



# **Cross-Cultural Communications in the Workplace**

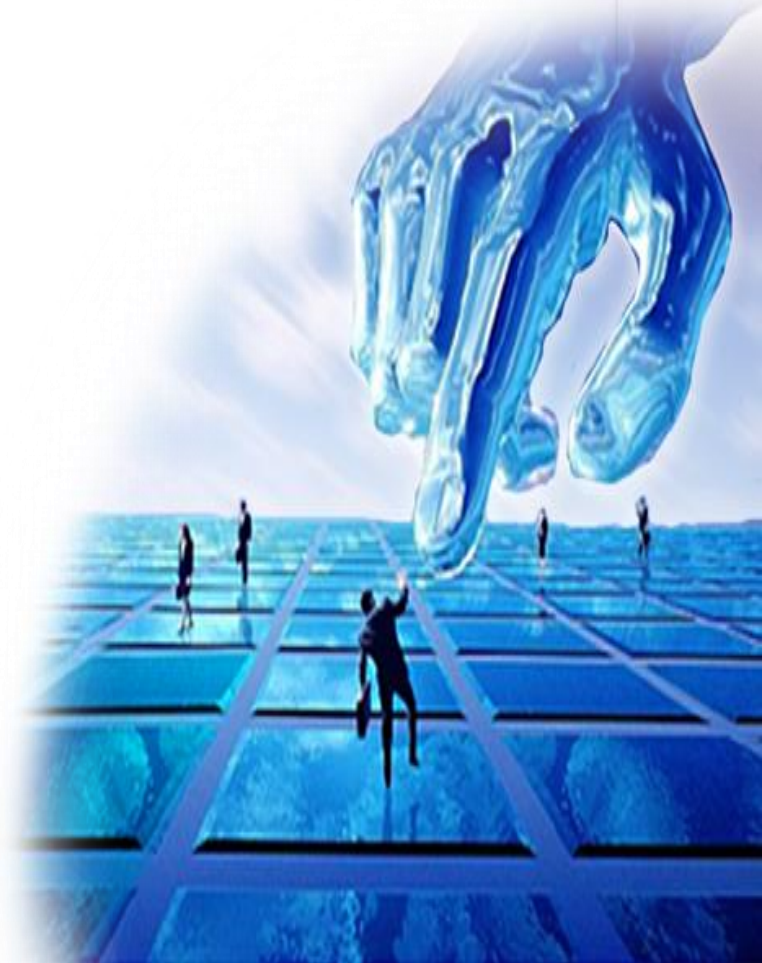
*Karen V. Beaman*

*Managing Partner, The Jeitosa Group, Inc.  
Co-Founder and Editor-In-Chief, IHRIM Journal*

*Lecture prepared for:  
MAP Course on Linguistic Perspectives  
New York University, 13 April 2005*

*"The reasonable person adapts  
himself to the world, while the  
unreasonable one persists in trying  
to adapt the world to himself."*

George Bernard Shaw



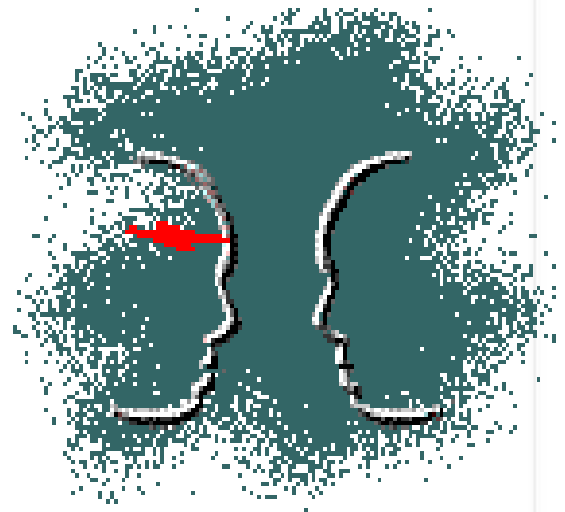
# Objectives for Today



- To describe a model for understanding cultural differences and to build awareness of the effects that culture has on language
- To understand some aspects of the international business environment and the role that culture and language play
- To illustrate the application of various analytical perspectives and models from linguistics and the social sciences on international business communications
- To demonstrate the interdependence of the social science disciplines – sociology, psychology, anthropology, and linguistics – and to show their effects on various business situations

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Culture
4. Communication
5. Global Business
6. Closing



# Do You Know? World Population Composition



If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look something like the following:

There would be:

57 Asians

21 Europeans

14 from the Western Hemisphere, both north and south

8 Africans

52 would be female

48 would be male

70 would be non-white

30 would be white

70 would be non-Christian

30 would be Christian

89 would be heterosexual

11 would be homosexual

# Table of Contents



## 1. Introduction

## 2. Background

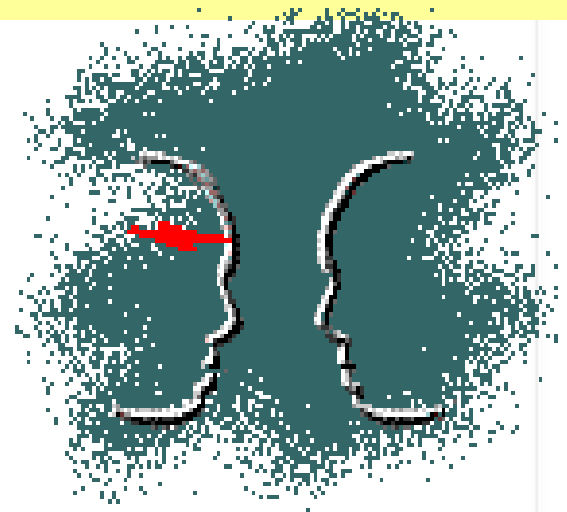
- 2.1 World Situation
- 2.2 Globalization
- 2.3 Business Culture
- 2.4 Language

## 3. Culture

## 4. Communication

## 5. Global Business

## 6. Closing







# World Situation

- Emergence of the Digital Age (e.g., revolution of computer technology, digitization, fiber optics, satellite communications, the Internet)
- Ease and speed of international travel
- Formation and expansion of regional trade alliances (e.g.,
  - NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement)
  - EU (European Union)
  - GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades)
  - ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)
- Growth of international professional associations
- Preponderance of English as the universal lingua franca





# Globalization

- The percent of the U.S. population that is foreign born has grown from 4.8% in 1970 to 6.2% in 1980 to 7.9% in 1990 and over 9% in 2000 (*Ferraro, 2002*).
- The U.S. has the fourth largest Spanish-speaking population in the world. E.g., More than 60% of the people in Miami speak Spanish as their first language (*Ferraro, 2002*).
- 60% of companies will increase their global presence in the coming three years (*ADP Survey, 2002*).
- A large number of corporations receive more than half of their sales from foreign markets. E.g., Coca Cola sells more of its product in Japan than in the U.S. (*Ferraro, 2002*).
- Senior executives say that the ability to manage the business on a global basis is a top priority (*ADP Survey, 2002*).
- All of these changes are facilitating the cross border movement of people, goods, and data, bringing more and more cultures into contact with one another and increasing the potential for cross-cultural conflict.
- What is new about the global economy is the *scale* and the *speed* with which innovations, borrowings (maladies!), etc. are spreading.





# Business Culture

- “Domestic business organizations can be viewed as ‘mini-cultures’ (composed of different people with different roles, statuses, and value systems) that operate within the wider national context.”
- Individuals engage in corporate rituals, perpetuate myths and stories, adhere to norms, symbols and behavioral expectations, and use specialized vocabularies.
- Businesses are both differentiated and socially stratified in that specific roles and statuses can be identified.
- Failure to understand the influence that culture and language has on business has led to misunderstandings, miscommunications, costly marketing blunders, lawsuits, and a general undermining of corporate goals.



# Language in Business

- An American airline offering service to Brazil advertised its “rendezvous lounges” in its business class section. They failed to realize that the word *rendezvous* in Portuguese refers to a room for illicit sexual encounters.
- The American Dairy Association’s successful ad “Got Milk?” was unfortunately translated in Mexico as “Are you lactating?”
- Chevrolet was surprised when their popular compact car, the Nova, when exported to Mexico, didn’t sell. What they failed to realize was that “No va” when translated into Spanish means “no go” or “won’t run”.
- An American ink manufacturer attempted to sell bottled ink in Mexico through their advertisement that they could “avoid embarrassment” (from stains) through their brand of ink. However, the Spanish word used for “embarrassed” was “embarazar” which means to become pregnant. People thought the company was selling a contraceptive device.



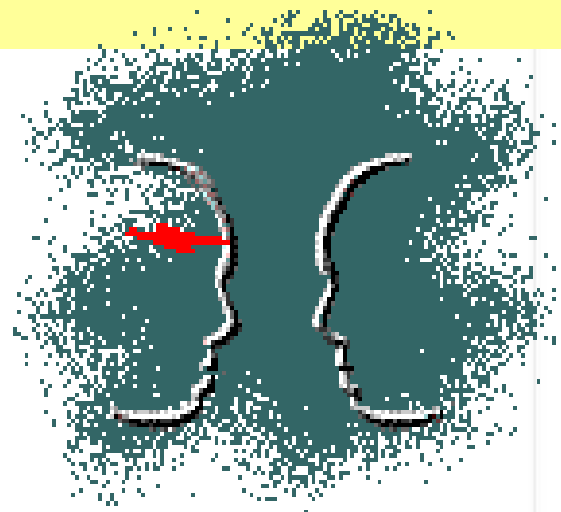
# Language in Business

- The failure rates of U.S. expatriates (individuals on foreign assignments) is significantly higher than for other countries; 76% of U.S. companies experience failure rates over 10%, as compared to 3% for Western European and 14% for Japanese companies.
- One of the biggest reasons for failure is the assumption that if someone is successful in their home environment, then they will be successful in an international environment.
- Research has shown that failures in international business most often result from the individual's inability to understand and adapt to the local country's ways of doing things.
- Companies are beginning to realize that the single most important criterion for success in international business is communication skills. This is followed by personality traits, such as flexibility and accommodation, individual motivation, and the expatriate's family situation.
- Important for successful communication skills are: competency in the local language, motivation to learn, and willingness to use it.

