Exercise 01

Multilingual realities arise in a number of ways.

Immigrants, whether settlers or invaders, bring languages into contact and sometimes, as with imperialist and colonial expansion, it is unnecessary for many people to physically move; their language may make its presence felt through military, religious, or economic force requiring relatively small numbers of soldiers, merchants, bureaucrats, and missionaries.

Some cultures have had more explicit policies here than have others, but all imperial powers have, directly or indirectly, made their languages attractive and sometimes necessary to conquered or colonized groups.

The languages of expansionist regimes often become intertwined with pragmatic advantage and cultural prestige at a local level, and these factors often long outlie the original dominating influence: the continued adherence to European varieties which exists in former colonial areas is an example here.

Exercise 02

A graduate student in history has a paper to write on the French Revolution.

Her grandfather is a professor of history, and when he did his Ph.D., it was a lot of work to pull together even ten citations for a midterm paper.

For the student, every paper and book she has ever read on the French Revolution is instantly available in her e-memory.

Besides the main text and four papers she is using in class, she pulls up another twenty-three references that she has encountered over the years.

She is able to refresh her memory on a few points and use several quotes from the old papers.

What would have taken her grandfather a full day at the library takes her just an hour.

Not only is her paper stronger, but her memory of the subject has been reinforced, and her big-picture understanding is broader.

Exercise 03

There is no question that a large amount of communication among humans is intentional, but much unintentional signaling takes place as well.

For example, in many cultures, someone giving a friendly greeting to another person raises his or her eyebrows for a moment.

This facial gesture is called “eyebrow flashing.”

Unless we make a conscious effort to think about it, we are not aware of having performed an eyebrow flash.

Even the receiver may not be aware of having seen the eyebrow flash despite the fact that it is a very important aspect of the greeting and alters the receiver’s interpretation of the words spoken at the time.

As Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt has demonstrated, greetings made without the eyebrow flash are interpreted as less friendly even when the spoken words are identical.

People in some cultures do not eyebrow flash, and this can create unintentional difficulties in intercultural communication.

There are many other examples of what is called nonverbal communication in humans, most of which are both signaled and received intentionally.

Exercise 04

Humanity’s shared evolutionary history means that all human bodies are alike, and so too are all human minds; Dylan Evans calls this the psychological unity of humankind.

Not only are the sic basic emotions universal, they are also instinctual and innate biological responses over which we have little conscious control.

This means that we are hard-wired to respond to certain stimuli in certain ways.

Our brains automatically appraise our experiences as they occur and create emotional responses to correspond with that unconscious appraisal.

This means that these emotional responses occur without us having thought about them.

Paul Ekman talks about autoappraisers, the automatic appraisal mechanisms which occur unconsciously in response to visual, auditory and sensory triggers, and create the physiological responses we call emotions.

Basically this means that when confronted by something which we find threatening, humans unconsciously respond in particular physical and emotional ways.

The sensations we experience as anger are the physiological preparations the body makes in order to protect itself.

Exercise 05

At any given time, the experts in a society determine the nature of current understanding.

One who understood physics in Aristotle’s time applied a different body of principles in a different way from one who understood physics in a Newtonian age, and the breakthroughs associated with relativity theory and quantum mechanics have brought about further alterations in the contemporary understanding of the physical world.

Understanding about the world of people does not evolve in so dramatic a fashion; Sophocles is far closer to Shakespeare than Aristotle is to Galileo.

Yet just as the wise elder possesses deeper insights into human nature than does the bright youngster, knowledge obtained from social and cultural studies has altered our notions of human individual and of human society.

For example, in light of psychoanalytic discoveries, a developed understanding of human behavior involves recognition of unconscious motivation.

Exercise 06

Although the prevalent emotional tone of infant-directed talk is warm and affectionate, parents of older infants vary it to convey important information.

For example, a mother’s “No” uttered with sharply falling intonation tells the baby that the mother disapproves of something, whereas a cooed “Yeesss” indicates approval.

The same intonational qualities are used by mothers to signal approval and disapproval across languages, from English to Italian to Japanese.

That infants use the intonation of their mothers’ messages to interpret meaning was clearly established by Anne Fernald in a series of clever experiments.

In one, 8-month-old infants were presented with an attractive toy, and their mothers either said “Yes, good boy” or “No, don’t touch.”

Half the statements of each type were said in a cooing, encouraging tone of voice and half were said in a sharp, prohibitive tone.

The infants played with the toy more then their mother’s tone of voice was encouraging, regardless of what she actually said.

Exercise 07

What employees want is to be stretched beyond their day-to-day tasks.

No matter how inexperienced people are, they need to be challenged to grow.

Finding small ways to test their skills and expand their experiences helps people grow.

In some companies there are slack-time lists that allow people to take on different tasks outside their everyday work when things are slow or they’re waiting for direction.

These tasks are important but not urgent.

It might be to build on a collection of data or research work, all things that you’d love to accomplish if only you had the time.

This way you can keep your staff productive when there are lulls in the schedule.

Anybody can add to the slack-time list; it simply needs to be approved by someone in authority to make sure the tasks are worth performing.

Exercise 08

Our love affair with shopping began in ancient Rome, the city that became ‘the centre of the world’s commerce’.

More than one million people lived in Rome by the third century AD.

In order to feed this unprecedented population vast warehouses and markets were needed, such as the fruit and vegetable market at the Forum Holitorium and the cattle market at Forum Boarium.

But the Romans were not satisfied with food alone.

The specialist shops whose window displays catch our eye on Main Street of in the mall made their first appearance in Rome, where there were shops for books, for precious stones and furniture.

Rome even had the first supermarkets (known as horrea).

Many Romans lived in tabernae, consisting of one of two rooms which opened directly on the street and which, as well as homes, doubled as shops or work rooms.

Indeed, look around the alleys and squares of old Rome today and you will see that there are still many shops that open on to the street often without glazing or doors, and which are sealed at night using shutters.