

Педагогикалық ғылымдар



Педагогические науки



Pedagogical sciences

IRSTI 16.01.45

M.V. Novozhilova¹ (orcid - 0000-0002-0444-5272) – *main author*
I.G. Loshkova² (orcid - 0000-0002-5031-9453)

¹*Cand. Ped. Sci., Ass. Prof.,* ²*Senior instructor*
^{1,2}*M.Kh. Dulaty Taraz Regional University, Taraz, Kazakhstan*

e-mail:¹novamarina1969@mail.ru,²i.loshkova@mail.ru

<https://doi.org/10.55956/DAQQ6320>

TEACHING CROSS- CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AT BUSINESS ENGLISH LESSONS

Abstract. This article is devoted to the issues of students' preparation for working in a cross-cultural Business setting. The authors describe some common cross-cultural theories and show how they may be applied in Business English classes. The material of the article covers the essentials of Business English teaching and learning focusing on cross-cultural communication. The article also depicts how vocabulary, reading, speaking, and writing skills acquired at the lessons are used in case studies, projects and role-plays within a cross-cultural Business context. The authors present a sufficient number of cultural notes, such as punctuality, the style and delivery of a presentation, persuasion strategies, the importance of body language, etc. that help students improve cross-cultural awareness and behave properly in business meetings.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication, collaboration, business interactions, communication strategies, verbal and nonverbal cues.

Introduction. These days, to prepare students for working in an intercultural business environment, the teachers of Business English get acquainted their students with the problems of cross-cultural communication and effective strategies to identify and overcome them.

A number of scholars including Robinson-Stuart and Nocon, Stella Ting-Toomey, Edward Hall and others, studied such kinds of problems.

For example, Robinson-Stuart and Nocon emphasize the importance of understanding second language culture in language acquisition [1]. Stella Ting-Toomey [2] focuses on three obstacles that prevent effective cross-cultural understandings, among them cognitive constrains, behavior constrains and emotional constrains. Ting-Toomey's main idea is that misunderstanding tends to lead to communication problems. The key point of cross-cultural communication is knowledge. First, it is essential that people understand the potential problems of cross-cultural communication, and make a conscious effort to overcome these problems.

Second, it is important to assume that one's efforts will not always be successful, and adjust one's behavior appropriately.

As for Edward Hall [3], he puts great emphasis on nonverbal communication calling it the "silent language". Emphasizing the identity of culture and communication, focusing on the symbolic function of human behavior, E. Hall noted: "Culture is communication".

We would like to describe how we applied the knowledge of peculiarities of cross-cultural communication among students of different Business English level in project work and case studies.

Terms and methods of research. Direct observation, questionnaires, review of relevant literature, interviews, focus groups, assessments/surveys, records & report studies.

Research results. The results were presented at a meeting of a scientific methodological seminar of “Practical foreign languages” Department, where the authors made a comparative analysis of students’ achievements in two groups.

We started our experiment with the questionnaire to determine the level of English and cultural awareness of our second-year students (30 students).

After analyzing the results, we divided students into two groups.

The first group was formed from students with a good level of English, but with little knowledge of peculiarities of cross-cultural communication.

The second (focus) group was presented by students with a satisfactory level of English, but with the knowledge of some difficulties of cross-cultural communication.

Both groups had the same Business textbook, but we gave more additional materials with the focus on cultural notes and effective strategies to identify and overcome some difficulties of cross-cultural communication to the second group. These strategies were taught at every Business English lesson.

The first group used only the basic textbook. Though they improved their level of English, they did not obtain enough knowledge of cross-cultural communication, as they did not have such creative tasks as case studies, problem solving, and business games. While the focus group performed a wide range of above-mentioned activities. For example, preparing for successful presentations or negotiating, students used cultural notes: the importance of body language, confidence, sincerity, the “Poker Face” and persuasion strategies.

At the end both groups worked on the same project and case studies, which include the role-play based on American style of presentation, meetings and negotiating, where the focus group students turned to be more creative and successful than the students of the first group.

Observing the work and involvement of students from both groups, we came to the conclusion that applied methods were effective and motivating.

In the final survey, the students noted the interesting and useful activities and the importance of cultural awareness. The assessment sheets showed the high level of knowledge of students from experimental group.

The discussion of research results. Our article tackles the key functional areas of business interactions such as presentations, meeting, and socializing. Our aim is to help students to develop the language they need to succeed in the workplace. Our students need to relate the language they are learning to their own work experience and communicate successfully with people of different cultures.

Effective communication is especially challenging as students have to be aware of cross-cultural values and attitudes and the impact on how we communicate across cultures and how others perceive the world.

