

Research article

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Anxiety and Uncertainty in Intercultural Communication: An Experimental Study

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Abstract

Introduction. This article presents the results of an experimental study of the contribution of anxiety and uncertainty to intercultural interaction, considered in the context of W. Gudykunst's anxiety/uncertainty management theory. Despite the correlation studies confirming its basic provisions, only the prerequisites for the desire to interact with representatives of a different culture, which is one of the characteristics of effective intercultural interaction, have been experimentally studied. To date there is no empirical support for the perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication, which is a more representative criterion of the effectiveness of intercultural communication in the anxiety/uncertainty management theory. The experiment was aimed both at testing the hypothesis about the existence of a direct effect of situations of uncertainty and anxiety on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction, and at studying the mediation of this influence by the perceived predictability of intercultural communication and perceived intergroup anxiety.

Methods. The study used an experimental design of 2 (uncertainty manipulation) × 2 (anxiety manipulation). The dependent variables were the perceived predictability of intercultural communication, intergroup anxiety, and the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction in prospective communication with a Colombian partner. In total, 92 participants took part in the experiment, aged 18 to 44 years, 78 % of whom were women. The experiment took place online, on the ZOOM video conferencing platform. **Results.** Hypothesis testing was performed using mediation analysis based on regression. The parallelism of the effects of the situation of uncertainty and anxiety on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication has been experimentally demonstrated. These effects are indirect and mediated by perceived predictability and perceived intergroup anxiety. **Discussion.** The results of the study are consistent with the data obtained earlier in the study of W. Gudykunst's anxiety/uncertainty management theory and are its first experimental confirmation. Moreover, we found that anxiety and uncertainty are different ways to ensure the effectiveness of intercultural communication.

Keywords

anxiety, uncertainty, predictability, intercultural interaction, perceived effectiveness, self-efficacy, experiment, mediation analysis, regressions, intercultural communication

Highlights

- ▶ We found an indirect effect of the situation of uncertainty on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication by reducing the perceived predictability of intercultural communication.
- ▶ We found an indirect effect of the anxiety situation on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication by reducing the perceived intergroup anxiety.
- ▶ The direct influence of a situation of uncertainty and anxiety on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication has not been confirmed.

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Introduction

This article investigates the contribution of anxiety and uncertainty to intercultural interaction. This issue is considered in the context of the theory of anxiety/uncertainty management developed by W. Gudykunst (Gudykunst, 1998; Gudykunst & Shapiro, 1996).

The anxiety/uncertainty management theory (hereinafter AUMT) states that in a situation of communication between people of different cultures, their interaction is filled with uncertainty. In intercultural communication, it is more difficult to predict behavior of another person. Consequently, increasing the predictability of the communication partner's behavior and reducing uncertainty represent a key need for intercultural interaction.

Uncertainty is one of the sides of intercultural communication. Another one is anxiety, which may be interpreted as an emotional response to uncertainty. Both of these phenomena interfere with effective intercultural communication, both in the short and long term, for example, worsen adaptation abroad (Hsu & Chen, 2021). Anxiety also negatively affects the acquisition of intercultural competence by foreign students (Cao & Meng, 2020); in the perspective of linguistic communication, it forms the so-called "linguistic anxiety vicious circle" (Lou & Noels, 2020) that critically reduces the ability of a foreign student to develop linguistic skills. Unlike the theory of intergroup anxiety, in the AUMT it is not a consequence of successful interaction, but a determinant that determines the quality of intercultural communication (Stephan, Stephan, & Gudykunst, 1999).

