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## **МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНАЯ КОММУНИКАЦИЯ КАК ОДИН ИЗ КЛЮЧЕВЫХ АСПЕКТОВ УСПЕШНЫХ ДЕЛОВЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ БУДУЩИХ ЭКОНОМИСТОВ**

Современный мир ставит новые трудные задачи в сфере международных экономических отношений. На сегодняшний день культура является одним из наиболее важных аспектов в понимании различных деловых и экономических ситуаций. Культура отражает различные исторические и традиционные особенности того или иного общества. Она повсюду вокруг нас и влияет на разум и поведение людей по всему миру.

На развитие страны может влиять ее собственная культура. Поэтому правильное понимание природы культуры и ее характеристик является существенным для международных деловых отношений. Эта статья посвящена научной информации о межкультурной коммуникации; в ней приводятся примеры и аргументы, почему эта сфера очень важна для будущих экономистов.

**Ключевые слова:** межкультурная коммуникация, деловой этикет, переговоры, культурные модели, коммуникационные стили, глобализация, межкультурная компетенция.

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## **CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AS ONE OF THE KEY ASPECTS OF SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS OF FUTURE ECONOMISTS**

The modern world offers new challenges for the world economic relations. Nowadays culture is one of the most important aspects in understanding different economic and business environments. Culture reflects various historical and traditional peculiarities of this or that society.

It is everywhere around us and thus it influences the mind and behavior of people all around the world.

The country development can be influenced by its own culture. Therefore, correct understanding the nature of culture and its characteristics is substantial to international business relations. This article deals with scientific information concerning cross cultural communication, examples and arguments why this sphere is very important for future economists.

**Keywords:** cross-cultural communication, business etiquette, negotiations, cultural models, communication styles, globalization, intercultural competence.

Nowadays modern world tends to globalization in any sphere of individuals' life. It goes without saying that global culture implies a multicultural society and always includes localization in the form of responses to global trends. Cross-cultural communication of global and local cultures is manifested in the creation and functioning of mechanisms for the global interaction of cultures. According to Mogilevich, essential trends of global development require understanding the problems of intercultural communication of representatives of different cultures and societies, which integrate all spheres of human communication at the level of individuals, social groups, states and civilizations both within the same culture and in the interaction of different cultures [1, p. 383]. It means that nowadays the global society tends to respect and fully understand different phenomena in communication. Mogilevich points out that the key condition for the success of cross cultural communication in the era of globalization is the cultivation of a tolerant attitude towards other cultures, languages and their carriers [1, p. 386]. Moreover it is literally impossible to succeed in the modern world without analyzing, learning and understanding the mentality of this or that country. Especially it is extremely important to be aware of the state of mind of your foreign partners.

Speaking about future economists for instance, we must point out that teachers of foreign languages at universities should try to educate them in the sphere of cross-cultural communication and give them enough knowledge for their success and well-being at work. Nowadays young people in Russia are eager to work in multinational corporations because they can get a lot of benefits for their self -development and

experience. Accordingly, they will have to communicate and integrate with their colleagues from other countries. Consequently young specialists will have to understand some specific features of representatives of different cultures and be able to cooperate with them successfully. Nowadays it goes without saying that topicality of learning cross-cultural communication at universities is becoming more and more urgent and essential for future economists. Thus this sphere is supposed to be one of the key aspects of successful business relationships.

Many outstanding scholars scrutinized the problem of cross-cultural competence and contributed a lot into the development of intercultural communication as a science. They offered different models for describing and analyzing national business cultures, as well as their own typologies based on certain common cultural criteria. As many experts emphasize, even a good knowledge of a foreign language is not enough for effective communication with its native speakers. Each nation has its own communication traditions, which are expressed in rituals, behavior, gestures, facial expressions, movements, ways of thinking, etc. During a business meeting, representatives of different cultures act in accordance with their cultural norms and national mentality. People's belonging to a certain nation, ethnic group, social group, religious denomination, professional community, etc. generates sociocultural differences that can cause significant difficulties in the process of communication. A teacher's goal is to facilitate students' understanding of all of these aspects and peculiarities. Specialists dealing with the problems of cross cultural communication study the features of the perception of a foreign culture by representatives of different nationalities. Researchers identify six types of reactions to another culture and its representatives:

1. Denial of cultural differences (this type of perception is based on the belief that all people share or must share the same values; they must think and act the same way).

