

**Adrian Holliday**  
**[*Understanding Intercultural Communication. Negotiating a Grammar of Culture*]**  
**Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Second Edition, 2019.**

Friend or foe? Issues of intercultural communication appear to be heavily in demand in academia and/or education (i.e. college courses), and of course the field itself reflects on a variety of societal changes (globalization, migration, changing business practices, to name just a few).

In order to successfully navigate the demands and needs of changing interpersonal communication and organizational communication, and to successfully apply the findings of intercultural communication research in everyday use, one is always in search of new approaches, theories and outlooks that might be helpful and profitable in the intercultural communication classroom and beyond.

Teachers and academics in the field of intercultural communication are always on the hunt for new, refreshing, and up-to-date sources and information (including texts) to be incorporated into the classroom curriculum. Therefore, a new book on the topic is always welcome.

The author, Adrian Holliday, is a professor of applied linguistics and intercultural education at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. He is an experienced academic and an author on topics that intersect at the crossroads of linguistics (English as a second/international language), cultural studies (intercultural communication) and research methodology.

The book contains nine chapters covering a total 181 pages. A slightly unusual and nontraditional concept involves establishing and presenting the list of figures, references, and acknowledgments at the beginning of the book. Then, the text follows with the presentation of the grammar of culture, cultural practices, investigating and constructing culture, the dialogue with structure, narratives of nation and history, discourses of culture, prejudice, cultural travel, and innovation, and the often-controversial notion of multiculturalism.

The length of the text is on the shorter side and the book's scope is relatively narrow; however, this is not something that should cause us to be dismissive of the whole work. The structure and the internal organization of the writing is very methodical, coherent and cohesive, which makes it ideal for quick reference and/or short assignments within a class.

The clear (and clearly structured) text is certainly a benefit for purposes of individual reading and preparation, accompanied with a plethora of examples (i.e. dialogues, interviews and their possible interpretations from different angles and contexts). The texts are firmly embedded in dichotomies and dualities (i.e. contradictory interpretations of situations and events). A larger part is devoted to stereotypes, self-stereotypes, and prejudice. Information is frequently presented in the form of charts and tables. One might even read this text as a guide on how to navigate a different culture (and how to explain that to students).

The potential weakness of the text does not lie predominantly in the content, but in its structure. It is a relatively short

text (more of a reference book, a supplementary text, rather than an actual textbook itself). It takes one prevailing and significant approach to culture and intercultural studies, and that is through the linguistic lens only (i.e. does linguistics dominate in an intercultural communication classroom?). Also, the list of references clearly suggests taking only the linguistic approach to issues of intercultural communication; there is no reference to cultural values, cultural dimensions, and cultural competencies related to cultural values (such as time, distance, power – as known from theories of G. Hofstede and F. Trompenaars, for example).

The ideal target audience might consist of various individuals and groups, such as academics and/or university/college teachers seeking a reference book for courses in intercultural communication. Also, it might be helpful for teaching foreign languages (i.e. Czech as a second/foreign language) to appropriately relate to the issues a student might be dealing with – for example, it might be helpful when seeking answers to questions such as how polite is polite (sociolinguistic issues within cultures).

It is also suitable as a supplementary text for assigning course readings (the classes might fluctuate from intercultural communication to research methods – how to conduct ethnographic research, qualitative and quantitative methods).

It is not a “traditional” textbook in the sense of explanatory theoretical frameworks and chapters, examples, exercises or discussions. However, it is suitable for additional discussions.

The book is a relatively subtle text that might be easily overlooked in the sea

of more “attention-seeking” (i.e. more aggressively marketed) texts; however, this should not stop one from reading it.

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