



Business English

Negotiating Deals across Cultures

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Unit 10: Negotiating Deals across Cultures

Objectives:

- Introduce language related to cultural differences and negotiating across cultures
- Reading to identify specific details related to comparison and contrast
- Refresh mastery of function words and articles “the/an”
- Transform sentences from active to passive
- Listen for specific details on Do’s and Don’ts in cross-cultural situations
- Writing for a professional purpose

Skills: reading/listening/writing

I. PRE-READING

A/ Who says what?

Look at the picture then fill in the bubbles with the following statements: There is an extra statement that you don't need.

1. When is he going to take my card?
2. Whoa! Personal space invasion!
3. He seems a bit unfriendly?
4. I'm next, what should I do?
5. When is the plane departing?
6. What do I do now?



B/ Matching exercise:

Look at the table by Dr Nancy Adler in which she ranks characteristics of negotiators as reported by managers in four national backgrounds.



AMERICAN NEGOTIATORS	JAPANESE NEGOTIATORS	CHINESE (TAIWAN) NEGOTIATORS	BRAZILIAN NEGOTIATORS
Preparation and planning skill	Dedication to job	Persistence and determination	Preparation and planning skill
Thinking under pressure	Perceive and exploit power	Win respect and confidence	Thinking under pressure
Judgment and intelligence	Win respect and confidence	Preparation and planning skill	Judgment and intelligence
Verbal expressiveness	Integrity	Product knowledge	Verbal expressiveness
Product knowledge	Demonstrate listening skill	Interesting	Product knowledge
Perceive and exploit power	Broad perspective	Judgment and intelligence	Perceive and exploit power
Integrity	Verbal expressiveness		Competitiveness

Now, rearrange the sentences by matching the elements in Column A with those in Column B.

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
1. Brazilians and Americans are almost identical	a. be an interesting person who shows persistence and determination.
2. The Japanese tend to emphasize verbal expressiveness and listening ability	b. on whether the negotiator is aware of these differences.
3. To the Chinese in Taiwan, it was important that the negotiator	c. except for the final category.
4. The characteristics show, in effect, that the	d. while their American and Brazilian counterparts focus more on verbal ability,



outcome of business deals depends	planning, and judgment.
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C/ According to you, what could be done to avoid problems while negotiating deals abroad? Choose the right answer.

1. Learn the foreign language of the business partner and therefore, avoid misunderstanding
2. Give a clearly detailed presentation and explanation of the business project
3. Take into account the potential partner's culture so as to avoid misunderstanding related to different negotiation conceptions

II READING

Read the text carefully then answer the questions:

Cross Cultural Negotiation

By [Neil Payne](#)



How do negotiation styles and techniques differ across cultures?

Cross cultural negotiation is one of many specialized areas within the wider field of cross cultural communications. By taking cross cultural negotiation training, negotiators and sales personnel give themselves an advantage over competitors.

- 5 There is an argument that proposes that culture is inconsequential to cross cultural negotiation. It maintains that as long as a proposal is financially attractive it will succeed. However, this is a naïve way of approaching international business.

Let us look at a brief example of how cross cultural negotiation training can benefit the international business person:

- 10 There are two negotiators dealing with the same potential client in the Middle East. Both have identical proposals and packages. One ignores the importance of cross cultural negotiation training believing the proposal will speak for itself. The other undertakes some cross cultural training. He/she learns about the culture, values, beliefs, etiquette and approaches to business, meetings and negotiations. Nine times out of ten the latter will succeed over the rival. This is



- 15 because 1) it is likely he/she would have endeared himself/herself more to the host negotiation team and 2) they would be able to tailor their approach to the negotiations in a way that maximises the potential of a positive outcome.

Cross cultural negotiation is about more than just how foreigners close deals. It involves looking at all factors that can influence the proceedings. By way of highlighting this, a few

- 20 brief examples of topics covered in cross cultural negotiation training shall be offered.

..... : In the US, UK and much of northern Europe, strong, direct eye contact conveys confidence and sincerity. In South America it is a sign of trustworthiness. However, in some cultures such as the Japanese, prolonged eye contact is considered rude and is generally avoided.

- 25 **Personal Space & Touch:** In Europe and North America, business people will usually leave a certain amount of distance between themselves when interacting. Touching only takes place between friends. In South America or the Middle East, business people are tactile and like to get up close. In Japan or China, it is not uncommon for people to leave a gap of four feet when conversing. Touching only takes place between close friends and family members.