2. Protection of one's own cultural superiority (this perception is based on the recognition of the existence of other cultures, however, there is a strong perception

that the values of a foreign culture threaten the usual order of things, ideological foundations, and the established way of life).

3. Minimization of cultural differences (this type of perception is characterized by the recognition of the possibility of the existence of foreign cultural values, norms of behavior and the search for common unifying features).

4. Acceptance of the existence of intercultural differences (this perception differs by the knowledge of another culture, by its benevolent attitude, but does not imply active penetration into a different environment).

5. Adaptation to a new culture (this type is characterized by a positive attitude to another culture, perception of its norms and values, the ability to live and act according to its rules while preserving its own cultural identity).

6. Integration into both native and new cultures (the type of reaction of a multicultural personality, which perceives foreign cultural norms and values as its own) [2, p. 605-607].

A great contribution to the development of problems of intercultural communication was made by the outstanding British linguist R.D. Lewis.

The author's goal was to show that cultural values cannot be good or bad, logical or irrational. They are different from each nation, and we must learn to perceive them correctly. R.D. Lewis conditionally divides all cultures in the world into three types: monoactive, polyactive and reactive. The scientist calls a culture mono active if the representatives of it prefer to plan their life, schedule, organize activities in a specific sequence, and only do one thing at a time. The typical examples of such a culture are Americans, British, Germans, Swiss, Swedes, etc. They believe that with a so-called line organization of labor, you can act more efficiently and achieve great results.

Sociable people (Italians, Latin Americans, Arabs, etc.) belong to polyactive cultures, and they are used to do many things at the same time, often not finishing them. They plan the order of affairs not according to a schedule, but according to the degree of relative attractiveness, significance of an event at the moment. Polyactive

people don't care much about punctuality. They believe that reality is more important than the routine established by a human being; therefore, they easily reconstruct and often change the sequence of work.

Reactive (listening) cultures attach the highest significance to politeness and respect. Representatives of these cultures are residents of Japan, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Korea, Turkey, Finland - they prefer to listen to the interlocutor silently and quietly, carefully reacting to the proposals of the other party. They are considered to be the best listeners in the world. They organize their activities not according to a strict and unchanged plan, but depending on the circumstances, responding to the changes that are taking place. In practice, they never interrupt their speaker and after listening carefully, do not rush to answer, do not express a definite opinion, try to clarify the speaker's intentions and expectations [3].

Another researcher who contributed a lot into the development of cross-cultural communication was Geert Hofstede. According to his study, there are some cultural dimensions: individualism/collectivism, power distance index, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity and indulgence vs restraint which have a significant impact on national competitiveness. Each country has its own stronger cultural model with prevailing accents on either individualism/collectivism, big or small power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity or high or low score of indulgence vs restraint. The first dimension, Individualism vs. Collectivism, refers to the relationship between the individual and the others. According to many studies, individualistic culture put individuals before the group, while collectivistic culture regards individuals as a part of a group. The scientist thinks that countries which can be characterized by high level of individualism are considered to be more competitive ones. The next important dimension is Power Distance which is characterized by inequality and social distance between members of a certain society. The next one is Uncertainty Avoidance which reflects the scale to which individuals within one culture feel threatened by uncertainty and unknown situations or events; the corresponding degree to which a society creates rules and refuses to go against nature

in order to avoid risks. The next dimension is Masculinity vs. Femininity which refers to determination whether a society is assertive or modest through gender. In masculine culture material success and various achievements are of importance. In contrast, security, desirable living environment and good relations at work are more typical for feminine culture. One more dimension is Indulgence vs Restraint. Countries with a high score ( Brazil) allow or encourage relatively free gratification of people's feelings and emotions while low score of this dimension is characterized by stricter social norms and more regulation of people's conduct and behavior ( Russia). Regarding different cultural dimensions correctly is able to help to compete in a society and become successful in the world economic relations [4].

