

Unit 14

Cultural Differences—Manners and Taboos

文化差异—禁忌礼仪

✓ Learning objectives

- In this unit, students will understand the importance of appropriate etiquette and protocol in intercultural business communication.
- Students learn identify cultural differences in initiating business contacts, in social entertainment and gift-giving practices, etc.

📖 Background reading

Notes:

1. protocol 礼仪 Touching the Queen was a breach of royal protocol.
2. etiquette 礼节 Etiquette is especially important on occasions such as weddings and funerals.
3. cost-effective 有成本效益的, 合算的 In the eyes of the intelligence agency terrorism can be a cost-effective undertaking.
4. optimum 最适宜 This design makes the optimum use of the available space.
5. embellish 美化, 润饰 a speech embellished with amusing anecdotes
6. well-honed 磨得很快或很亮的; 训练有素的 International business people should have a well-honed sense and appreciation of appropriate protocol.
7. world-savvy 了解社会的 This can make you stand out as a world-savvy individual in a competitive global market.
8. mores 道德观念 They stood for the preservation of the mores and folkways that had guided their forebears for generations.
9. strategically 战略上的 Strategically placed video cameras can alert police to any trouble.
10. given 假定的事实, 已知的情况 Basic table manners are a given in most cultures.
11. courtesy 礼貌 It's a matter of common courtesy to acknowledge letters.
12. esteemed 受尊重的 The old teacher was much loved and esteemed.
13. precede (在顺序、位置或时间上)处于...之前, 先于 We were preceded by our guide.

Answers to the comprehension questions:

1. How has the author linked executive manners to business success?
Executive Manners can create the strong, effective executive presence that propels an individual upward in his or her career.
2. Why does the author say “good manners are cost-effective”?
Good manners are cost-effective because they not only increase the quality of life in the workplace, contribute to optimum employee moral, and embellish the

company image, but they also play a major role in generating profit.

3. Why can a high appreciation of protocol make an individual stand out?

A well-honed sense and appreciation of appropriate protocol can make you stand out as a world-savvy individual in a competitive global market, because getting and keeping a job or being promoted will depend not only on how well qualified you are but also on how appropriately you behave and how much you look and act the part for a particular position. Your manners are often counted as highly as your knowledge of your subject matter or your brilliance at the negotiation table.

4. How would you define *protocol*? What does it cover usually?

(It's an open question.)

Translation of background reading

跨文化商务交际中恰当礼节

商务及个人礼仪领域的专家 Letitia Baldrige 519 页厚的《经理礼仪全指南》(*Complete Guide to Executive Manners*, Letitia Baldrige), 开始就写道:“这本书不仅有关礼仪,而是有关出色的品质。该书向我们阐述了细节的重要性以及众多细节联系到一起之后怎么创造出有力有效的经理表现风度,而这种良好的风度能够积极促进个人的事业。所以这么说来,这是一本关于成功的书。”

这本书的理论基础是:优秀的礼仪之所以有成本效益,是因为这些礼仪不仅仅能够提高工作岗位的生活质量,促进员工的道德面貌,美化公司的形象,更重要的是它们在推动公司利益中能起到重要的作用。很明显,一个人人与人之间互相体谅的氛围能让顾客充分享受到做生意的乐趣。而且更重要的是,一个作风礼让、名誉显著的公司,能够吸引并留住更多的成功人士。

对恰当的礼仪训练有素及推崇可以让你以通晓世界的个人形象在全球化市场中突显出来。随着公司的重建和细化,竞争愈展愈烈。获取并保持一份工作并且得到提升将不仅仅取决于知识水平,更重要的是在于行为举止的合适程度以及在特定职位上尽职的程度。你的举止方式往往和你谈论主旨的知识程度或谈判桌上的机智表现一样重要。

礼仪的“规则”首先是基于相互体谅,也同样基于对于风俗及我们生活及工作所处的社会的一种常识和认知。这种对特定风俗的认知有时会当我们在国外旅行或工作的时候产生一定的障碍。有时出于好意的行为可能被误解为敌视或贬意。

虽然世界似乎在一定程度上变得越来越小,但是尊敬及观察异国礼仪的必要性却仍然同样重要。你需要充分了解一个特定国家的正确礼仪从而可以避免无意侵犯该国的风俗。了解基本的礼仪及礼节——即其他人在正式或非正式商务场合下对你期望的行为——是一种重要的技巧。

一位全球化经济咨询师 Nan Leaptrott(1966)说道:“礼节是为达成任何商务目标而必须遵循的一系列互动规则。礼仪的知识使得全球化商务成为一场战略的游戏。而对行为规则的忽视则会将其变成一场碰运气的游戏。”他进一步解释道:“精通全球化商务的游戏需要两项技巧:理解沟通规则和策略性地使用这些规则。请注意,第一个技巧说的是理解沟通的规则,而不只是知道这些规则。理解意味着知道这些规则的来源及其用途以及特定的风俗习惯……如果一个人理解礼仪形成的指导原则——即文化的潜在价值——那么在大多数场合下正确的礼节可以被推论出来。”所有,掌握商务及社交礼仪及礼节规则的知识对指导跨文化交际

有着很重要的作用。

适当的礼仪在当今的商界中已经远远超出桌上礼仪（这些毕竟是大多数文化都有的内容）和普通的谦恭举止（例如在进门时为敬重的同事或上司让路）。Carl A. Nelson 说，有八种通用的礼节因素或类别有助于人们在任何文化背景下都能成功地做生意。按重要性排序，它们分别是：姓名、等级及头衔、时间、行为、交流、送礼、食物和饮料。

Loose-leaf selective listening

Part A Intercultural Business Miscommunication

First listening: listen for the gist

What is the main idea of the mini-conversations?