Despite the presence of correlation studies confirming the basic provisions of the AUMT (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001; Gudykunst & Shapiro, 1996; Hubbert, Gudykunst, & Guerrero, 1999; Nadeem & Koschmann, 2021; Neuliep, 2012; Presbitero & Attar, 2018), there is a lack of experimental evidence regarding its causal connections. In the 2010s a series of experiments was carried out showing the contribution of anxiety and uncertainty to the desire to interact with people of a different culture. It has been shown that people experiencing anxiety are less likely to interact with an unpredictable partner in a different culture than with someone they perceive to be easily predictable (Samochowiec & Florack, 2010). It has been shown that the predictability of the host family increases the involvement in communication with its representatives (Rohmann, Florack, Samochowiec, & Simonett, 2014). It was found that situations that provoke anxiety and uncertainty in a person interacting with a healthcare professional of a different culture lead to a decrease in the desire to communicate with him/her (Logan, Steel, & Hunt, 2016). At the same time, in a study of students studying abroad, similar in design, only the effect of an

anxiety provoking situation on the desire to communicate with a foreign cultural partner was found (Logan, Steel, & Hunt, 2015). A decrease in the desire to interact with a representative of a different culture in these studies is considered as a result of managing anxiety and uncertainty in intercultural communication. A person avoids communication with a foreign cultural partner in order to reduce the level of anxiety and uncertainty in communication (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001).

However, the desire to interact with a representative of another culture is only one of the characteristics of effective intercultural interaction. The perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication is another characteristic, which is more presented in anxiety/uncertainty management theory. It is not possible to directly assess the effectiveness of communication by measuring the degree of achievement of mutually shared meanings (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2011). Therefore, within the AUMT researchers mainly measure of the perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication. In a study of the adaptation of foreign students in Russia (Gritsenko et al., 2021), the authors found that the desire to interact with Russian students is only associated with the psychological adaptation of foreigners; the perceived effectiveness of communication is associated with psychological and sociocultural adaptations, as well as with the experience of cultural shock. We may say that the perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication is most likely a more important parameter for predicting the effectiveness of intercultural communication than the desire to interact with a foreign cultural partner.

The perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication may be considered in the context of Bandura's social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1978) as context-specific self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's belief in his/her own ability to perform the required tasks. Respectively, in relation to certain types of tasks, we can speak of specific self-efficacy. Modern studies use the term '*self-efficacy in intercultural communication*' (Kabir & Sponseller, 2020; Peterson, Milstein, Chen, & Nakazawa, 2011) or '*intercultural effectiveness*' (Zimmermann, Greischel, & Jonkmann, 2021). According to Peterson et al. (2011) a person with a high degree of self-efficacy in intercultural communication functions more efficiently and confidently in various situations. It is important that self-efficacy largely determines the quality of interaction not only in direct but also in indirect intergroup contact, that is, acts as the observer's self-efficacy (Mazziotta, Mummendey, & Wright, 2011). In the context of this approach, the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction is an extremely important parameter that influences the real effectiveness of communication.

Thus, the effect of uncertainty and anxiety on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication is theoretically justified but not proven in an experimental study, which would establish cause-effect relationships. In this regard, we formulated the following research hypotheses: *Hypothesis 1*: In the situation of intercultural communication, there is a direct experimental effect of uncertainty (hypothesis 1a) and anxiety (hypothesis 1b) on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction. *Hypothesis 2*: In the situation of intercultural communication, the experimental effect of uncertainty on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction will be mediated by the perceived predictability of intercultural communication. *Hypothesis 3*: In the situation of intercultural communication, the experimental effect of anxiety on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction will be mediated by the perceived intergroup anxiety.

Methods

Sample and study design

The study used an experimental design of 2 (uncertainty manipulation) × 2 (anxiety manipulation). The dependent variables were the perceived predictability of intercultural communication, intergroup anxiety, and the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction in prospective communication with a Colombian partner (Ramona or Dominic). To control the emotional state, we used the Scales of Positive Affect and Negative Affect (Osin, 2012). The Beck Anxiety Scale (Tarabrina, 2001) was used to evenly distribute low and high anxiety participants across all four experimental groups.

In total, 92 participants (78 % women, 22 % men, aged 18 to 44 years) took part in the experiment, 75 % of whom had higher education, 7.6 % – vocational secondary education, and 17.4 % – general secondary education; 74 % of whom considered themselves to be Russians, 17 % – Buryats, and the other ones – of other nationalities. Most of the respondents (65 %) did not undergo training related to the development of intercultural competence, raising awareness about other cultures. However, 74 % of them lived abroad for more than 1 month, 20 % had frequent, and 46 % had very little experience of communicating with partners from abroad.