There are numerous definitions of competitiveness but the most understandable one is offered by The National Competitiveness Council: «Competitiveness is the ability to achieve success in markets leading to better standards of living for all. It stems from a number of factors, notably firm level competitiveness and a supportive business environment that encourages innovation and investment, which combined lead to strong productivity growth, real income gains and sustainable development» (Global Competitiveness Report, 2003-2004). In order to measure the national competitiveness the study uses global competitiveness index (GCI). There are some correlations between above mentioned dimensions and GCI. According to some researches, if in a country a power distance is high, the national competitiveness is low. The examples of such countries are Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Venezuela. In contrast, The USA, Switzerland, Finland and Holland are the countries where the power distance is low and consequently, the national competitiveness is high. Speaking about individualism vs. collectivism we may say that countries with individualist culture (Denmark, The United Kingdom, Australia) are more competitive in comparison with countries where collective cultural model prevails (Mexico, Portugal, Taiwan). As for the correlation between uncertainty avoidance and national competitiveness, countries where a lower uncertainty exists are more competitive, and those ones in which there is a higher uncertainty control the

tendency is to be less competitive. Masculinity vs. femininity dimension is rather ambiguous as well as indulgence vs restraint in regard to the national competitiveness because an economy can be competitive no matter if it is characterized by masculinity or femininity/ high or low score of indulgence vs restraint [5]. Thus it is possible to confirm that there are three cultural dimensions – power distance index, individualism and uncertainty avoidance – which have a major impact on national competitiveness. Culture affects economic and business performance and in correlation with competitiveness contributes to national development and identity.

One more scientist whose sphere of observation was cross cultural communication was Trompenaars. He compared culture with an onion and divided it into three layers. According to Trompenaars, the outer layer is what most people primarily confront. «People usually have access only to the visual reality, which consists of language, behavior, food, and so on» [5, p. 22].

The next layer consists of norms and values of a community. «Norms are external factors, which are used for control and are imposed on the members of a society. Values, on the other hand, have no means of enforcement upon others. In this sense, values are more internal than norms. Both norms and values influence the outer areas of culture but are invisible» [5, p. 22]. And the last layer is the key to understanding the culture. «This layer consists of basic assumptions, which can be measured by the cultural dimensions» [5, p. 22]. However this division is not the only one which was observed by Trompenaars. He presented seven fundamental dimensions of culture – «universalism vs. particularism; individualism vs. collectivism; neutral vs. affective; specific vs. diffuse; achievement vs. ascription; time (sequential vs. synchronous); and environment (internal vs. external control). These variables influence the way people live and work in different environments» [5, p. 23].

Hall was one of the other scholars who presented his own model of cultures. According to him, all cultures can be presented in the context of space and time in to several categories: high-low context; time orientation; and interpersonal space [5,



p. 23]. Speaking about high-low context the scientist meant «primary meaning conveyed nonverbally, contextually, and situationally» [5, p. 24, Table 3] for high context and «primary meaning conveyed verbally or through writing» [5, p.24, Table 3] for low context. Besides he spoke about time (monochromic / polychromic) and space ( proxemics: the appropriate interpersonal length of distance or space) [5, p. 24, Table 3]. The knowledge of these models can facilitate overcoming of so-called cultural barriers in professional communication at the international level. If students, future economists are aware of the basic ideas of the mentioned above models, it will be easier for them to succeed in their career.