*Ferraro. 2002. The Cultural Dimensions of International Business.*

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Culture
  - 3.1 Definition
  - 3.2 A Cultural Model
  - 3.3 Dimensions of Culture
4. Communication
5. Global Business
6. Cultural/Linguistic Assimilation
7. Summary/Closing





# What is Culture?

## **Culture** (‘kʌltʃə) n.

1. the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action.
2. the total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group; e.g., *the Mayan culture*.
3. the artistic and social pursuits, expression, and tastes valued by a society or class, as in the arts, manners, dress, etc.

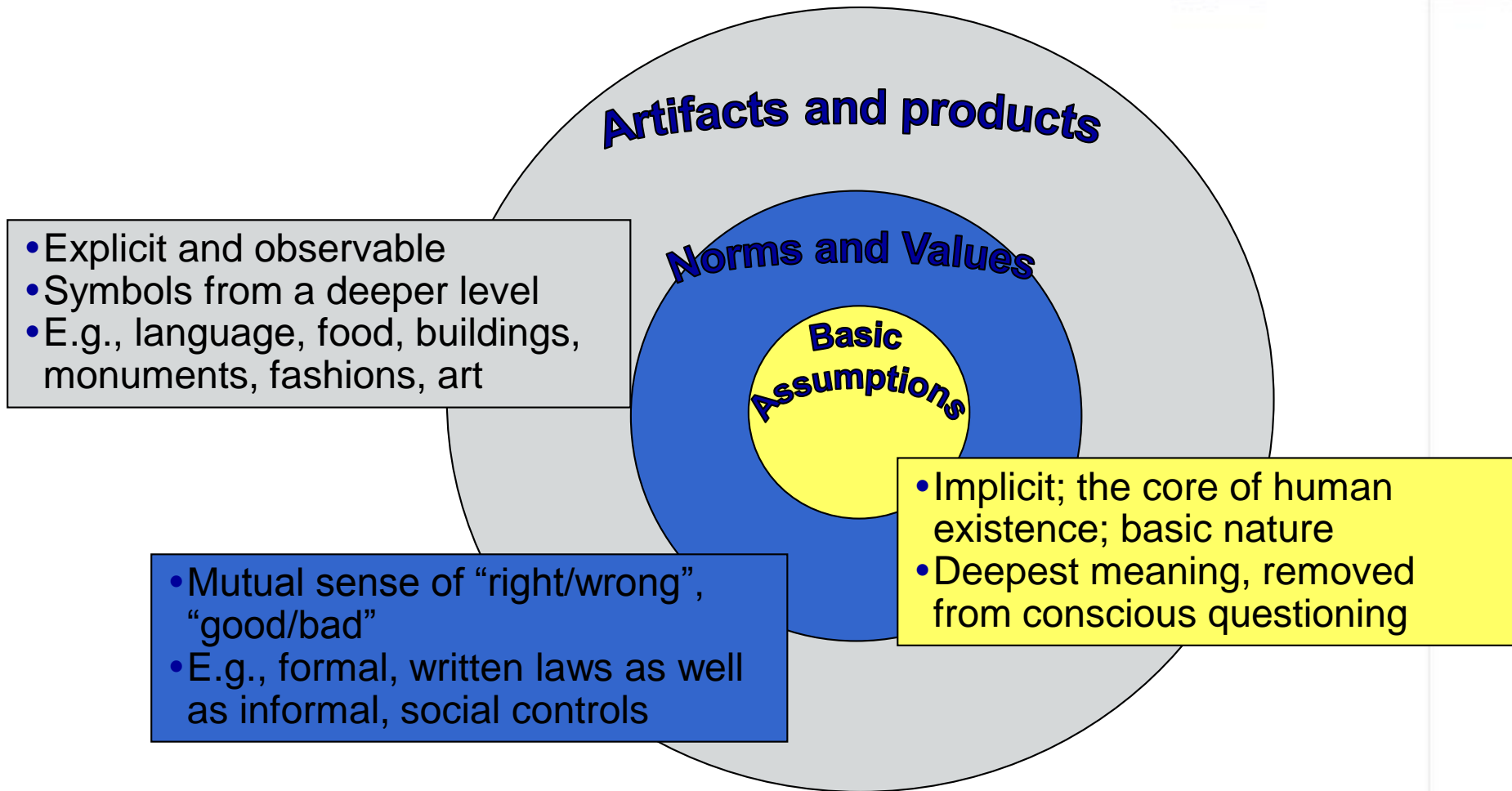
Source: Collins English Dictionary.  
1995. HarperCollins Publishers.

- Permeates both our conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings, and perceptions; unwritten codes of behavior that individuals have internalized
- Affects the way we interpret and judge events, respond to new situations, and make decisions (i.e., the fabric of everyday life)
- Learned and absorbed from our earliest childhood, reinforced by stories and heroes, expressed in our values and views, passed down from generation to generation
- Reflected in the language we use to describe daily phenomena; found on a variety of levels from national/country, corporate/professional, ethnic/group membership, and personal/individual

### 3. Culture

#### 3.2 A Cultural Model

## A Cultural Model



Fons Trompenaars. 1998. *Riding the Waves of Culture*.





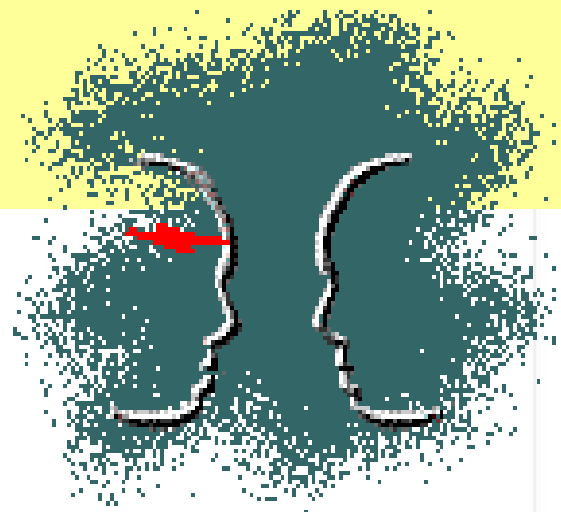
## Nine Dimensions of Culture

- *Relationships* – importance of building relationships versus completing a job
- *Time* – importance of personal relationships versus adherence to schedules
- *Communication* – ways the society communicates, including gestures
- *Hierarchy* – perception of rank in relationship to others and ways of interacting
- *Status Attainment* – importance of personal achievement and sense of well-being
- *Space/Proxemics* – the amount of space needed for comfort in business and personal environments
- *Group Dependence* – importance of the individual versus the group in social and business situations
- *Diversity Receptivity* – how roles, power, and authority are associated with gender, race, religion, and country of origin
- *Change Tolerance* – responses to change, the need for rules, the ability to take risks, and the perception of control over one's own destiny

Schell and Stolz-Loike, *Journal of International Compensation and Benefits*, Jan/Feb 1994.

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Culture
4. Communication
  - 4.1 Language
  - 4.2 Non-Verbal
  - 4.3 Verbal
  - 4.4 Meetings
5. Global Business
6. Closing





# Language

- The ability to speak a language is the most significant feature of being human.
- Because languages are arbitrary symbolic systems, it's not surprising that there is so much linguistic diversity. There isn't even universal agreement about how many languages there are in the world. Estimates range from several thousand to 10,000.
  - Do we count languages that have died out?
  - What about languages in remote areas that haven't been studied as thoroughly?
  - Where do we draw linguistic boundaries (e.g., languages, dialects, accents)?
- However, fewer than 100 languages are spoken by 95% of the world's population. Chinese accounts for 20%. With English, Spanish, Russian, and Hindi, the number rises to 45%. German, Japanese, Arabic, Bengali, Portuguese, French, and Italian bring the figure to 60% (Katzner 1975).



# Top Ten Languages Spoken in the World

<u>Language</u>	<u>Primary Country</u>	<u>No of Speakers</u>
1. Mandarin	China	1,262,358,000
2. Hindi	India	366,000,000
3. Spanish	Spain	358,000,000
4. English	UK/USA	341,000,000
5. Bengali	Bangladesh	207,000,000
6. Portuguese	Portugal/Brazil	176,000,000
7. Russian	Russia	167,000,000
8. Japanese	Japan	125,000,000
9. German	Germany	100,000,000
10. French	France	77,000,000



# Language in International Business

- English is just one of the world's major business languages; it is the mother tongue of only about 5% of the world's population.
- Other major languages in international business include: Spanish, Chinese, French, and German.
- A fundamental tenet of any business encounter is effective communication. Individuals who have to rely on translators and are not skilled in the cultural and linguistic aspects of the foreign country are at a serious disadvantage.
- While many cultures sincerely appreciate a foreigners attempt to speak their language (e.g., Brazilians, Germans), others do not, unless the speaker is very good (e.g., French).