- 30: Western societies are very 'clock conscious'. Time is money and punctuality is crucial. This is also the case in countries such as Japan or China where being late would be taken as an insult. However, in South America, southern Europe and the Middle East, being on time for a meeting does not carry the same sense of urgency.

Meeting & Greeting: most international business people meet with a handshake. In some

- 35 countries this is not appropriate between genders. Some may view a weak handshake as sign of weakness whereas others would perceive a firm handshake as aggressive. How should people be addressed? Is it by first name, surname or title? Is small talk part of the proceedings or not?

.....: In Japan and China gift-giving is an integral part of business protocol; however in

- 40 the US or UK, it has negative connotations. Where gifts are exchanged should one give lavish gifts? Are they always reciprocated? Should they be wrapped? Are there numbers or colours that should be avoided?

All the above in one way or another will impact cross cultural negotiation and can only be learnt through cross cultural training. Doing or saying the wrong thing at the wrong time, poor

- 45 communication and cross cultural misunderstandings can all have harmful consequences.

Cross cultural negotiation training builds its foundations upon understanding etiquettes and approaches to business abroad before focusing on cross cultural differences in negotiation styles and techniques.

There are three interconnected aspects that need to be considered before entering into cross



50 cultural negotiation.

The Basis of the Relationship: in much of Europe and North America, business is contractual in nature. Personal relationships are seen as unhealthy as they can cloud objectivity and lead to complications. In South America and much of Asia, business is personal. Partnerships will only be made with those they know, trust and feel comfortable with. It is therefore necessary

55 to invest in relationship building before conducting business.

Information at Negotiations: Western business culture places emphasis on clearly presented and rationally argued business proposals using statistics and facts. Other business cultures rely on similar information but with differences. For example, visual and oral communicators such as the South Americans may prefer information presented through speech or using maps,

60 graphs and charts.

Negotiation Styles: the way in which we approach negotiation differs across cultures. For example, in the Middle East rather than approaching topics sequentially negotiators may discuss issues simultaneously. South Americans can become quite vocal and animated. The Japanese will negotiate in teams and decisions will be based upon consensual agreement. In

65 Asia, decisions are usually made by the most senior figure or head of a family. In China, negotiators are highly trained in the art of gaining concessions. In Germany, decisions can take a long time due to the need to analyse information and statistics in great depth. In the UK, pressure tactics and imposed deadlines are ways of closing deals whilst in Greece these would backfire.

70 Clearly there are many factors that need to be considered when approaching cross cultural negotiation. Through cross cultural negotiation training, business personnel are given the appropriate knowledge that can help them prepare their presentations and sales pitches effectively. By tailoring your behaviour and the way you approach the negotiation you will succeed in maximising your potential.

Source: Buzzle.com <http://www.buzzle.com/editorials/10-5-2004-60126.asp>

A/ What is the main idea of the text? Choose the right answer:

1. People from other countries and cultures carry out transactions differently from the way we do them.
2. Negotiators benefit from doing business abroad thanks to the various opportunities presented to them.
3. Training in cross-cultural negotiation enables negotiators to handle cultural differences more appropriately, and thus allows them to do more successful business abroad.



B/ What do the following words refer to? (These words are underlined in the text):

1. themselves (line 4):
2. they (line 52):
3. those (line 54):
4. these (line 68):
5. them (line 72):

C/ In lines 21, 30, and 39, the headings are missing. Provide suitable ones:

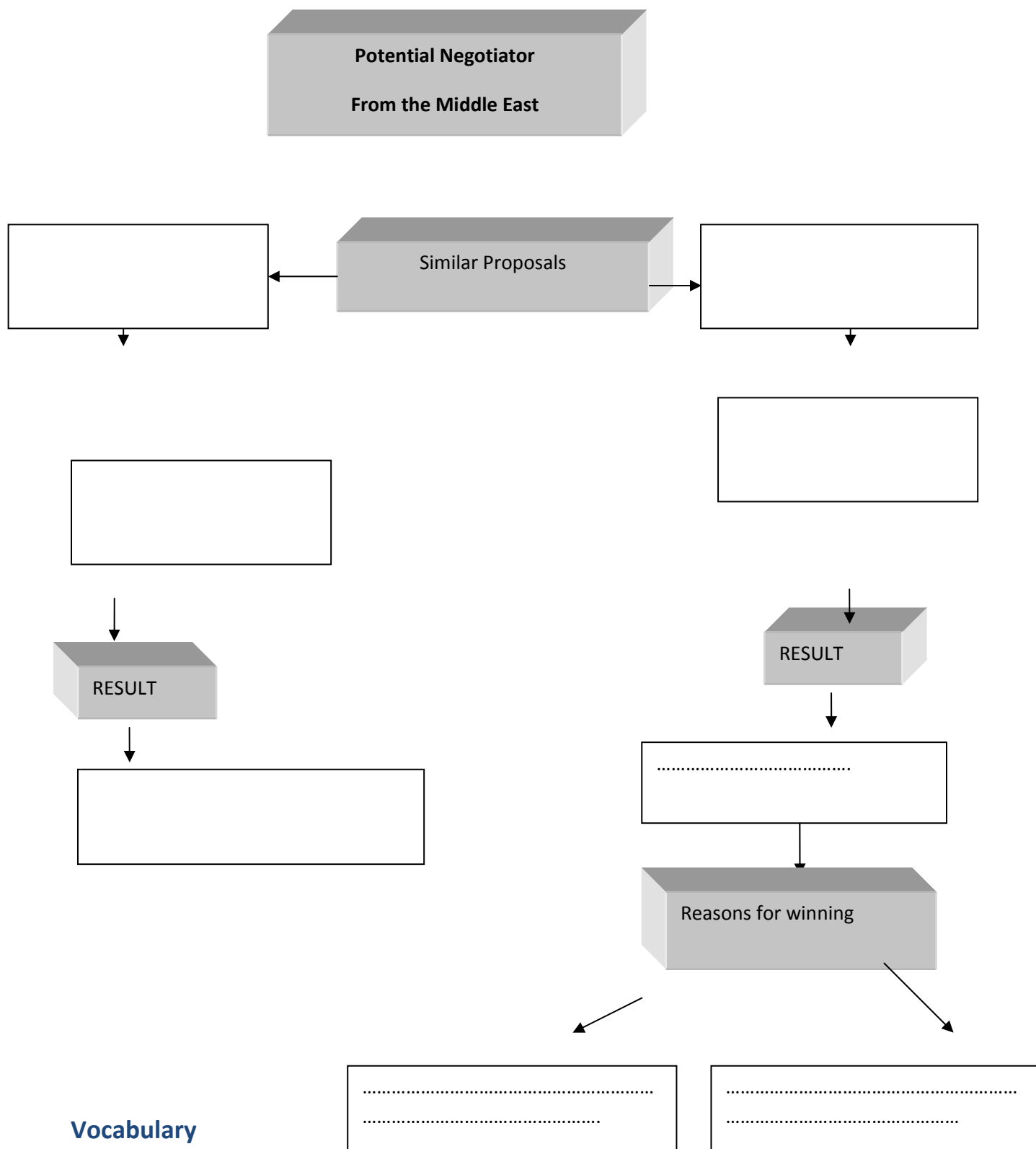
1. Line 21:
2. Line 30:
3. Line 39:

D/ True or false exercise: Indicate whether the following sentences are true or false:

1. In international business, successful transactions depend only on attractive proposals.
2. Cross-cultural negotiation does not only concern how business is processed abroad, but also every aspect that may affect transactions.
3. In contrast to South Americans, Asians, in the Far East keep their distance with all other people except with relatives and friends.
4. Negotiators in the Middle East are easily outraged by unpunctual clients.
5. Differently from Westerners, South Americans and Asians do not separate business from personal relationship.
6. German negotiators carry out fast transactions since they are not very rigorous by nature.
7. Pressure tactics and imposed deadlines are unsuccessful in Greece.

