apprehension and anxiety about communicating with different racial and cultural groups. Although the present study tested anxiety in two ways: by coding the number of adaptors displayed in racially homogeneous and heterogeneous groups and by administering a version of the PRCA, the statistical power was low, and communication apprehension of the group members in the video/group portion of the study was not tested. Assessing CA prior to and after each meeting could strengthen the empirical foundation of this study.

NOTE

1. Group participants were paid $10 each in part one of this study.

REFERENCES