As noted by Tatiana Y. Osadchaya, the problem of the formation of intercultural competence of students is currently the subject of numerous studies, which is caused by the processes of economic globalization and cultural integration that occur in the modern world [6, p. 151]. In her paper she dwells upon the idea that English language is considered to be prevalent in business sphere and teaching English should be conducted with a professional orientation and business English at a university should go together with studying not only business cultures of English-speaking countries, but also with such concepts as «national business culture», «criteria for differences in business cultures», «types of national business cultures», certain features of communication with representatives of various types of national business cultures [6, p. 151]. Lack of knowledge in this sphere may lead to misunderstandings and rude violations of orders and norms. Nowadays negotiations occupy a very important place in international business relationships and future specialists in economics should be enough educated to conduct them successfully. Besides career in a prestigious international company is a dream of many students. Large international companies such as Nestlé, General Motors, HSBC, Google and others, offer their employees interesting, promising and profitable work, as well as a number of unique opportunities for personal and professional development. Therefore, many young professionals tend to get a job in foreign companies.



The style of leadership and the order in the company will depend on which country the company originates from. With all the possible differences, however, foreign employers belonging to the same country often share common features. In spite of the fact that many people eager to work for international companies, they shouldn't forget about some certain advantages and disadvantages of the mentioned above organizations.

First of all the advantages:

- Travelling to where this company does business;
- Options to relocate to another country;
- High salaries and good career opportunities;
- Sense of prestige.

And the disadvantages:

- An employee is not very important in a huge company;
- Complicated job; an employee should be aware of local and international laws, certain models of behavior.

Thus every job applicant should weigh up all the pros and cons in order to make a right decision when choosing this or that international company.

The fact is that nowadays a high-qualified job-applicant should be aware of some peculiarities of an international company which are connected with some traditional and religious norms and stereotypes, cultural and legislative aspects and behavioral models. Communicating with foreign partners may become a problem if a job applicant or an employee is not aware of certain models of behavior and moral standards which are typical for his colleagues from this or that country. Therefore the importance of cross cultural communication in the aspect of communicating with foreign partners is extremely important in order to establish successful business relations.

A communication style is a model of behavior that consistently occur in the way a person verbally, nonverbally or para verbally interact to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood. Gudykunst (2001)

conceptualized that high context communication (East Asian, Latin American, Southern Mediterranean and Arab countries) includes the following communication styles: being indirect, inferring meaning, interpersonal sensitivity, using feelings to guide behavior, and using silence. In contrast, low context communication (The USA, Canada, Western Europe) includes the following styles: being dramatic, dominant, animated, relaxed, attentive, open, friendly, contentious, and impression-leaving. According to Hall (1976), Asian cultures tend to adhere to high context communication styles, while European cultures tend to adhere to low context communication styles. The explanation why high context communication is more prevailing in Asian countries is regarded in close connection with the philosophy of Confucianism according to which the purpose of communication is to develop and maintain harmony within relationships rather than pursuing the outcomes and obtaining benefits. Furthermore traditional Asian communication is characterized by reticence which values more than expressiveness. Time for Asian countries is regarded in the perspective of culture: it is considered to be relative and circular. Besides in Asia people tend to be collective and loyal, their success and failure are shared and being a part of a community is an essential sphere of their life. Thus we may conclude that collectivism is an essential cultural dimension for Asian countries. In contrast European model of behavior is characterized by individualism, by value of one's own perceptions, perspectives and opinions. It is very important for European people to be heard and meetings are means of exchanging information for them. In Europe relationship management is a substantial part of business life and people focus on building relationships to get ahead and be successful. These relations are built individually while in Asia people focus on group harmony and cohesion [7]. Being aware of all these peculiarities concerning cultural differences, future professionals will be able to conduct negotiations successfully and maintain business relations easily.