Measurement techniques

Perceived intergroup anxiety was assessed using a 10-item scale developed from the Intergroup Anxiety Scale by Stephan & Stephan (1985). We formulated the main question, "How do you think, what feelings will you experience while communicating with Ramona/Dominic?" Answering it, the respondents were asked to rate each of 6 statements (for example, "I will be upset" and "I will be anxious") on a 7-point scale from 1 – "Strongly disagree" to 7 – "Strongly agree".

The perceived predictability of intercultural communication was measured using the scale proposed by W. Gudykunst and T. Nishida (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001) to assess the experience of uncertainty in the situation of intercultural communication. A high level of predictability means a low level of uncertainty and vice versa. The Scale consisted of 4 statements (e.g., "How do you think you can understand Ramona/Dominic?" and "To what extent do you think you can predict Ramona/Dominic's behavior in different situations?"). The respondents were asked to give an answer using a 10-point scale, where 1 refers to "I can't at all", and 10 – "I certainly can".

The perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction was measured using the scale proposed by Gudykunst & Nishida (2001) for self-assessment of the effectiveness of intended communication with a partner from Colombia. The methodology consisted of 4 statements. Examples: "I think that my communication with Ramona/Dominic will not be very successful" and "Even in a situation of misunderstanding with Ramona/Dominic, I can think of something". The respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the statements on a 7-point scale from 1 – "Strongly disagree" to 7 – "Strongly agree".

The Scales of Positive Affect and Negative Affect (SPANAS) questionnaire was developed by E. N. Osin (Osin, 2012) based on the English-language PANAS method and diagnoses a wide range of positive and negative emotional states. It consists of a list of 20 adjectives that describe various feelings and emotions. The respondent was asked to read each adjective and mark next to it to what extent he/she felt herself/himself (e.g., enthusiastic, afraid, confident, restless) using a scale from 1 – "almost or not at all" to 5 – "very much".

In addition to standard socio-demographic measurements (gender, age, education, and nationality), we used the following three questions to control the experience of intercultural

interaction: (i) *Have you received training related to the development of intercultural competence, raising awareness of other cultures?* (ii) *Have you lived ever abroad (longer than 1 month)?* (iii) *Do you have experience of communicating with partners from abroad?*

Research procedure

Prospective participants in the experiment received an email invitation to take part in an international research project to study intercultural communication. The experiment itself was based on the principle of fictitious feedback about an imaginary partner in intercultural communication (Logan et al., 2015). Uncertainty and anxiety manipulations were drawn from previous experiments (Logan et al., 2015, 2016; Rohmann et al., 2014; Samochowiec & Florack, 2010).

The participants were informed that within the framework of the project they would be offered to interact remotely with their peers from Colombia (with a good command of Russian). Participants would need to discuss a number of issues together (a list will be provided) and solve a number of communication problems. However, before the online meeting with a partner from Colombia, participants would be asked to fill out several questionnaires. Then, using the online survey service in electronic form, all the participants filled out a preliminary block of methods, which included sociodemographic variables and the Beck Anxiety Scale. After processing the results, participants with low and high levels of anxiety were evenly distributed across all four treatment groups.

Then we invited each participant of the experiment to an online meeting with a partner from Colombia, which had to take place online on the ZOOM video conferencing platform. At the beginning, the experimenter reported, *“Based on a preliminary survey, a partner from Colombia was selected for you. This is Ramona/Dominic, the same age as you. In half an hour you will have the opportunity to meet her/him online. And now, let us prepare for intercultural communication.”*

Then the first stage of the experiment began (the manipulation of the uncertainty of intercultural communication). The experimenter reported, *“From the link that I will send you in the chat, you will see ten situations describing Ramona/Dominic. In terms of the situation, you should guess how, in your opinion, Ramon/Dominic may behave in this situation. On the other side of the situation, you should guess what kind of behavior Ramon/Dominic may expect from you. Immediately after filling out, the system will automatically calculate the results and I will tell you the number of correct answers”*.