## Second Language Learning

- Commonly stated reasons for not learning a second language:
  - “I’m not very ‘talented’ in learning foreign languages.”
  - “The company can hire local nationals in the country to run the business.”
  - “I’ll only be there for a short period of time, so it’s not worth it.”
  - “It could hinder my advancement at home if I’m too closely associated with them.”
- Reasons for learning a foreign language:
  - Being able to speak about the art, literature and culture of a country greatly enhances the business encounter by earning the respect of the local people
  - According to Benjamin Lee Whorf, the only way to really understand the *worldview* (a system of categories for organizing the world) of a culture is through its language.
  - Learning a second language helps with a deeper understand of one’s own language.
  - Learning a second language is helpful in learning a third and fourth language.





# Language Relativism

- Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis: language is not merely just a mechanism for communication but is also the “shaper” of ideas.
- Language establishes the categories upon which our interpretations of the world are based. Thus, speakers of two different languages will not put the same importance on items that are not significant categories in their language (e.g., color terms, tense systems, noun class systems).
- *“It’s not what you can do, it’s what you do do.” (Michael Halliday).*
- Hence:
  - a deep understanding of the language is facilitated by a good knowledge of the culture;
  - and, a deep understanding of the culture is aided through a solid understanding of the language.



## Non-Verbal Communication

- *Paralinguistics* – the nonverbal elements in speech, such as body language, intonation, etc., that send messages about feelings and emotional states, may affect the meaning of an utterance.
- Some studies say it makes up more than 70% of the communication channel.
- Nonverbal communication is highly dependent on the culture and the context. While some aspects of non-verbal communication may be universal (e.g., smiles, frowns, eyebrow flashes), the great majority are learned and can vary significantly in meaning from culture to culture.
- Unlike verbal communication, many non-verbal elements are out of our conscious control (e.g., blushing when embarrassed, perspiring when nervous, pupil dilation when frightened).
- Studies have shown that when there's a discrepancy between the verbal and the non-verbal messages, people will believe the non-verbal.
- Research has shown that women are better able to read non-verbal cues; 75% showed a significant female advantage (Hall 1978, Rosenthal 1979).

Ferraro. 2002. *The Cultural Dimensions of International Business*.



## Non-Verbal Communication

- *Proxemics*: the study of spatial interrelationships in humans or in populations of animals of the same species.
- *Kinesics*: the study of the role of body movements, such as winking, shrugging, etc., in communication.
  - *Gestures*
  - *Facial Expressions*
  - *Touching*
  - *Posture*
  - *Eye Contact*
- *Silence*: affects timing and turn-taking during discourse
- *Clothing/Hairstyles/Cosmetics/Artifacts*: influences our perceptions of the interlocutor, such their status, their personal/political/religious leanings, etc.



## Proxemics

- Ray Birdwhistle, the founder of *proxemics*, first described the differences in personal space between cultures; e.g., the Italian businessman who backed a British businessman all the way across the room when talking to him.
- You can see major differences in the importance various cultures place on personal space by just observing how people stand in elevators, subways, and queues.
  - In France, if there is any gap at all between you and the person in front of you, you will lose your place in line.
  - By contrast, Americans and British are very uncomfortable when people touch, lean or press against them. They will adopt an overly rigid posture, avoid eye contact, not even acknowledging that other people are present.
- Personal space is different around the head versus the feet. For example, touching someone's foot in the subway is okay, while touching their head is not. It's okay to pat a child on the head in American culture, but not in a Muslim culture.



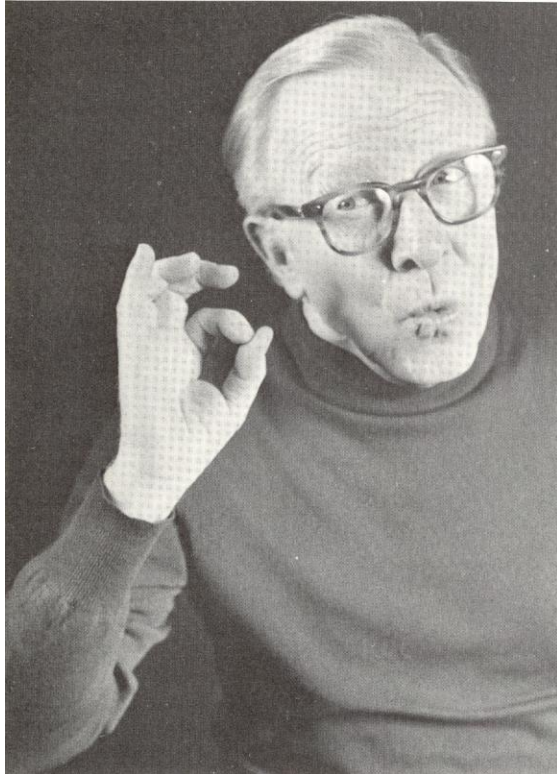
## Gestures

- *Gestures*: 1. a motion of the hands, head, or body to emphasize an idea or emotion; 2. something said or done as a formality or as an indication of intention: a political gesture.

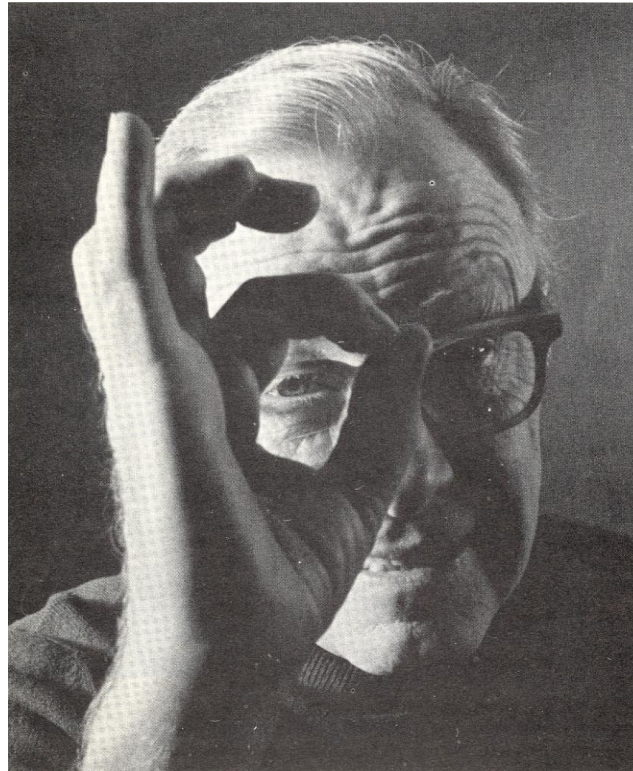




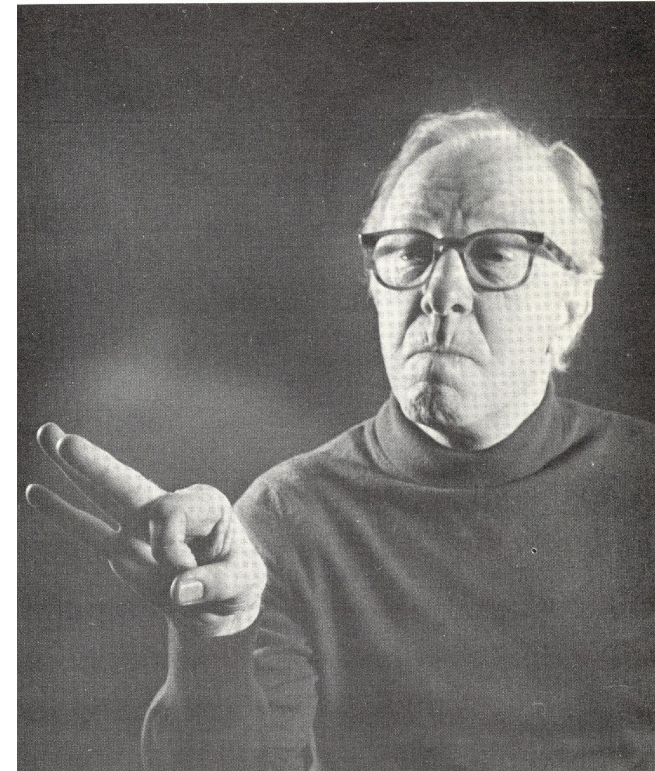
## Gestures – France



***Au Poil! Perfect! OK!***



***Zéro! Worthless!***



***Du menu fretin! Rubbish!***

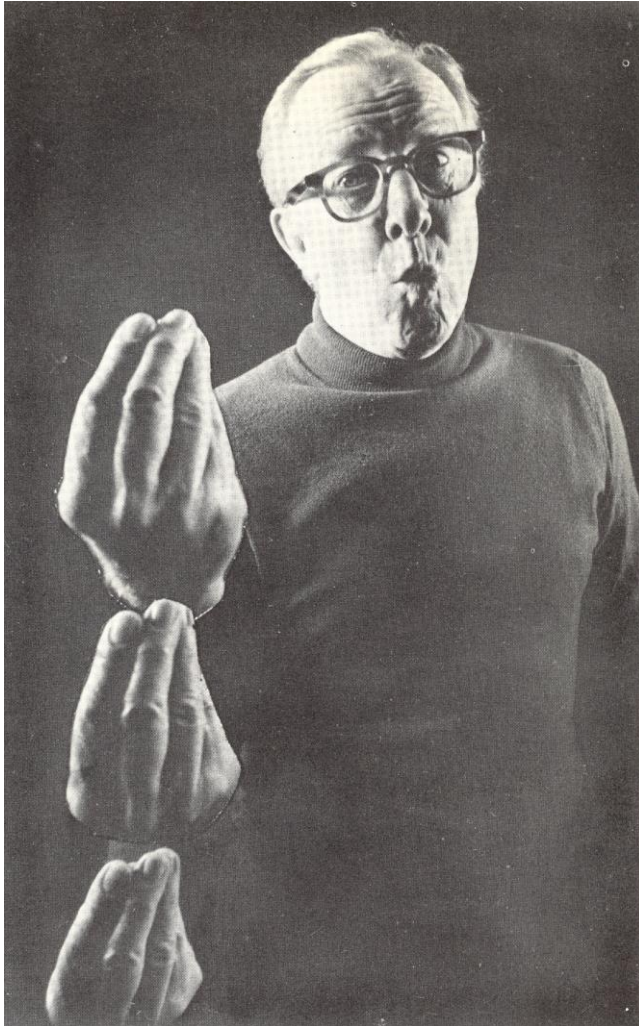
**Watch out: This gesture can mean “asshole” in parts of Latin America!**

