



對外經濟貿易大學
UNIVERSITY OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

Unit 13

Effective Communication— Language and Culture

有效沟通—语言文化

✓ Learning objectives

- Students will be able to illustrate the close relationship between language and culture.
- Students will learn how to increase cultural awareness in language learning and intercultural communication.

Answers to the comprehension questions

1. What is the relationship between language, cognition and cultural setting?

Much of the recent work has revealed that language is related to cognition, and cognition in turn is related to the cultural setting.

2. What three words are given as examples of close relationship between language and environment in the article?

Camel, bamboo and snow.



Answers to the comprehension questions

3. Why does the author say language is a mirror of culture? Give examples.

Language is a mirror of culture because language not only reflects the environment in which we live, but also reflects cultural values, reflecting human relationships and the way the society operates. For example Chinese kinship terms reflect the importance of our family system.

4. What is the main idea of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis? Why is it important?

The main idea of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that language not only serves as a mechanism for communication, but as a guide to social reality. It has become one of the most important theoretical formulations concerning language.



Part A Business News

First listening: listen for the gist

- What is the main idea of the news report?

The news report tells how the concept of Culture Year was created and how the Chinese Culture Year will provide a comprehensive picture of Chinese society and its people.

- What is the main idea of the two stories?

The two stories are about the miscommunication caused by unawareness of implied meanings of words in different cultures. The first is about the word “corn” and the second is the phrase “to table an item”, both having different implied meanings between British English and American English.

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 these expressions are different between British English and American English:
corn, maize, table an item
- Ask students to fill in the blanks with figures and facts in exercise 1) and 2). Check answers.

Part B What Is Culture Like?

First listening: listen for the gist

- What is the main idea of the seminar?

The seminar is a brainstorming around the topic “What is culture like?”. The various images of culture all point to the idea that culture is largely out-of-awareness. With greater awareness of our own culture, we will better understand the meaning systems of other cultures and will be better able to adapt to them.

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 these expressions are related to the understanding of culture.

iceberg, onion, water a fish swims in, software of the mind, grammar of one's behavior, the dancing step of the human race, the social adhesive of all human relationships, a blueprint for living

- Ask students to fill in the table with appropriate information in exercise 1). Check answers.
- Ask students to make a summary and then think of their own metaphors to describe their understanding of culture.

Third listening: sentence imitation

- Ask students to use the following active vocabularies to form sentences as what they have heard from listening (Dictate then remember).
 1. to be aware of--As with any good software, we are only vaguely aware of it as we use it.
 2. to fade into--It fades into the background.
 3. to be incompatible with--We just know that the computer sometimes does not work because it is incompatible with someone else's software.
 4. to scan--Like any creature, a fish scans its environment to find food.

Part C Culture-loaded Idioms

First listening: listen for the gist

- What is the main idea of the lecture?

The lecture illustrates with many examples the cultural similarities and/or differences relating to certain animal words and sports idioms between Chinese and English. Such idiomatic or informal forms are difficult to learn to non-native speakers and the trouble in understanding them is that the meaning of the whole phrase cannot be deduced from the individual words which constitute it.

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 these animal idioms and sports idioms are culture-loaded.
deer, monkey, wolf, bee, fox, lamb, lark, donkey, owl, bat, horse, mule, goose, eel, lion; term players, step up to the plate, game plan, to jockey itself into position, striking out, out in the left field
- Ask students to fill in the blanks with the appropriate animal words in exercise 1) and the meaning of sports idioms in exercise 2). Check answers.
- Ask students to compare the cultural similarities and/or differences relating to certain animal words and sports idioms between Chinese and English, and try to explain why.

Third listening: sentence imitation

- Ask students to use the following active vocabularies to form sentences as what they have heard from listening (Dictate then remember).
 1. to deduce from--The trouble in understanding an idiom is that the meaning of the whole phrase cannot be deduced from the individual words which constitute it.
 2. to evoke--Mention of the *bat* often evokes the image of an ugly, sinister, blood-sucking creature.
 3. to be guilty of--The Americans are probably most guilty of using sports terminology as slang in business negotiations
 4. to prone to--The Americans are not the only nationality prone to this common error.
 5. to render--The problem of rendering idioms of one language into another are always complex.