Appendix 1 provides an example of a situation describing the behavior of Ramona/Dominic. We asked each participant to choose one of the answer options – to predict the behavior and behavioral expectations of a partner from Colombia. Then, on the basis of preliminary distribution in the experimental group, he/she was presented with the fictitious results of their answers. Under the condition of high uncertainty, we told the participant that he/she gave the correct answer only in 2 situations out of 10. Under the condition of low uncertainty, we told the participant that he/she gave the correct answer in 8 situations out of 10. Moreover, in each case we told the participant that his/her result corresponded to the mean results for all the participants in the experiment.

After the experimental exposure using the online survey service, the participant electronically completed the first block of T1 methods – the perceived predictability of intercultural communication, intergroup anxiety, the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction in the alleged communication with a partner from Colombia, and the Scales of Positive Affect and Negative Affect.

Then the second stage of the experiment began (the manipulation of anxiety in intercultural interaction). The experimenter said, *“Before communicating with Ramona/Dominic, I would like to give you the opportunity to get acquainted with information about her/him. I will introduce you to quotes from the feedback questionnaires of other participants in the experiment. They have already spoken with Ramona/Dominic”*. The experimenter then posted fictitious information about a partner from Colombia in the chat, allegedly based on feedback from previous participants (Appendix 2). In a low-anxiety condition, the participant received a description of the Colombian partner as a positive and accommodating peer. In conditions of high anxiety, Dominic/Ramona appeared to be negative and intractable characters. After the experimental exposure using the online survey service, the participant electronically filled out the second block of T2 methods, which completely repeated the block of T1 methods.

Finally, the experimenter spoke about the true purpose of the study and gave an emotional debriefing. As compensation, the participants were offered to attend the MSPPU ethnoclub and have a meeting with a real student from Colombia.

Results

The psychometric characteristics of the methods are presented in Table 1. The Cronbach coefficient speaks in favor of the sufficient reliability of all scales.

Hypothesis testing was carried out using mediation analysis based on regressions using the PROCESS macro add-in (Hayes, 2018) to the IBM SPSS 21.0 program. All the obtained data were previously standardized in accordance with the recommendations of A. Hayes (2018). When testing the models, the controlled variables were gender, age, education, ethnicity, positive affect, negative affect, participation in training related to the development of intercultural competence, experience of living abroad, and experience of communicating with partners from abroad. The experimental conditions were coded into a dummy variable format, where 1 was high anxiety/uncertainty and 0 was low anxiety/uncertainty.

The first hypothesis of the study was not confirmed. Direct effects of situations of uncertainty ($\beta = -0.10$ (95 % CI [-0.38; 0.18]); SE = 0.14; $p = 0.49$) and anxiety ($\beta = -0.10$ (95 % CI [-0.13; 0.34]); SE = 0.12; $p = 0.40$) on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction were not reliable.

The analysis confirmed hypothesis 2. In a situation of uncertainty, the perceived predictability of intercultural communication is significantly reduced ($\beta = -1.27$ (95 % CI [-1.78; -0.75]); SE = 0.26; $p \leq 0.001$), which, in its turn, is a significant predictor of perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction ($\beta = 0.15$ (95 % CI [0.05; 0.26]); SE = 0.05; $p \leq 0.01$). To test the significance of the indirect relationship, we used the bootstrap function and calculated 95 % confidence intervals based on 10,000 bootstrapped resamples. Since 0 does not fall within the confidence interval, we can conclude that in the situation of intercultural communication the indirect effect of uncertainty on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction through the perceived predictability of intercultural communication is significant: $\beta = -0.19$ (95 % CI [-0.38; -0.04]); SE = 0.09.