*Laurence Wylie. 1977. Beaux Gestes.*





## Gestures – France



***Ah! J'ai eu la trouille!***  
***'I had a fright! I was really scared!'***

*Laurence Wylie. 1977. Beaux Gestes.*

# 4. Communication

## 4.2 Non-Verbal

### 4.2.2 Gestures



## Gestures – Around the World



**EGYPT**

*Be patient*



**ITALY**

*What exactly do you mean?*



**GREECE**

*That's just perfect*

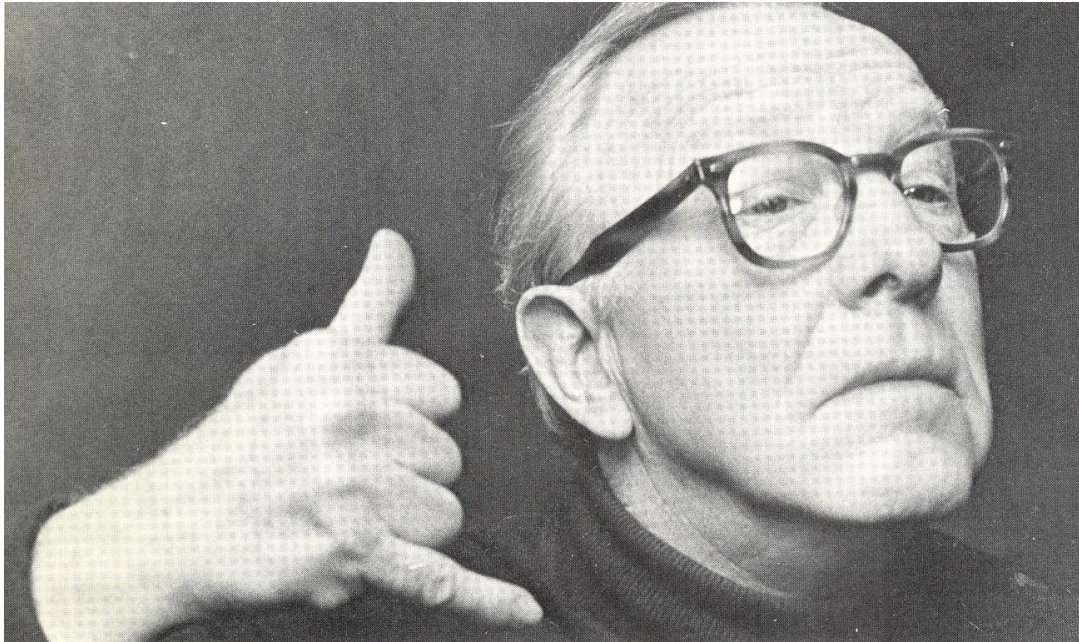
Never underestimate the importance of local knowledge.

HSBC Advertisement. April 2003. *The Economist*.





## Gestures – Around the World



*Western: 'Do you have a telephone?'*

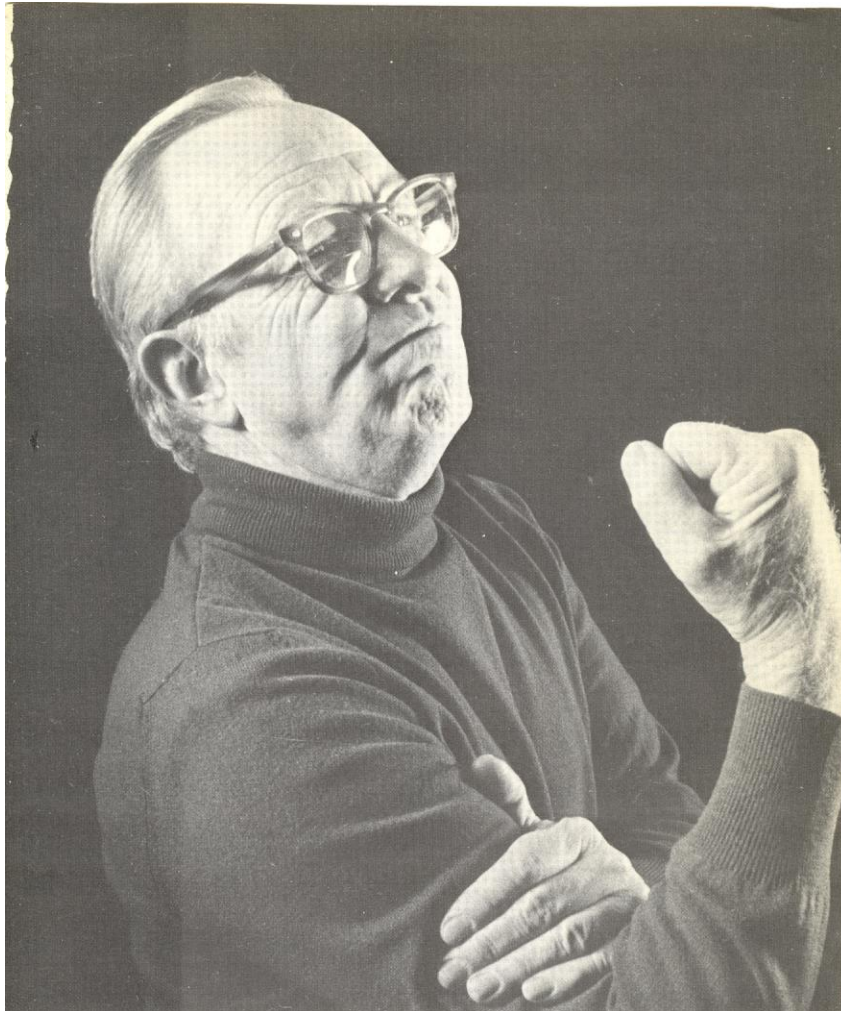
*USA: sign for the Texas long horns*

*Brazil: 'Cuckold!' (meaning your wife is cheating on you)*

*Laurence Wylie. 1977. Beaux Gestes.*



## Gestures



***Le bras d'honneur***  
***'The arm of honor'***  
***'The Royal Shaft'***

***The most macho of gestures***

*Laurence Wylie. 1977. Beaux Gestes.*



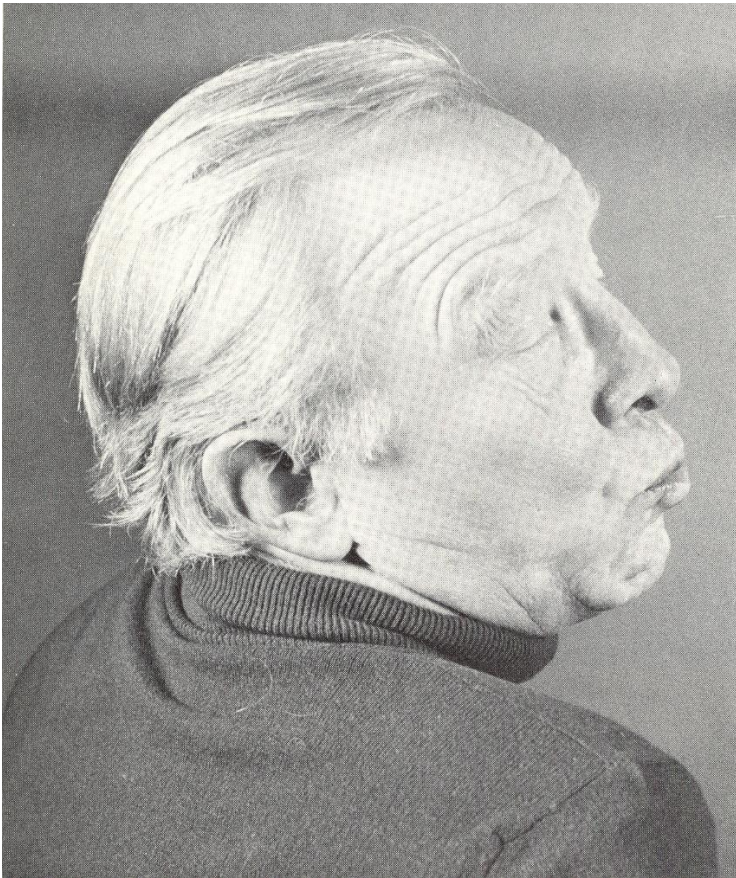
# Facial Expressions

- *Facial Expressions*: 1. a manifestation of an emotion, feeling, etc., without words; 2. a look on the face that indicates mood or emotion.

