



# Understanding Mexicans and Americans: Cultural Perspectives in Conflict (Cognition and Language: A Series in Psycholinguistics)

*Rogelio Diaz-Guerrero, Lorand B. Szalay*

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The Communication Lexicon is a new concept; it is a new source of information in the field of language and area studies. Its focus is on people's way of thinking, their frame of reference, their characteristic outlook on life. Compared to the more traditional area studies, our main focus is not on history or religion or geography, not on tangible material realities of existence in a particular country, but rather on people's shared subjective views of those realities which are dominant in their minds. The focus of the analysis is essentially psychological; it is centered on perceptions and motivations which influence people's choices and behavior. Compared to individual psychology, the information represented by this volume is psycho-cultural in that it is centered on the shared perceptions and motivations which people with the same language, backgrounds, and experiences develop together into a shared cultural view or subjective representation of their universe. The attention psycho-cultural factors are receiving these days follows from the growing realization that their influences are powerful and yet they occur without people's awareness. Based on extensive empirical data produced through an analytic technique of in-depth assessment, the Communication Lexicon presents the culturally characteristic system of meanings which members of a particular cultural community develop in construing their world. At the level of specifics the lexicon describes how selected themes such as family, society, work, and entertainment are perceived and understood by members of three cultures: Mexicans, Colombians, and U.S.

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