The analysis also confirmed hypothesis 3. In a situation of anxious feedback, the perceived intergroup anxiety increases significantly ($\beta = 0.43$ (95 % CI [0.10; 0.76]); SE = 0.17; $p \leq 0.05$), which in its turn acts as a significant predictor of the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction ($\beta = -0.35$ (95 % CI [-0.51; -0.20]); SE = 0.08; $p \leq 0.001$). As with hypothesis 2, we used the bootstrap function. Since 0 does not fall within the confidence interval, we can conclude that the indirect effect of the anxious situation of intercultural communication on the perceived

effectiveness of intercultural interaction through perceived intergroup anxiety is significant: $\beta = -0.15$ (95 % CI [-0.31; -0.02]); SE = 0.07.

At both stages of the experiment, the positive affect ($p \leq 0.001$) was a positive significant predictor of the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction; negative affect was a significant predictor of the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction at the first stage T1 (negative association, $p \leq 0.05$).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and correlations among study indicators

| | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>α</u> <u>Cronbach</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>8</u> | <u>9</u> |
|---|----------|-----------|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. Intergroup anxiety T1 | 2,75 | 0,85 | 0,79 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Perceived predictability of intercultural communication T1 | 6,53 | 1,40 | 0,80 | -0,23** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 3. Perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction T1 | 4,23 | 0,71 | 0,71 | -0,45** | 0,48** | 1 | | | | | | |
| 4. Positive affect scale T1 | 3,35 | 0,63 | 0,81 | -0,30** | 0,40** | 0,47** | 1 | | | | | |
| 5. Negative affect scale T1 | 1,22 | 0,38 | 0,70 | 0,32** | -0,20 | -0,36** | -0,35** | 1 | | | | |
| 6. Intergroup anxiety T2 | 2,69 | 0,95 | 0,85 | 0,59** | -0,27** | -0,39** | -0,34** | 0,26* | 1 | | | |
| 7. Perceived predictability of intercultural communication T2 | 6,32 | 1,71 | 0,91 | -0,17 | 0,70** | 0,26* | 0,30** | -0,23* | -0,46** | 1 | | |

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and correlations among study indicators

| | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>α</u> <u>Cronbach</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>8</u> | <u>9</u> |
|---|----------|-----------|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 8. Perceived predictability of intercultural interaction T2 | 4,23 | 0,73 | 0,69 | -0,42** | 0,36** | 0,52** | 0,45** | -0,26** | -0,65** | 0,56** | 1 | |
| 9. Positive affect scale T2 | 3,38 | 0,72 | 0,87 | -0,22** | 0,40** | 0,42** | 0,88** | -0,37** | -0,44** | 0,47** | 0,56** | 1 |
| 10. Negative affect scale T2 | 1,21 | 0,37 | 0,69 | 0,32** | -0,17 | -0,27** | -0,33** | 0,68** | 0,51** | -0,39** | -0,42** | -0,47** |

Notes: T1 – the first stage of the experiment, T2 – the second stage of the experiment; * – correlations are significant at the level of not less than 0.05; ** – correlations are significant at the level of not less than 0.001.

Discussion

The study did not find a direct effect of the situation of uncertainty and anxiety on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction. A series of experiments with similar designs found direct effects of both predictability/uncertainty and anxiety feedback on the desire to interact with a member of another culture (Logan et al., 2016; Rohmann et al., 2014; Samochowiec & Florack, 2010). At the same time, in one study (Logan et al., 2015), only the contribution of uncertainty was confirmed; the effect of anxiety was not statistically significant. The authors explain its absence by the small sample size. Perhaps this explanation is also relevant for the results of our study. However, it is worth considering the specifics of the experimental situation – the experiment presented in this article was conducted online.

Recent studies show that there are no differences in the results of experimental studies conducted online and offline (Finley & Penningroth, 2015; Huber & Gajos, 2020); the quality of experimental data obtained via the Internet is quite adequate (Arechar, Gächter, & Molleman, 2018). On the other hand, an online laboratory experiment is the creation of a certain simulation of reality (as opposed to field experiments (Parigi, Santana, & Cook, 2017)). At the same time, in online reality, the interaction effects will differ from face-to-face communication. Social anxiety is known to be lower in online communication (Yen et al., 2012); non-verbal communication (Hou, 2017) – one of the leading sources of uncertainty in intercultural communication – plays a lesser

role in online interaction (Lieberman & Schroeder, 2020). We may assume that for the participants of the experiment, it seemed easier to communicate online than offline. Therefore, the feedback provoking anxiety and uncertainty about the future intercultural partner did not have a direct impact on the assessment of the effectiveness of communication with him/her.

