

Theory Summary Form**Theory (1 pt.)**

The theory presented in Chapter 7 is the Expectancy Violations Theory or EVT.

Representative Theorists (1 pt.)

The theorist associated with EVT is Judee Burgoon. EVT contains a sub-theory called Interaction Adaptation Theory, which was developed by Burgoon and two of her students, Lesa Stern and Leesa Dillman.

Key Claims or Propositions of Theory (2 pts.)

Expectancy Violations Theory examines and seeks to explain the responses of humans when their expectations for other's behavior is violated. EVT proposes that all people have a set of expectations for interaction that embodies what they think will actually happen during that interaction. Their expectations are based on where the interaction takes place (context), the relationship held between them and the person they're interacting with, and personal characteristics of the communicator, such as appearance, demographics, personality, etc. For example, your expectations for the behavior of a close friend at a social function vary drastically from your expectations for the behavior of a classmate in the library working on a group project with you. When the behavior expected of a person in a certain situation is violated, we evaluate whether or not this deviance from our expectancy is positive or negative. The violation may be positive, for example, if a cute boy in your class comes a little closer than acceptable social distance to ask you a question not relating to classwork. However, the violation may also be negative, for example, if the know-it-all boy you would rather stay away from violates social distance to ask you to lunch. Your expectancies for the two boys are different, due to your relationship with them and their personal characteristics, even though the context of the classroom is the same. Both boys violate your expectancies in different ways, one positively and one negatively. The positive or negative association made with violations is referred to as *violation valence*. However, in some cases, if you felt that the know-it-all boy could benefit you by helping you with homework in the class, you may look at his violation as less negative, as unethical as that may seem. Violations seem more positive if you feel that you may benefit from the violation, and more negative if you feel the violation could hurt you. This evaluation of violations in terms of how they could positively or negatively impact you in the future is referred to as *communicator reward valence*. EVT also includes a theory within it that describes how people adjust their attitudes following an expectancy violation. This theory is called *Interaction Adaptation Theory*, and examines the stance one starts with towards a situation (called *interaction position*) and how this stance changes following a violation. The initial interaction position is created through a combination of *requirements* (what one needs), *expectations* (what one expects), and *desires* (what one wants). Conclusions can be drawn from how one's interaction position changes following an expectancy violation.

Interesting Application of Theory—can be past or potential future applications. How can theory be used in the “real world?” What are your experiences? (2 pts.)

Expectancy Violations Theory can easily be applied to the real world. In our group presentations one of the first days of class, my group gave many examples of EVT. In the skit Morgan and I performed, we acted like a couple on a date. Morgan played the role of the male, who asked the female (me) to dinner. At the end of our romantic dinner, I expected Morgan to pick up the bill and desired for “him” to ask me on a second date. However, my expectations were violated when Morgan asked the waiter for separate checks. The context of being in a restaurant on a date, and the relationship between Morgan and I of being a dating couple formed my expectancy that “he” would pay for my dinner. My violation valence in this case was negative, as I did not like this breach of expectancy. Interaction Adaptation Theory would analyze my reaction to Morgan asking for separate checks, which was a state of shock and anger. My reaction was more negative than my interaction position, which was positive, so therefore I would be expected to respond with some form of divergent behavior.

Significance of Theory for Communication Research (2 pts.)

I think the biggest significance of EVT for communication research is its progress over time. EVT has changed drastically over the past 30 years, and continues to change. Burgoon unceasingly tested her theory, and made necessary changes when aspects proved unsupported. For communication research, this process shows that theories are not expected to be perfect and should always be regarded as works in progress with room to grow and change. Communication researchers can use EVT to predict and explain how people react when their expectations are violated. This could be helpful in for therapists or employers, to name a few. Research done on employee satisfaction in the workplace, for example, could be conducted with regards to EVT, exploring what an employee expects from the workplace and how they may respond to violations to those expectations.

Critique of Theory—area(s) where theory lacks sufficient development? (2 pts.)

EVT is a theory that has heavily evolved over time, dropping some specific focuses and adding more general claims. However, it is difficult to pin down exactly how everyone will react to breaches in expectations. Everyone is different and responds differently to situations based on their contexts, lived experiences and personalities. While EVT can predict what *may* happen, it can never directly say what will happen perfectly.