E/ Focus on the passage in the text from line 10 to line 17, then complete the chart using the following statements:

1. Cross-cultural negotiation training is unimportant.
2. Negotiator two
3. High chances of winning over the competitor
4. Behaviour appeals to host negotiators.
5. Very little chance of winning over the competitor
6. Approach adopted to guarantee success
7. Negotiator one
8. Trained in cross-cultural negotiation



Vocabulary

A/ What do the underlined expressions mean? Choose the right alternative:



1. the proposal will speak for itself (line 12):
 - a. The proposal will have a positive outcome
 - b. The proposal will be accepted.
 - c. The proposal is fine as it is and does not require anything else.
2. business people are tactile and like to get up close (line 27):
 - a. like to get up early
 - b. ... like to come nearer
 - c. like to keep their distance
3. Western societies are very “clock-conscious,” ... (line 30):
 - a. They attach great significance to time.
 - b. They are very careful with their watches.
 - c. They are conscious of the problem of time.
4. ..., being on time for a meeting does not carry the same sense of urgency. (line 34):
 - a. is never an urgent matter.
 - b. does not have the same meaning.
 - c. is not so serious a matter for them as it is for the others.
5. ... and decisions will be based upon consensual agreement. (line 64):
 - a. ... upon majority view.
 - b. ... upon permission.
 - c. ... upon disagreement.

B/. Find in the text the synonyms or antonyms of the words in Column A, then place them in Column B or Column C as required:

WORDS	SYNONYMS	ANTONYMS
▪ Unimportant		
▪ Fail		
▪ Different		
▪ Adjust/adapt		
▪ Minimise		
▪ Truthfulness		
▪ Brief		



▪ Strength		
▪ implication		
▪ modest		

C/ Match the words in Column A with those they are associated with in column B:

Column A	Column B
a. Takes	1. to complications
b. a sign	2. by name
c. eye	3. for people
d. addressed	4. for a meeting
e. It is common	5. upon agreement
f. being on time	6. contact
g. gift	7. in nature
h. contractual	8. of weakness
i. lead	9. place
j. based	10. giving

III POST-READING

A/ Choose the right alternative among the three options below for each blank in the following paragraph:

Time

The inability of customers to keep (1) time is probably one of the (2) significant irritations in cross-cultural negotiation. Those cultures that are less aware of exactness in time and timing, often (3) understand the preoccupation of Americans and others with time, and vice versa. South Americans and Africans may claim (4) the inability to be on time (5) only the



unavoidable and unforeseen occurrence of other duties - such as those (6) family or friends - or unexpected duties placed on them by members of ruling families that draw (7) away from agreed meetings with Westerners.

- 1.in – to – at
- 2.most – more – much
3. must not – cannot – should not
4. that – whom – which
5. are – is – was
6. involved – involve - involving
7. him – her – them

B/. Choose the right article in the following paragraph:

It is said that over two-thirds of **a/an – the – no article** - effectiveness of **a/an – the – no article** - negotiation is determined by **a – the – no article** - non verbal communication. Body language can therefore frequently provide valuable insight into **a – the – no article** - person's feelings and attitudes. **The – no article** - Gestures and facial expressions can communicate diverse emotions and attitudes. They are, however, often misleading due to **a – the – no article** - marked cultural differences in **a/an – the – no article** - use and interpretation of nonverbal cues.

C/ Fill in the table with the appropriate words:

VERB	NOUN	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB
base	basis		
	depth		
		communicative	
help			
			successfully
weaken			

D/ Rewrite the sentences using the words given:

1. Cross-cultural negotiation training gives negotiators an advantage over competitors.

- Negotiators **are given an advantage over competitors by cross-cultural negotiation training.**

2. Cross-cultural negotiation is about how foreigners close deals. It is also about the aspects that affect the process.

- Not only
.....

3. Strong, direct eye contact conveys confidence and sincerity in the US. Prolonged eye contact is considered rude in Japan.



- Whereas
-

4. Business people are tactile in the Middle East. They like to get up close.

- Because
-

5. In Japan or China, people are very reserved, so it is not uncommon for people to leave a gap of four feet when conversing.

- In Japan or China, people are so
-

6. “How should people be addressed?” I wonder.

- I wonder
-

7. I asked myself: “Are people addressed by first name, surname, or title?”

- I asked myself
-

8. In Germany, negotiators need to analyse information and statistics in great depth, so their decisions take a long time.

- In Germany, negotiators need to analyse information and statistics in such.....
-
-

E/ Focus on the underlined part then ask WH. Questions:

1. He/she learns about the culture, values, and negotiations.

.....

....

2. In Europe and North America, business people will usually leave a certain amount of distance between themselves when interacting.

.....

.....



3. Where will business people usually leave a certain amount of distance between themselves when interacting?

.....

3. Most international business men meet with a handshake.

.....