According to Prigozhina, the value orientations typical for representatives of different cultures influence the course and results of business contact in situations of

intercultural business communication and, in particular, international commercial negotiations. In this regard, the formation of intercultural competence is of particular relevance in relation to this type of business interaction. She points out that the understanding of cultural differences is based on the ability of participants in intercultural business communication to understand common and distinctive features, to understand and interpret them in a specific context based on a comparison of the native culture and cultures of business communication partners. This determines the specificity of the structural component of the intercultural competence of the participant in international negotiations and the process of its formation [9, p. 111]. She concludes that there is a need to identify a number of conditions, compliance of which ensures effective formation of intercultural competence during foreign language training of participants in international commercial negotiations:

1) the necessary skills are formed on the basis of the obtained in the course of study together background knowledge about the different cultures in the presence and the formation of students ' General intercultural awareness and tolerance sensitivity to different cultures;

2) familiarization with the differences of cultures is based on the principle of conscious selection and comparison of the parameters of the differences of cultures, which allow to form the ability to penetrate into the essence of the causes of cultural dissonance and to develop a strategy of behavior adequate to the situation of intercultural interaction [9, p. 111].

Prigozhina considers that for effective intercultural interaction it is necessary to have a common intercultural awareness of cultural differences and tolerance. It is an affective component. On this basis, in the course of training, a system of background knowledge about the situational and contextual specifics of intercultural business communication is formed – a cognitive component, and skills are developed as part of each of the mentioned components to develop a strategy of behavior adequate to the situation of intercultural interaction – a behavioral component [9, p. 111-112]. Moreover Prigozhina clarifies that perception, analysis and assimilation of

information about cultural differences requires openness of consciousness. The process of formation of intercultural competence should, first of all, take into account the emotional-evaluative and value-semantic aspects of preparation for participation in intercultural business communication. The stage of familiarization with cultural variability in situations of business communication helps to increase the level of general cultural awareness and susceptibility to cultural differences, which forms an affective component of intercultural competence and brings to the level of understanding of culture on the basis of personal meanings. On the basis of the formed skills as a part of the affective component, the transition to the formation of the cognitive component of the intercultural competence of the participant of international negotiations is carried out. The cognitive component includes background knowledge about the differences of cultures, communicative and cognitive features of the partners and their cultural portrait. Background knowledge is formed on the basis of perception, comparative analysis and interpretation of the parameters of cultural differences. At the stage of formation of the cognitive component of intercultural competence, students are invited to conduct a comparative analysis of cultural differences in relation to situations of intercultural business communication. Since the parameters of cultural differences vary depending on the situations of intercultural interaction, it is advisable to carry out a comparative analysis with the help of graphic modeling of cultural portraits of partners in intercultural communication. This way of comparing cultures helps to reveal the zones of cultural coincidence and dissonance [9, p. 113].

Besides we shouldn't forget about morality and tolerance in the process of formation of cross-cultural competence. For instance I.V. Karpova, N.A. Martynova write in their article that the category of quality implies the honesty and truthfulness of the information. Sincerity in intra-cultural communication is expressed not only by verbal means, but also by non-verbal (gestures, facial expressions) and paraverbal means (pauses, intonation), which is very difficult in intercultural communication, as gestures and intonation of speech in different languages and cultures have different

meanings. And these differences can lead not only to communicative discomfort, but also to communicative failure. Besides Karpova and Martynova focus our attention on the fact that postulates of normal communication require from communicants sincerity and truthfulness. However, the concepts of the truth of judgment in different cultures may differ due to such factors as the relativity of the concepts of time, space, value judgments, ethical and moral norms, etc. The consequence of these differences may be the distrust of participants in intercultural communication to each other, which is a serious communicative hindrance. The category of relevance seems to be more important for intercultural communication than for intra-cultural communication, since in intra-cultural communication the participants of the dialogue have a common background knowledge, which allows them to avoid communicative discomfort, despite a sharp change in the subject of conversation or unwillingness to follow the thought of the interlocutor. Differences in the cultural base of interlocutors in intercultural communication can lead not only to communicative discomfort, but also to a complete misunderstanding [10, p. 176].