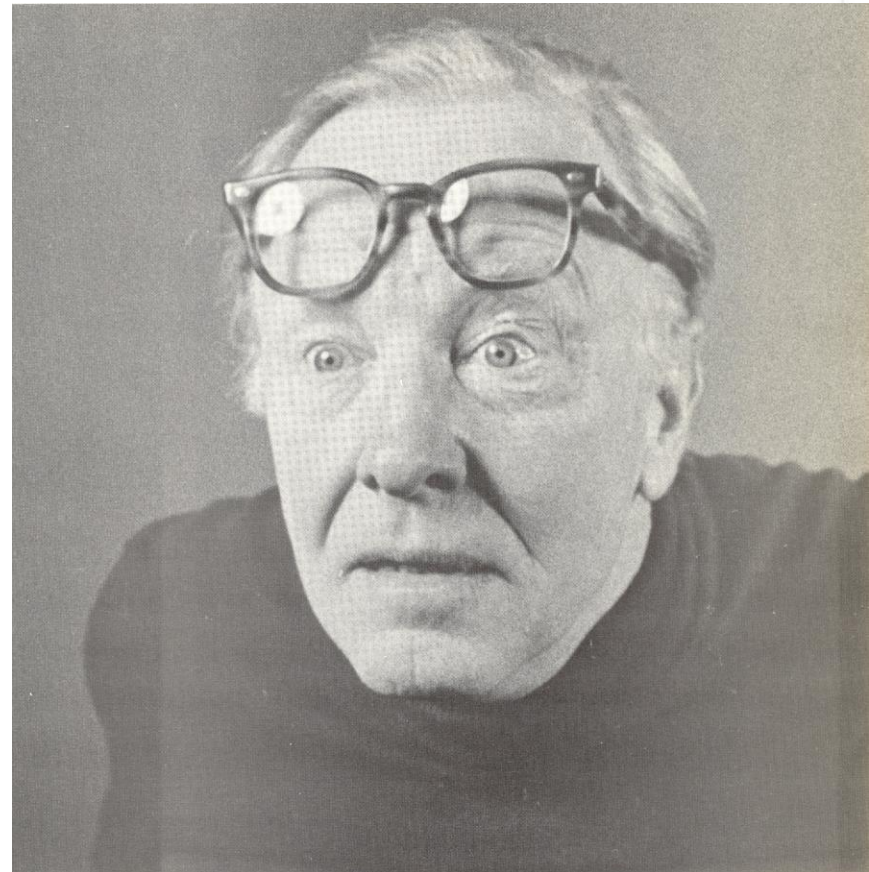




## Facial Expressions



***Je m'en fous! 'I don't give a damm!'***



***Mais, je rêve! 'I can't believe my eyes!'***

*Laurence Wylie. 1977. Beaux Gestes.*





# Touching

- Touching is the most personal of non-verbal communication; in the first few years of life it is the most intense channel of communication.
- Cultures have well-defined systems of rules and meanings on touching, including who touches whom, on what parts of the body, and under what circumstances.
- Types of touching includes: patting, slapping, punching, pinching, stroking, shaking, kissing, licking, holding, embracing, linking, kicking, tickling, laying on (of hands), grooming, guiding
- The meaning of touch can vary from culture to culture. Some cultures are considered “high-touch” (e.g., Mediterranean cultures Arabs, Jews, eastern Europeans); whereas, others are considered “low-touch” (e.g., English, Germans, northern European, and many Asian cultures).
- It's important not to over-generalize. Touch can vary within cultures according to a number of factors, age, sex, and relative status of the individuals.



## Silence

- There are major differences in the interpretation of *silence* in a discourse between cultures.
- Westerners tend to interpret long silences as “non-comprehension” and thus try to “fill up the silence” by explaining the point one more time.
- Japanese often see Westerners as rude, coarse, insensitive, who should be taught to “shut up.”
- Native Americans use long periods of silence when first meeting someone as a way of becoming more familiar and comfortable with the person before beginning a discourse.



## **Elements of Verbal Communication**

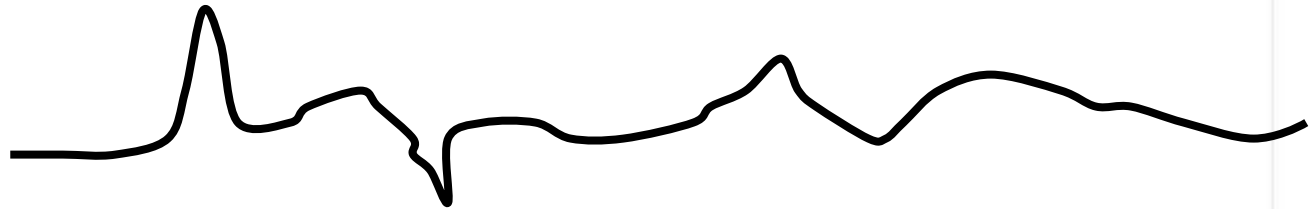
- Intonation
- Turn-taking
- Greetings
- Terms of Address
- Directness/Indirectness
- Agreement/Disagreement
- Individualism/Collectivism
- Explicit/Implicit Communication
- Lexical
- Humor



## Intonation

- Linguistically significant patterns of variation in the fundamental frequency of a speaker's voice.

Anglo-Saxon



Italian



Japanese





## Turn-Taking

- The social convention governing who speaks when in a discourse involving multiple participants; the rules that govern turn-taking are highly culture-dependent.
- American middle class speakers exhibit a pattern of “no gap, no overlap” and maintain strong sense of who speaks next in the conversation. The highest order rule is that the current speaker can select the next speaker. Otherwise, the first person who starts talking gets the floor. If no one starts talking, the speaker is obliged to continue to fill up the awkward silence (*Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1973*)
- Other English speakers, (e.g., New York Jewish (*Tannen, 1976*) and working class Australians (*Horvath and Daisley, 1987*)) demonstrate high frequency of “cooperative overlap” – the process of the next speaker starting before the current speaker has finished.
- In contrast, a variety of other cultures tolerate large gaps between speakers (e.g., Japanese, Native American, Finnish), which to many Westerners invoke a strong feeling of awkwardness.





## Turn-Taking

Middle-class American

A	_____	_____	_____	_____
B		_____	_____	_____

New York Jewish

A	_____	_____	_____	_____
B		_____	_____	_____

Japanese

A	_____	_____	_____	_____
B		_____	_____	_____



# Greetings Around the World

## Brazil:

→ Women kiss and are kissed; men embrace men

## Germany:

→ Handshake between men; one kiss for the woman

## France/Belgium:

→ Two kisses in Paris; three in Belgium; four in Brittany

## Russia:

→ Both men and women kiss each other

## Japan:

→ Bowing; lower status person bows lower than higher status person

## China:

→ “Have you eaten rice today?” => “How are you?”

## Native American:

→ Silence until the two people become comfortable with each other

## West African:

→ Handshake with a snap of the fingers; handholding while talking/walking



## Terms of Address

- Words used to refer to the person you are talking to, for example:
  - Germany: *Herr Doktor Professor Guy*
  - France: *Madame Beaman*
  - Brazil: *o João, a Maria / o Senhor, a Senhora*
  - North America: *John, Mary*
- Pronouns of power and solidarity, for example:
  - French: Tu/Vous *Comment allez-vous? Comment vas-tu?*
  - German: Du/Sie (Ihnen) *Wie geht es Dir? Wie geht es Ihnen?*
  - Spanish: Tu/Usted *Como esta? Como esta Usted?*
- Forms of speech that signify group membership, for example in Japanese:
  - *Uchi* (the in-group) “one of us” *Ohayo gozaimasu*
  - *Soto* (the out-group) “one of them” *Konnichiwa* (Mizutani, 1979)



## American/British Differences

*“Britain and America are two countries divided by a common language.”*

*--George Bernard Shaw*

*“Nowadays we have almost everything in common with America, except,  
of course, language.”*

*--Oscar Wilde*

American:

“Jack will blow his top.”

British:

“Our chairman might tend to disagree.”

American:

“You’re talking bullshit.”

British:

“I’m not quite with you on that one.”

American:

“You gotta be kidding.”

British:

“Hm, that’s an interesting idea.”

Source: *The Navigator*, Jan/Feb 2003.



## Indirectness in Japan

- Japanese exhibit a strong sense of indirectness in their language, often through the use of the passive voice. For example, “It is said that...”, “Some people think that...” Studies have shown that Japanese use the passive construction significantly more than Americans.
- Some Japanese quotations demonstrating the value of indirectness:
  - “Vagueness is virtue.” -Yone Noguchi*
  - “In the Japanese language, exactness is purposely avoided.” -Sumi Mishima (writer)*
  - “We simply do not think it civilized to be too direct in expression.” -Yasushi Akashi (diplomat)*
  - “A strong distrust develops between Japanese if they try to express everything through words.” -Shuichi Kato (essayist)*
- To Americans, the Japanese style of indirect communication can be interpreted as tricky, deceptive, and of questionable integrity.
- To the Japanese, the American style of direct communication can be seen as rude, coarse, and insensitive.

Source: Tony Nemelka, October 1998.





## Agreement/Disagreement

American: “Yes” means yes and “No” means no

Japanese: Yes ‘*Hai*’ means....

1. Yes, I hear you, I agree, and I will do.
2. Yes I hear you, I agree, but I will not do.
3. Yes I hear you, but I do not agree.
4. Yes I am listening, but I do not understand.

Brazilian: An open “no” is considered extremely hostile and rude  
A polite way to disagree would be “I’m not sure” or “It might be difficult”

French: “Ce n’est pas possible” “It’s not possible”,  
... when in fact it very well could be possible but requires  
some negotiation between the two speakers

Source: Tony Nemelka, October 1998.



## Lexical

- Vocabulary is probably the most salient indicator of the relationship between language and culture in the business environment.
- A language's vocabulary contain large numbers of words that reflect the technologies, occupations, and values important to the culture (e.g., sports analogies and colloquialisms in American English).