The two mini-conversations reveal the different cultural conceptions between American and Japanese businesspersons which result in their miscommunications. In the first conversation the American manager can not understand why the Japanese employee responds to his praise in a silent way when he openly praises the Japanese employee in front of his colleagues. In the second conversation, Mr. Sato, a Japanese businessman, feels puzzled when his American partner Mr. Rogers puts Sato's business card into his wallet immediately and suggests starting their meeting right away instead of introducing themselves first, such as the positions in the company.

Second listening: listen for specific information

In this part the teacher has great freedom and flexibility to ask students questions, to clarify any difficult language points, to add in supplementary materials as background knowledge or in-depth understanding of the listening materials.

Ask students to answer the following questions about the two conversations respectively. Compare answers.

1) Conversation 1

- (1) Do you think it appropriate for the American manager to openly praise the Japanese employee in front of his colleagues? Why yes or no?

No. The open praise by the American manager not only pushed that Japanese worker to the corner—off guard and speechless, but may result in another side effect, i.e. the American manager may lose the respect from the other Japanese workers present because he openly praised someone among them. Had he any knowledge of the cultural differences, he would not have blamed that Japanese worker as “rude”.

- (2) Why did the Japanese employee respond to the American boss' praise in such a silent way? Is he “rude” in such a setting?

According to the Japanese practice, the Japanese employee is not rude to respond to his American boss' praise in such a silent way, because in Japan, an individual should never be singled out from his group for praise.

- (3) What cultural differences can you draw from this conversation between American and Japanese cultures?

While Americans advocate their individualism, Japanese stick firmly to their collectivism, a spirit deeply instilled into the minds of the Japanese.

- (4) What suggestions can you offer to the American manager to avoid such kind of awkward encounters in the similar cases?

If you should give the case a closer look, we would find that there is little consideration of the Japanese culture in the way the American manager talked to that Japanese worker. Therefore, to avoid such kind of awkward encounters, the American manager should gain some knowledge of Japanese business culture and adapt to it accordingly.

2) Conversation 2

- (1) Why does Mr. Sato feel puzzled when Mr. Rogers first suggest starting their meeting?

Because according to Japanese business practice, business people usually have some kind of small talks before coming down to business meetings, which they believe will help create a more harmonic atmosphere for the talk..

- (2) Do you think it is proper for Mr. Rogers to put Sato's business card into his wallet immediately? Why?

No. Because the practice in the U.S. of glancing at the business card and promptly putting it in the pocket is considered rude in countries like Japan. The Japanese examine the business card carefully and make some comment while accepting it. During meetings, place the business cards of others attending in front of you on the conference table to properly refer to names, ranks, and titles, Use both hands when presenting your card in Japan; position the card so that the person can read it. Presentation of the card varies with the culture.

- (3) Why does Sato insist on introducing themselves, such as the positions in the company instead of beginning the meeting?

Because it is very important for a Japanese businessman to know the position of his business partner in the company before they start the meeting. Japanese society is of high hierarchy, in which one should behave properly according to his or her position.

Third listening: sentences imitation

Ask students to use the following active vocabularies to form sentences as what they have heard from listening (Dictate then remember).

Please first write down the following words on the blackboard or computer. Then ask students to listen for sentences with these words in them. You ask them to listen two times and see who has caught more sentences.

- 1) fumble I fumbled around in my bag for a cigarette.
- 2) graciously She graciously accepted his gift and opened it very carefully.
- 3) flip side Sato is puzzled when he turns the card over to its flip side and it is bland.
- 4) inadequate The parking facilities are inadequate for a busy shopping centre.

- 5) incompetent The Prime Minister is incompetent to govern the country.

Part B Protocols of Handshaking and Gift-giving

First listening: listen for the gist

What is the main idea of this part?

In this part, we hear an American businessman talking about his observation about cultural differences in handshaking practice. Then we hear two business people talking about gift-giving practice in Japan.

Second listening: listen for specific information

In this part the teacher has great freedom and flexibility to ask students questions, to clarify any difficult language points, to add in supplementary materials as background knowledge or in-depth understanding of the listening materials.

- ◆ Notice how the following expressions are related to handshaking and gift-giving practice.
firm or limp handshake, direct eye contact, shifty and untrustworthy, intensity and duration, loosen/unloosen one's grips, bow, distance, ritual parcel, label, position, equality, practicality, taboo, number, painting, propensity, unwrap, symbolically, well-intentioned gift, embarrassment, hatred, proper, repetition

Ask students to do blanks filling exercise. Check answers.