However, disturbing feedback about a prospective intercultural partner has an extremely strong effect on perceived uncertainty and intergroup anxiety. And through these variables it affects the perceived effectiveness of intercultural interaction, which confirms hypotheses 2 and 3. Therefore, it is the subjective perception of uncertainty and anxiety in a situation of intercultural communication that is key to assessing its effectiveness. According to Bandura's social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1978), self-efficacy determines whether or not coping behavior will be initiated and how persistently a person will resist difficulties and cope with negative experiences. Thus, we may assume that actions that increase the perceived predictability of communication with people of a different culture will be effective, even with their low real predictive effect. Obviously, it is this mechanism that underlies the effectiveness of intercultural training using cultural learning technologies (Black & Mendenhall, 1990).

We should note that the indirect effect of a situation of uncertainty is only discovered through perceived predictability, but not anxiety. Also, the manipulation of the anxiety of the situation affects the effectiveness of communication through perceived intergroup anxiety, but not through perceived predictability. Despite the fact that in W. Gudykunst's model anxiety and uncertainty (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001) are related to each other, they are different ways of ensuring the effectiveness of intercultural communication. This should also be taken into account when preparing for intercultural interaction. Activities that increase the predictability of intercultural communication will not necessarily stimulate a decrease in intergroup anxiety. And anxiety-provoking actions cannot adequately provide an adequate level of predictability.

Conclusion

The parallelism of the effects of the situation of uncertainty and anxiety on the perceived effectiveness of intercultural communication has been experimentally demonstrated. These effects are indirect and mediated by perceived predictability and perceived intergroup anxiety. The results of the study are consistent with the data obtained earlier in the study of W. Gudykunst's anxiety/uncertainty management theory and are its first experimental confirmation. The findings are of direct practical significance and may be used in developing programs for training specialists in intercultural interaction. The main practical conclusion is that the likely effectiveness of such an activity should be evaluated in terms of the extent to which it reduces anxiety and increases the sense of predictability of intercultural communication.

The limitations of the study are as follows: (a) The size of the sample, limited due to the experimental design, makes it impossible to unambiguously judge the persistence of the effects obtained in this study. (b) We measured attitudes towards an imaginary partner in intercultural communication; in a real communicative situation the effects may be different. (c) The composition of the participants in the experiment (2/3 of women) could lead to distortions, despite the statistical control of this variable.

Thus, the prospects for further research are associated with an increase in the sample size and an increase in its representativeness in relation to the general population. Also, future experiments should be based on a real communicative situation of intercultural interaction.

Appendix 1. An example of a situation describing the behavior of Ramona/Dominic (for fictitious feedback, providing manipulation of predictability).

Question 1. Ramona says she cannot solve the problem. You offer her help, but she refuses. Why? Choose one answer.

- A. Her pride does not allow her to accept your offer.
- B. She says no, but she means yes.
- C. She doesn't want to take your time.
- D. You should ask three times until she agrees.

Appendix 2. Experimental conditions of anxiety

Low anxiety. I was not embarrassed and felt quite comfortable. I think I have successfully dealt with the task of interacting with Dominic. Dominic was really positive. Dominic is no different from those with whom I have communicated before. Dominic's values and norms were clear and understandable to me. In my opinion, Dominic is no different from me. Dominic was quite compliant; we agreed on everything.

High anxiety. I was embarrassed and very uncomfortable. I think I did a poor job of dealing with Dominic. Dominic was very negative. I've never spoken to someone like Dominic before. Dominic's values and norms remained completely incomprehensible to me. In my opinion, Dominic is very different from me. Dominic was very intractable; everything went awry, without any agreements.

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