### Baseball Colloquialisms in American English:

- He threw me a curve ball.
- She fielded my questions well.
- You're way off base.
- You're batting 1,000 so far.
- What are the ground rules?
- I want to touch all bases.
- He went to bat for me.
- He has two strikes against him.
- That's way out in left field.
- It's just a ballpark estimate.



## Lexical

- *Borrowings*: There are a significant number of English words that have been borrowed into other languages, e.g., Japan, *besuboru* 'baseball', Portuguese, *time* 'team', *site* 'website', *lapitope* 'laptop'.
- *Slang*: The use of slang can signal what subgroup the member is "in", e.g., teenagers, Jazz musicians. Business slang includes expressions like "red tape", "in the black", and "bottom line."
- *Euphemisms*: Most cultures avoid taboo words around sexual relations and bodily functions, e.g., "bathroom" (American), "washroom" (Canadian), and "water closet" (British).
- *Proverbs*: Signal what values a culture places on various aspects of behavior, e.g., "The early bird catches the worm;" "Schaffe, schaffe, Häusler baue" (Swabian), 'Work, work, build a house;' "The Germans live to work, the French work to live." "Monkey jam, eat pepper" (Liberian). "Pole-pole mwendo njia," 'Slow-slow going road' (Swahili).
- *Word Formation*: German has the highly productive ability to create completely new words by concatenating multiple smaller words together, e.g., *eierlegende Wollmilchsau* 'egg-laying wool milk pig.'



## Lexical Differences

- Navajo: have multiple ways to say “I’m going” depending on whether they’re going on foot, by horseback, wagon, boat, or airplane
- Nuer (Sudan); have literally hundreds of words in their language to distinguish between different types of cows based on their color, markings, and configuration of horns (*Hickerson 1980*).
- Koga (southern India): have seven different words for “bamboo” and not a single word for snow (*Plog and Bates 1980*).
- Sotho (South Africa): has one word that means both “green” and “blue.”



## Lexical Differences

<u><i>Lexical Item</i></u>	<u><i>American English</i></u>	<u><i>British English</i></u>
■ “homely”	→ “plain” or “ugly”	→ “warm” and “friendly”
■ “rubber”	→ “condom”	→ “eraser”
■ “knock up”	→ “get pregnant”	→ “stop by the house”
■ “table something”	→ “defer indefinitely”	→ “give prominent place”

More frequently two different words refer to the same thing. E.g, the British live in “flats” not “apartments”, they “queue up” rather than “line up”, and wear “plimsoles” rather than “sneakers.” To the British, the “trunk” is the “boot”, the “hood” is the “bonnet”, the “windshield” is the “windscreen”, the “horn” is the “hooter”, and the vehicle runs on “petrol” not “gas.”





## Conducting Meetings

- Meeting style varies significantly across cultures, including such factors as timing, duration, agenda, breaks, etiquette, facilitation, notes, etc.
- In France, meetings rarely include scheduled breaks (except lunch). People get up and leave whenever they need to take a break.
- In Latin cultures, meetings typically start 15-30 minutes late, leading to such colloquialisms as “hora brasileira” or “hora mexicana”.
- In Germany, meetings start on time, follow a defined agenda, and are followed up by printed minutes from the meeting.
- Meeting purpose and decision-making strategies also vary across cultures. For example, in France, decisions are generally made in the hallway after the meeting has been concluded.
- Use of “small talk” and asking personal/family-related questions varies tremendously across culture (e.g., high in Arab cultures and in some American local cultures, such as the South, low in German and Japanese cultures)



## Style and Culture in Meetings

### American

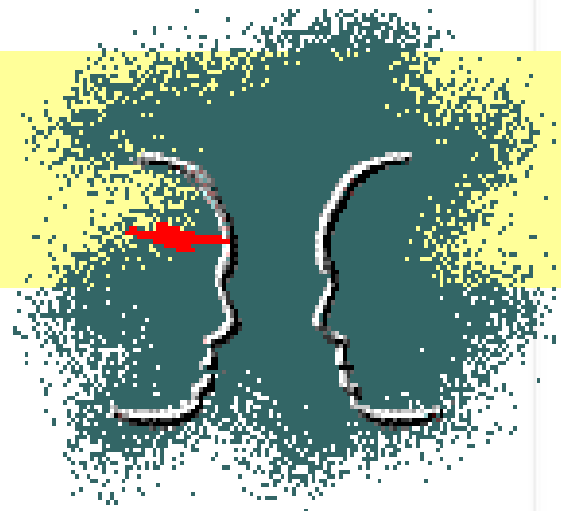
- Direct
- Drive to be explicit:
  - Give / get the facts
  - State a clear position and rationale
  - Decide on the merits or rely on position of authority
- Giving and taking negative feedback is a sign of strength
- Confront when necessary with logic and persuasion skills

### Japan

- Indirect
- Drive to reach consensus:
  - Explore interest of all parties
  - Reserve stating a firm position
  - Achieve consensus
- Protect the dignity and self esteem of yourself and others
- Avoid confrontation
- Strive to develop harmonious, trusting business relationships

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Culture
4. Communication
5. Global Business
  - 5.1 Business Culture
  - 5.2 Multi-centric Mindsets
  - 5.3 Global Mindset Research
6. Closing





## Cultural Influences on Business

- Interpretation of legal, statutory, and compliance issues
- Definition of standards, consolidation and reporting needs
- Understanding differences in:
  - Verbal/written cultures, familial/ hierarchical cultures, etc.
  - Work styles, methods, and ethics
  - Decision-making processes
  - Meeting etiquette
  - Levels of technology acceptance
  - Openness towards new ideas and change







## Business Culture

- Business cultures are like societies studied by traditional anthropologists; employees in corporations:
  - engage in rituals
  - perpetuate corporate myths and stories
  - adhere to a set of norms, symbols, and behavioral expectations
  - use specialized vocabularies
- Business organizations tend to be both differentiated and socially stratified, with specific roles and statuses identified.
- Business organizations deal with groups such as unions, governments, environmental groups, consumers, etc., and have external relations with other social systems.

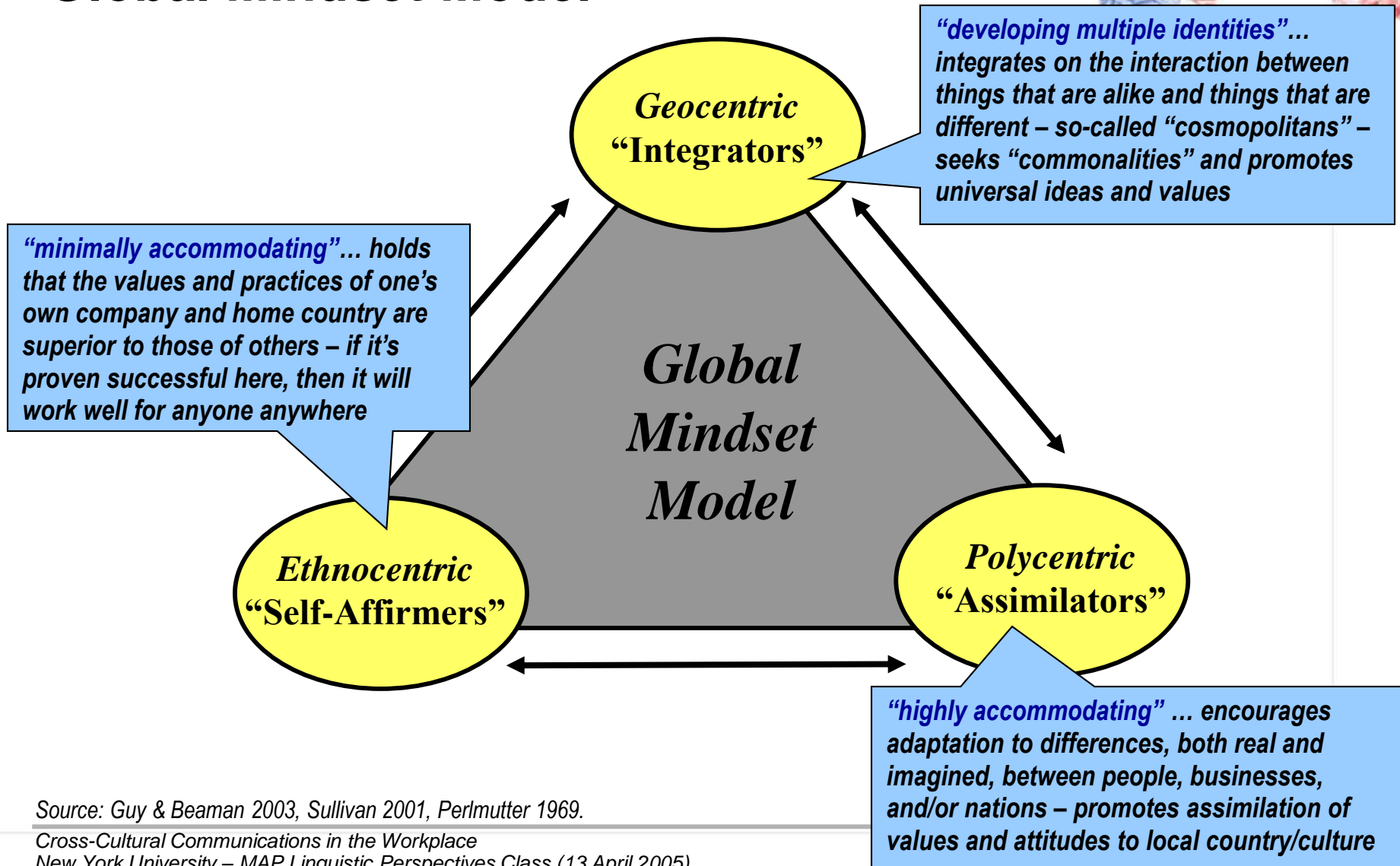
## Multi-centric Mindsets

- Global pioneers must have a particular mindset -- the capacity to manage knowledge in order to boost the value of human capital.
- “Deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action.” *Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline*





## Global Mindset Model



Source: Guy & Beaman 2003, Sullivan 2001, Perlmutter 1969.