- ◆ Stop from time to time and leave time for students to fill in the blanks in the table. The key information in the table will make a good summary for the talk. Compare answers.

1) Hand-shaking

Culture	Type of Handshaking
United States	A firm handshake plus direct eye contact, step forward to shake hands, then loosen their grips quickly, and back to keep a certain distance from each other
Chinese	Hold hands at first, then come closer to each other
Japanese	Keep a greater distance, slightly bow, avoid focusing straight into the eyes of another person
British	Soft
German	Firm, more frequent, repeated on arrival and departure, traditionally accompanied by a slight bow
French	Softer and limp
Middle Eastern	Gentle; repeated frequently, and free hand placed on forearm of other person, the eyes are hooded, even languid

2) Gift-giving

Ask students to do True (T) or False (F) questions. Check answers. Explain to students why they are true or false and find evidences to support.

1. T 2. F 3. T 4. F 5. T

Third listening: sentences imitation

Ask students to use the following adjectives to form sentences as what they have heard from listening (Dictate then remember).

Please first write down the following words on the blackboard or computer. Then ask students to listen for sentences with these words in them. You ask them to listen two times and see who has caught more sentences.

- 1) limp His body suddenly went limp and he fell down on the floor.
- 2) intimidating 威胁的 Cawley received an intimidating letter from her ex-husband's lawyer.
- 3) hooded The glitter in his hooded eyes made it impossible for her to hazard even the wildest guess at what he was thinking.
- 4) languid He greeted Charles with a languid wave of his hand.
- 5) exuberant The prose is exuberant and knowingly exotic.
- 6) irresistible High interest rates have made these saving plans irresistible to small investors.

Part C Hall's High- and Low -Context Orientation

First listening: listen for the gist

What is the main idea of the talk?

The talk is about the differences between high-context cultures and low-context cultures. In high-context cultures, most of the information is in the physical context or is internalized in the people who are a part of the interaction. In low-context cultures, most of the information is contained in the verbal message, and very little is embedded in the context or within the participants.

Second listening: listen for specific information

In this part the teacher has great freedom and flexibility to ask students questions, to clarify any difficult language points, to add in supplementary materials as background knowledge or in-depth understanding of the listening materials.

- ◆ Notice how the following expressions are related to High- and Low -Context Orientation.

physical context, surroundings, environment, internalize, information, code, verbal message, clarify

1)

Ask students to do blanks filling exercise. Check answers.

	Features	Examples of countries
High-context culture	Most of the information is in the physical context or is internalized in the people who	Japan, Korea, China

	are a part of the interaction. Very little information is actually coded in the verbal message. People are more adept at reading nonverbal behavior and the environment.	
Low-context culture	Most of the information is contained in the verbal message, and very little is embedded in the context or within the participants.	German, American

If time permits, teachers can give students some more information about high-/low-context culture.



2)

Ask students to do True (T) or False (F) questions. Check answers. Explain why it is true or false.

1. T 2. T 3. F 4. F 5. F

Third listening: sentences imitation

Ask students to use the following active vocabularies to form sentences as what they have heard from listening (Dictate then remember).

Please first write down the following words on the blackboard or computer. Then ask students to listen for sentences with these words in them. You ask them to listen two times and see who has caught more sentences.

- 1) embed Feelings of guilt are deeply embedded in her personality.
- 2) explicit The kidnappers have given us explicit instructions not to involve the police.
- 3) in reverse US video recorders cannot play European tapes, and the same applies in reverse.
- 4) credible The complaint would be more credible if he could remember more specific details.
- 5) inarticulate Footballers are famous for being inarticulate when they are interviewed on TV, and Danny Lord was no exception.

Acting out

1. Divide students of the class into four groups and then assign the four topics to them respectively. Give them some time to discuss in groups about the method and the schedule of their research and then distribute the tasks among the group members. Ask them to get well prepared when they make a report back to the whole class at the next meeting.
2. Explain to students the importance of case study in learning business and introduce them some basic steps of case analysis.

◆ Definition of a case study

A *case study* is defined as an in-depth, multifaceted investigation, using qualitative research methods, of a single social phenomenon. The study is conducted in great detail and often relies on the use of several data sources.

• In general terms, a case study involves characteristics or configurations of a particular unit of analysis--be this an individual, a community, an organization, a nation-state, an empire, or a civilization. Characteristics of good cases

- Authentic
- Typical
- Purposeful
- Narrative
- Story with readability (conflict), integrality (time, place, process, result), materiality (specific details)

◆ Why study cases?

Develop analytic and critical thinking ability organizational and communication skills

- Resolve a complex, difficult, often ambiguous situation
- Steps in analyzing a case study
- Identify all pertinent facts in the case.
- Formulate a problem statement or question that summarizes the central issue of the case.
- Identify resources and weaknesses that pertain to the problem.
- Create alternative courses of action.
- Choose one course of action for your recommendation and state your reasoning for choosing it.