Annotated Bibliography

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COM 212: Interpersonal communication

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Walther, J. B., & Tidwell, L. C. (1995). Nonverbal cues in computer-mediated communication, and the effect of chronemics on relational communication. *Journal of Organizational Computing*, *5*(4), 355–378. https://doi.org/10.1080/10919399509540258

This is a landmark study from 1995 that establishes that chronemics matters in Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). Previously, it was assumed that CMC was devoid of any nonverbal cues, the "cues-filtered-out" view. This is one of the first studies to notice that there are nonverbal, chronemic cues in CMC. It finds that altering time and date stamps changes the way external observers see the communication. Walther and Tidwell (1995) validates two hypotheses and has complex results for others. First, it proves (their H2) that a social message sent at night signals less dominance than a social message sent during the day and that a task message sent at night is more dominant than a task message sent during the day. This suggests that even in cmc, "different parts of the day correspond to different activity contexts, and formal 'business hours' versus informal 'after hours' carry different expectations [30]" (Walther & Tidwell, 1995, p. 361). Second, it proves (their H3) that a slow reply to a social message indicates greater affection than a fast reply, but a slow reply to a task message indicates less affection than a fast reply (Walther & Tidwell, 1995, p. 370). Not all of their results yielded simple results.

They had two other hypotheses, which weren't simply proven or disproven, but had complex interactions. The first, their H1, expects that a nighttime social message would be more affectionate than a daytime social message, and that a daytime task message would be more affectionate than a nighttime task message. The task message is indeed recieved as more affectionate or positive when sent in daytime (Walther & Tidwell, 1995, p. 368), but the social message's perception is interfered with by the reply speed. The researchers didn't expect the reply to affect perception of the first message sent, but when someone replied

quickly to a social message sent at night, the first social message (not the reply) is seen as less affectionate. The second complex finding (on their H4) is that a faster response suggest a more equal footing between participants, rather than suggesting that the replier is less dominant than the sender (Walther & Tidwell, 1995, p. 371).

Kalman, Y. M., & Rafaeli, S. (2011). Online Pauses and Silence: Chronemic Expectancy Violations in Written Computer-Mediated Communication. *Communication Research*, *38*(1), 54–69. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650210378229

Kalman and Rafaeli (2011) cites Walther and Tidwell (1995) and describes cmc message latency in terms of expectation violation theory. Kalman and Rafaeli (2011) set up an experiment where managers ranked job applicants based on "vignettes" (p. 1) which included chronemic information. Kalman and Rafaeli (2011) found a complex interaction. For low valued applicants, the latency of the message did not change much about the managers' assessment of them, but for high valued applicants, a high latency was percieved negatively and changed the managers' appraisal of their application.

That lines up with Walther's claims that task focused messages with high latencies were perceived negatively. This study also discusses that cues-filtered-out theory doesn't account for this effect, as Walther and Tidwell (1995) explains.

If there's anything problematic about this study, it is probably that it isn't very ambitious. Kalman and Rafaeli (2011) had hypotheses:

> Hypothesis 1: An e-mail response latency of 1 day will be more expected and will lead to more positive evaluations of the responder than the longer response latency of 2 weeks or no response at all.
>
> Hypothesis 2: The effect of e-mail response latency on perceptions of the responder will be moderated by candidate reward valence. (p. 59)

These aren't exactly exciting, but this is the kind of groundwork that's needed to get the exciting results of Kalman et al. (2013) below.

Kalman, Y. M., Scissors, L. E., Gill, A. J., & Gergle, D. (2013). Online chronemics convey social information. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *29*(3), 1260–1269. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.036

This study evaluates a measure called interpost pause. It builds on the findings of Kalman and Rafaeli (2011) and SIP theory by using chronemics as nonverbal cues that participants use in place of normal face to face cues. Kalman et al. (2013) found that people who were more extraverted "exhibited shorter interpost pauses," and that pairs who trusted each other less had longer interpost pauses (p. 16). Interestingly, the correlation with trust was stronger than the correlation with extraversion.

Unfortunately, it's hard to know why these two results exist. For trust, Kalman et al. (2013) suggests it may come down to the assumption that lying is harder than telling the truth (and therefore should take longer), but it may also be that people just prefer their conversation partner to respond quickly and the dislike of slow responses bleeds into their trust for the person. For extraversion, Kalman et al. (2013) suggests this is mostly because extraverted people talk more and with less hesitation than intraverted people. Essentially, the same thing happens in face to face communication because that's just the way people are.

References

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