Pronunciation:

A/ Drop the words in the column

ʃ	z	dʒ
Negotiation	Communications	Objectivity
specialised	proposal	gender
partnership	business	package
concessions	maximise	just

B/. Put the following words in the right columns according to the underlined sounds:

Culture – business – leave – statistics – surnames – builds – Japanese – money – learnt – attractive – personal – package – trust – proceedings – healthy

ʌ	ɪ	i:	ə :	æ

Listening

A/ Watch the video entitled 'Negotiating across cultures' by Krish Dhanam then answer the questions: <http://candogo.com/search/insight?i=6285>

1. The main idea of this presentation is:

- Making sales
- Building trust
- Preparing an encounter
- Understanding international buyers

2. True or false:

- Negotiating across cultures is rarely neglected or unprepared.



- b) Relationship in international business must be based on trust.
- c) International buyers are interested in doing business in the US in order to get advantage of the crisis and the weakened dollar.
- d) Without trust, you will have very little impact concerning your business.
- e) If you fail in meeting someone's expectations over a period of time, you will have succeeded in meeting your own expectations.

2. ASSIGNMENT: Watch the next presentation by the same business consultant, Krish Dhanam, about 'Global Selling: Learn about Your Guests' Background' (<http://candogo.com/search/insight?i=2790>), then fill in the table with appropriate information about the things you need to do and the things you should avoid doing while you are conducting business at the dinner table. The first one is done for you. Once you're done, write an e-mail in which you give advice to a businessmen you know leaving on a business trip to China about what should/should not be done.

DO'S	DON'TS
a. Find specific information about the individual or groups that you are dining with.	c.
b.	d.
	e.

FORUM: Discuss with your classmates whether businessmen can be prepared for venturing into international business travel across cultures. Focus on the following questions:

- Should that be part of their education at university or should their employer give them specific training when needed?
- What are the factors influencing the likelihood of misunderstanding while conducting business across cultures?
- What personality traits can help businessmen navigate through the similarities and differences between business cultures?

Writing

Read the following advertisement about Business Hotel Lelystad in Amsterdam, Holland.

Business Hotel Lelystad – Where Business mixes with Pleasure

Lelystad is an obvious choice for your business meeting – its central location with respect to nearby Lelystad Business Airport, the cities of Amsterdam,



Almere and Utrecht, as well as its excellent infrastructure, all make sure your clients and/or business partners will find this location extremely accessible. Apollo Hotel Lelystad City Centre staff is delighted to facilitate your business meeting, conference or symposium in any way it can. Conference rooms in **Business Hotel Lelystad** can comfortably seat up to 250 people. They are all air-conditioned and have wireless internet access (WiFi). Audio-visual equipment is available on request. After business has been completed, you will undoubtedly be ready to unwind with a delicious glass of local beer or a cocktail in the hotel's bar and lounge, perhaps followed by a superb steak or a delicious Asian meal at the restaurant. **Business Hotel Lelystad**: the perfect venue for entertaining your clients or business partners.

As a manager of (Give a name to your company), you think this hotel is very appropriate for your next business meeting with your American and European associates. Write a reservation letter including all the necessary information.

Instructions:

The details you need to include in your letter:

- Date and time of arrival and departure
- number of days of your stay
- Type of room and any special needs or requests (air-conditioner, internet access (wifi), audio-visual equipment etc.

The tone that you need to use in your letter:

- It must be a professional tone:
- Use salutations: To Whom It May Concern, or Dear Sir or Madam.
- Include the date at the top of the letter.
- The information in the body of your letter must be to the point without unnecessary repetition. You should specifically state what you need and how you will pay.

Use these for a starter:

Date

To Whom It May Concern,

Please reserve a non-smoking king sized bedroom for me and my partner for the following dates_____.

Please charge my credit card for the initial deposit required. Include any discounts that my early registration permits.

Credit card number:

Exact name on the card:

Expiration date:



Thank you for your prompt attention to and I look forward to receiving a letter confirming my reservation.

Thank you,

Your name, address, email, phone, fax

2. **Assignment:** The following link: [http:// www.cyborlink.com/besite/japan.htm](http://www.cyborlink.com/besite/japan.htm) gives you information about Japanese business etiquette.

Read it carefully, then write a conversation between a Tunisian businessman or businesswoman and a potential Japanese client while they are trying to finalize a deal. Both have some knowledge about each other's culture, and so they are very careful in the way they negotiate the deal.