Cross-Cultural Communications in the Workplace

New York University – MAP Linguistic Perspectives Class (13 April 2005)



## Global Mindset Model

### **ETHNOCENTRIC**

#### Benefits:

- Safeguards proprietary technology and business design
- Poses cognitive challenges, inspiring emulation

#### Risks:

- Tries to fit all situations into one and only way of doing things
- Promotes “not-invented-here” syndrome
- Inhibits adaptation and absorption of new ideas

### **POLYCENTRIC**

#### Benefits:

- Bridges differences by being an empathetic facilitator
- Accelerates market entry, product adaptation, positioning
- Attuned to various customers, markets, and institutions

#### Risks:

- Can have limited territorial scope
- Champions “idealized” foreign markets / “going native”
- Tendency to generalize small experiences to larger domain

### **GEOCENTRIC**

#### Benefits:

- Supports diversity and sensitivity to local practices
- Thinks of individuals as part of the global community
- Pushes managers to seek new ways of doing things

#### Risks:

- Knowing a little about everything, but not much about anything
- Difficult to develop and retain while preserving who you are
- Can erode clarity and common purpose; lost in “hodge-podge”



## Global Mindset Research Question

*"How do individuals' personalities, experiences, attitudes, and global orientation towards the intercultural experience relate to their success on an international assignment?"*





## 5. Global Business

### 5.3 Global Mindset Research



# Population Demographics

Job Title	N	%
Executives	25	25.0%
Directors	34	34.0%
Professionals	30	30.0%
Academics	11	11.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Home Base	N	%
United States	52	52.0%
Canada	7	7.0%
France	12	12.0%
Germany	7	7.0%
United Kingdom	6	6.0%
Other Europe <sup>1</sup>	4	4.0%
Asia Pacific <sup>2</sup>	8	8.0%
Latin America <sup>3</sup>	3	3.0%
Africa <sup>4</sup>	1	1.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Netherlands, Spain, Finland

<sup>2</sup> Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan

<sup>3</sup> Brazil

<sup>4</sup> South Africa

Education	N	%
Some College	8	8.0%
Bachelors Degree	34	34.0%
Masters Degree	48	48.0%
Advanced Degree	10	10.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Destination	N	%
United States	15	15.0%
United Kingdom	14	14.0%
France	12	12.0%
Germany	11	11.0%
Other Europe <sup>1</sup>	17	17.0%
Latin America <sup>2</sup>	7	7.0%
Asia Pacific <sup>3</sup>	20	20.0%
Africa <sup>4</sup>	3	3.0%
Middle East <sup>5</sup>	1	1.0%
None	-	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Belgium, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Norway, Czech, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Brazil, Venezuela

<sup>3</sup> Australia, NZL, Singapore, HK, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan

<sup>4</sup> South Africa, Kenya

<sup>5</sup> Iran

Age Group	N	%
Under 30	4	4.0%
30-39 years	33	33.0%
40-49 years	25	25.0%
Over 50	38	38.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Gender	N	%
Male	73	73.0%
Female	27	27.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Intl Experience	N	%
< 6 months	23	23.0%
6-12 months	10	10.0%
1-2 years	16	16.0%
3-5 years	18	18.0%
> 5 years	33	33.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Assign. Duration	N	%
< 6 months	22	22.0%
6-12 months	17	17.0%
1-2 years	21	21.0%
3-5 years	23	23.0%
> 5 years	17	17.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



# Findings – Global Mindset

Measures	Ethno	Poly	Geo
<b>ASSIGNMENT:</b>			
Satisfying	-0.171		
Successful			
Frustrating			0.318
Educational		0.257	
<b>EXPERIENCE:</b>			
Amount of Experience		0.165	
Duration of Stay		0.216	-0.214
Stay Extended			
Time Since Completed	-0.347		
<b>LANGUAGE:</b>			
Linguistic Accommodation		0.196	
Prior Language Ability			0.172
Language Improvement	-0.169		
Language Maintained		0.209	
<b>MEMBERSHIP:</b>			
Home Comm/Social Orgs		-0.196	
Home Prof/Acad Orgs	0.181	-0.230	
Global Comm/Social Orgs			
Global Prof/Acad Orgs			
<b>ATTITUDE:</b>			
Local Language		0.306	
Local Friendships	-0.201		-0.238
Home Management Support			0.219
Spousal Support			

Note:  $p < .05$  ( $r = .164$ );  $p < .01$  ( $r = .230$ );  $p < .005$  ( $r = .254$ );  $n = 100$

- ◀ Ethnocentrics found the experience the least satisfying; Geocentrics the most frustrating; Polys the most educational
- ◀ Polycentrics had the most experience and longest stays; Geos the shortest stays; Ethnocentricity declines with time elapsed since assignment ended
- ◀ Ethnos showed the least language improvement; Polys the strongest linguistic accommodation; Geos the best language ability prior to the assignment
- ◀ Ethnos more likely to participate in home country orgs; Polys the least likely
- ◀ Ethnos and Geos least likely to make local friends; Geos need most home management support



## Findings – Culture

Measures	USA n=50	Non- USA n=50
<b>MINDSET:</b>		
Ethnocentricity		
Polycentricity		
Geocentricity	7.9	7.4
<b>ASSIGNMENT:</b>		
Satisfying		
Successful		
Frustrating	2.7	2.0
Rewarding	4.4	4.0
<b>EXPERIENCE:</b>		
Amount of Experience	No Significant Differences	
Duration of Stay		
Stay Extended		
Time Since Completed		
<b>LANGUAGE:</b>		
Linguistic Accommodation		
Prior Language Ability	1.2	2.8
Language Improvement		
No of Languages Spoken	2.1	2.7
<b>MEMBERSHIP:</b>		
Home Comm/Social Orgs	No Significant Differences	
Home Prof/Acad Orgs		
Global Comm/Social Orgs		
Global Prof/Acad Orgs		
<b>ATTITUDE:</b>		
Local TV/Radio	3.7	4.2
Local Friendships		
Home Management Support	4.2	3.6
Spousal Support		

◀ Americans were more likely to be Geocentric than the non-Americans (population selection)

◀ Americans also found the experience simultaneously more frustrating and rewarding

◀ Non-Americans were more likely speak more languages and have prior foreign language skills

◀ Non-Americans were more likely watch local TV/radio; Americans required more home management support



## Findings – Family Situation

Measures	Family Went n=44	Family Didn't Go n=32	No Family n=24
<b>ASSIGNMENT:</b>			
Satisfying	4.6	4.1	4.5
Successful	2.2	2.0	2.6
Frustrating			
Educational			
<b>EXPERIENCE:</b>			
Amount of Experience	3.8	2.1	2.7
Duration of Stay			
Stay Extended			
Willingness to Go Again	1.0	1.1	1.7
Time Since Completed	2.5	3.4	3.3
<b>LANGUAGE:</b>	No Significant Differences		
Linguistic Accommodation			
Prior Language Ability			
Language Improvement			
Language Maintained			
<b>MEMBERSHIP:</b>			
No of Comm/Social Orgs	1.8	1.3	0.8
No of Prof/Acad Orgs	1.4	1.5	0.6
Global Comm/Social Orgs	2.1	1.4	1.6
Global Prof/Acad Orgs	2.3	1.9	1.3
<b>ATTITUDE:</b>			
Local Language			
Local Friendships	4.5	4.4	4.8
Home Management Support			
Spousal Support			

◀ Those with family along and those with no family were the most satisfied and most successful (personal evaluation)