One more equally important factor of formation international business relationships is the knowledge of business etiquette. According to Romanova, representatives of the business environment enter into a large number of business contacts every day, participation in which involves compliance with a number of conditions and rules of conduct which are called business etiquette [7, p. 133]. Unfortunately this area of knowledge is not always presented to students in the appropriate quality. As a result we get young specialists who know almost nothing about some specific rules and modes of behavior of their foreign partners. The lack of information leads to complete misunderstandings, total failures and sometimes may even bring to litigation. In order to prevent bad consequences students should be informed by their teachers of foreign languages of some basic rules of business etiquette before they graduate from their universities and start to work. As Romanova points out, that in international business relations etiquette is considered to be even an economic category. It brings harmony in business relations, contributes to business

efficiency [7, p. 133]. Nowadays, especially in Russian companies, understanding of business etiquette is increasingly becoming an important factor in a person's professional activities, because a lack of good manners negatively affects the moral and psychological climate in an organization. During English lessons teachers should train their students, giving them some practical tasks, for instance role playing games. Students will be able to practice a lot of business situations using some cliché phrases which will help them in future. In her paper Romanova focuses our attention on the fact that the reason of increasing interest to the problem of business etiquette in Russia is a current language situation which occurred after radical changes in politics, economics, and social sphere in 1990s. The change in the socio-economic structure of society has led to drastic changes in the language, a decline in the culture of speech, and a slight use of speech etiquette. Romanova points out that currently, these changes are reflected in the growth in the number of different kinds of speech errors and variants arising under the influence of vernacular, territorial and social dialects, semi-dialects, and in the stylistic decline of modern speaking and writing [7, p. 134]. This tendency can negatively effect on the working environment in a company, can spoil the reputation of an employee and lead to total failures in his or her career in general. Thus we have to admit that the idea of development of the area of business etiquette at universities is very up to date and can't be ignored by teachers and students. Our findings appear to be supported by general experience either teachers or students. The mentioned above knowledge is inevitable nowadays and should be thoroughly analyzed and taken into consideration.

In the form of the conclusion we may state that in the context of expanding international cooperation in all spheres of activity, the teaching of cross- cultural communication in a foreign language to students of non-linguistic specialties is of particular importance. Cross-cultural communication is a special form of communication between two or more representatives of different cultures, during which there is an exchange of information and cultural values of interacting cultures. All people are different and all cultures have their own features and peculiarities. One

of the main goals of a modern teacher is to show his or her students the beauty of every culture, to plunge them into the atmosphere of this or that country, to explain how deal with foreigners, business partners in a correct way, how to behave during negotiations. In a broad sense, intercultural communication is studied by culturology. This science studies intercultural communication as a dialogue of cultures and the social formations to which these cultures belong. The process of intercultural communication is a specific form of activity, which is not limited only to the knowledge of foreign languages, but also requires knowledge of the material and spiritual culture of another people, religion, values, moral attitudes, worldview, etc., together defining the model of behavior of communication partners. Cross-cultural communication is closely connected with ethics and psychology. Well-educated specialists should cultivate moral qualities and do not forget about them forming their business relations. Future economists should respect foreign cultures and consider tolerance to be one of the key quality of a modern person. Besides the importance of business etiquette has increased significantly. It is important not to ignore the universalism of etiquette as a set of rules of conduct in the business world, but rather its relative universalism, since we are talking about intercultural communication. Consequently, the rules of speech etiquette should be applied in practice with certain amendments based on the cultural behavioral characteristics of the foreign partner. It should be highlighted once again that in the light of the current state of the culture of speech and communication, the implementation of all these aspects should be focused by a teacher of a foreign language. This information is necessary for the formation of future economists intercultural communicative competence, as they will provide them in practice a decent behavior, adequate communication situation in the field of intercultural communication, the achievement of a positive communicative effect and a certain impact on the dialogue of partners, as well as the establishment of harmonious partnerships. Due to globalization in the modern world people are becoming more and more similar to each other but they should remember about



values and cultural peculiarities of other nations in order to lead a successful business and to understand each other.

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