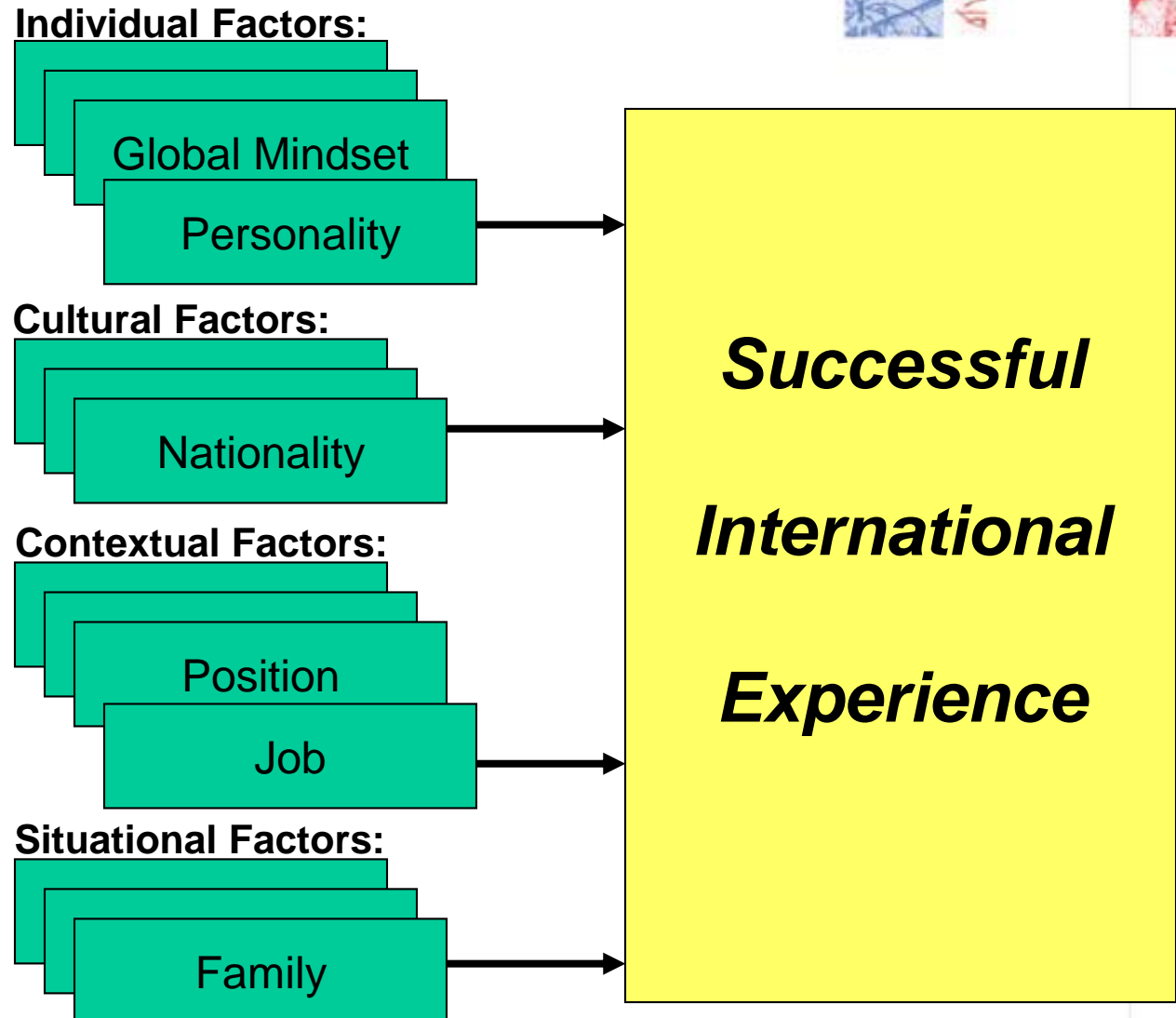
◀ Those with family along and those without family stayed the longest and were more willing to return.

◀ Those with family along were more likely to participate in social and professional organizations of all types

◀ Those with family along and those with no family made more local friends



# Multi-Dimensional Model of Global Mindset





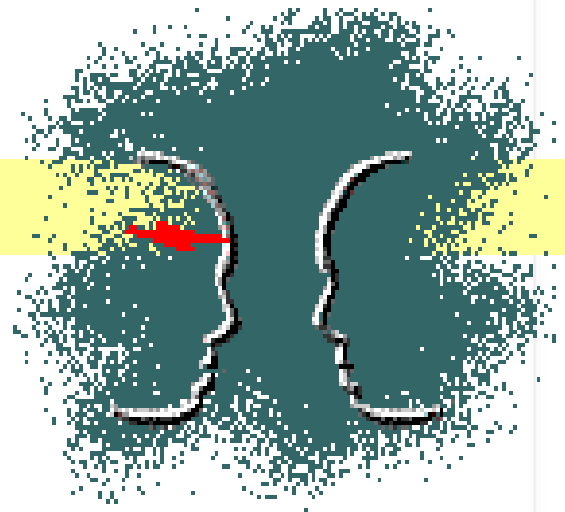


## Study Conclusions

- Determination of international success in a global environment is multi-factorial – individual, situational, cultural, and experience-based
- Global Mindset and inherent personality characteristics affect individual reactions to the international experience, and hence satisfaction and performance
- Effective management of international assignees needs to evaluate the Global Mindset of the individual to:
  - *assess individual personality traits for appropriate fit,*
  - *manage the acculturation process through effective training,*
  - *foster a motivational environment with adequate support, and*
- Ethnocentricity diminishes with experience, demonstrating that Global Mindsets are malleable and evolve over time
- Linguistic and cultural sensitivity and ability jointly affect successful international performance

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Culture
4. Communication
5. Global Business
6. Closing



# Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity



### ***THE ETHNOCENTRIC STAGES***

#### **I. DENIAL**

- A. Isolation
- B. Separation

#### **II. DEFENSE**

- A. Denigration
- B. Superiority
- C. Reversal

#### **III. MINIMIZATION**

- A. Physical Universalism
- B. Transcendent Universalism

### ***THE ETHNORELATIVE STAGES***

#### **IV. ACCEPTANCE**

- A. Respect for Behavioral Difference
- B. Respect for Value Difference

#### **V. ADAPTATION**

- A. Empathy
- B. Pluralism

#### **VI. INTEGRATION**

- A. Contextual Evaluation
- B. Constructive Marginality



# Do You Know?

## **The Final Word on Nutrition and Health and Nationality**

**It's a relief to know the truth after all the conflicting medical studies.**

**1a) The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.**

**1b) The French eat a lot of fat and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.**

**2a) The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.**

**2b) The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.**

**3) The Germans drink a lot of beer and eat lots of sausages and fats yet suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.**

## **CONCLUSION:**

**Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.**

## 6. Closing



*Merci*

*Obrigada*

*Ευχαριστώ*

*Dankeschön*

*Kiitos*

*Tack*

*Gracias*

*Dank u*

*Grazie*

*Shukriya*

*Tesekkür ederim*

*Takk*

*Terimah Kasih*

*Krop Kuhn Kah*

*Dziêkujê*

*Arigato*

*Asante Sana*

*Go Raibh Maith Agat*

*Thank You!*

谢谢

*For more information, contact:*

*karen\_beaman@jeitosa.com*

*www.jeitosa.com*





## References (1/2)

- Baruch, Yehuda. 2002. "No Such Thing as a Global Manager." *Business Horizons*. University of Delaware Library. Vol. 34, No. 1. January-February. 36-41.
- Bartlett, Christopher and Sumantra Ghoshal. 1989. *Managing Across Borders: The Transnational Solution*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Beaman, Karen V. (Editor). 2004. *Out of Site: An Inside Look at HR Outsourcing*. Austin TX: Rector-Duncan & Associates.
- Beaman, Karen V. 2003. "The New Transnational HR Model: Building a Chaordic Organization." In Row Henson (editor). *Heads Count: An Anthology for the Competitive Enterprise*. San Francisco: Book Block.
- Beaman, Karen V. (Editor). 2002. *Boundaryless HR: Human Capital Management in the Global Economy*. Austin TX: Rector-Duncan & Associates.
- Beaman, Karen V. and Gregory R. Guy. 2003. "The Efficiency Innovation Model: Cultivating a Transnational Environment." *IHRIM Journal*. November 2003, Vol. VII, No. 6.
- Beaman, Karen V. and Alfred J. Walker. 2000. "Globalizing HRIS: The New Transnational Model." *IHRIM Journal*, October 2000, Vol. IV, No. 4.
- Bennett, Milton J. 1993. "Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity." In *Education for the Intercultural Experience* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), ed. R. M. Paige, Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press. 21-71.
- Caligiuri, Paula. 2002. "Expatriate Selection and Cross-Cultural Training: Technological Application for Effective Global Assignment Management." *IHRIM Journal*. September 2002, Vol. VI, No. 5.
- Caligiuri, Paula M. & Di Santo, V. 2001. "Global Competence: What is it and Can it be Developed through Global Assignments." *Human Resource Planning*. Vol. 24, No. 3. 27-35.
- Caligiuri, Paula M. 2000. "Selecting Expatriates for Personality Characteristics: A Moderating Effect of Personality on the Relationship Between Host National Contact and Cross-Cultural Adjustment." *Management International Review*. Vol. 40, No. 1. 60-80.
- Caligiuri, Paula M. 2000. "The Big Five Personality Characteristics as Predictors of Expatriate Success." *Personnel Psychology*. Vol. 53. 67-88.



## References (2/2)

- Guy, Gregory R. and Karen V. Beaman. 2004. "Mindset and Identity in the Globalizing Future." Presented for consideration to the International Journal of the Humanities.
- Guy, Gregory R. and Karen V. Beaman. 2003. "Global Orientation and Sociolinguistic Accommodation as Factors in Cultural Assimilation." To appear *International Journal of the Humanities*, Vol. 1.
- Handy, Charles. 1994. *The Age of Paradox*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Harzing, Anne-Wil. 1995. "The Persistent Myth of High Expatriate Failure Rates." *Human Resource Management*. Vol. 6. May 1995. 457-475.
- Hock, Dee. 1999. *Birth of the Chaordic Age*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Hoffman, Edward. 2001. *Psychological Testing at Work: How to Use, Interpret and Get the Most Out of the Newest Tests in Personality, Learning Styles, Aptitudes, Interests, and More*. McGraw-Hill Trade..
- Hofstede, Gerte. 1980. *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- McCall, Morgan W. and George P. Hollenbeck. 2002. *Developing Global Executives: The Lessons of International Experience*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Moore, Karl. 2003. "Great Global Managers." *Across the Board* 2, No. 24. May/June. New York: The Conference Board.
- Perlmutter, H. 1969. "The Tortuous Evolution of the Multinational Corporation." *Columbia Journal of World Business* January/February. 9-18.
- Sanchez, Juan I., Spector, Paul E., & Cary, Cooper. 2000. "Adapting to a Boundaryless World: A Developmental Expatriate Model." *The Academy of Management Executive*. Vol. 14. 96-107.
- Senge, Peter. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday/Currency.
- Sullivan, John. 2001. "Mindsets, Managers, and Globalization." *IHRIM Journal*. Vol. V, No 4, November 2001.
- Trompenaars, Fons and Charles Hampden-Turner. 1998. *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Global Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.