According to a survey from Fierce, Inc., 86 percent of workers said that workplace failures happened due to ineffective communication and a lack of collaboration. As businesses grow and technology makes it easier to work with companies around the globe, the need for organizations to learn cross-cultural communication has grown with it.

The students of Business English course study cultural information and communication strategies in making a presentation, meetings and negotiating not only in Kazakhstani culture, but also in American.

The following cultural notes help our students improve cross-cultural awareness and behave properly in business meetings.

“Time is money”

Americans believe that time is a product, which can be spent, used, lost, or managed.

Punctuality, arriving on time and starting on time, is highly valued in America.

When a meeting begins, only a short time is spent on small talk and introductions. You will quickly get right down to work, and start discussing your official business.

Schedules and deadlines are very important. It is expected that activities and projects will be organized according to a schedule, and that everyone will follow the schedule.

Efficient use of time is important. Americans focus on doing the job in the quickest way possible. They dislike wasting time on things not directly related to the current item of business.

The Agenda

Business meetings are usually organized according to an agenda.

The agenda lists all the topics in the order that they will be discussed at the meeting. It is prepared in advance and is generally distributed to the meeting participants before the meeting.

Participation of the members of the meeting is given on the agenda. Generally, each agenda item is discussed by a specific person, who has been dealing with that item.

At the beginning of each meeting, the chairperson will ask the participants if they have any changes to make to the agenda. The agenda may be changed by adding new topics or other business. Topics may be deleted (taken off the agenda) or tabled (delayed) until another meeting. The order of the topics can be changed.

The meeting is generally organized in chronological order. Discussion begins with a review of topics from the previous meeting. Then, current topics are discussed. Topics that were not listed on the agenda are usually discussed at the end of the meeting.

Giving the Presentation

American presentations are fact-filled and fast paced.

After giving a brief general introduction, move directly to the main part of the presentation. Give evidence and examples to support your main points. Presentations rely heavily on facts and figures.

Presenters should have detailed knowledge of the material being presented. The presentation is generally followed by a discussion period during which the audience asks specific and detailed questions.

The style and delivery of a presentation is as important as the content. The effectiveness of a presentation depends on a balance of logical argument, audience interest, and entertainment value. Presenters must appear confident, knowledgeable, and well prepared. Americans interpret the appearance of confidence and competence as a sign of actual competence.

For impromptu presentations, when you have no preparation time, follow a chronological order. Begin with a discussion of the past, move to the present situation, and finish with recommendations for the future.

Places to meet

Americans often hold meetings away from the office.

Meetings that occur in restaurants serve the same purpose as the meetings which take place in the boardroom. Restaurants can be convenient places to meet business colleagues.

Breakfast meetings and business lunches are popular. They can save time and also provide an opportunity to meet privately, away from the office. These meetings are very similar to office meetings: participants may want to negotiate, make decisions, or finalize contracts. In addition, the meeting participants can exchange information which can be acted upon immediately during the same business day.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming meetings are a way to develop ideas and solve problems.

A brainstorming session produces as many ideas as possible about a specific topic. It is a fast-paced, creative process. At the beginning of the meeting, the goal is to suggest a variety of ideas so that many points of view can be considered before a decision is made.

Interrupting in a brainstorming session is quite acceptable as ideas are meant to be shared. One person writes down the ideas for all the participants to see. This helps people think of more ideas.

Evaluations of ideas occurs at the end. Once all the ideas have been given, all the participants consider the different ideas and choose the best. In this way, the group collectively makes a decision, and responsibility is shared.

Persuasion strategies

Americans use facts and logic when persuading others.

Americans find out what their clients want and need. They try to satisfy those specific requirements in order to present an offer, which will match their clients' needs.

The use of supporting evidence is very important. Using statistics, surveys, and scientific research is common. Claims and statements are presented with documented proof. In general, Americans are impressed and persuaded by facts and figures.

Involving the client and making the offer personally relevant to him or her is also important. Explain how the offer will benefit the client, and clearly describe how his or her future will be improved by accepting your offer.

If your offer is rejected, respond with more facts and evidence. Prove that your offer is the best choice.

Finally, summarize all the facts and evidence which support your position and repeat the fact that your offer will benefit the client.

“Just the Facts”

Americans have a profit-based approach to negotiations.

Developing long-term relationships is not as important a factor in American negotiations as in Asian negotiations. Decisions will not be made on personal relationships alone. Americans also rely heavily on costs, profits, and facts. As a result, negotiators often have an impersonal, direct manner.

Negotiators have a wide range of authority and decision-making power. They expect to make important decisions during negotiations, without consulting their superiors.

During the negotiations, Americans openly discuss the issues or concerns that either side has. They want to deal directly and immediately with problems that arise in order to develop the details and specific points of the agreement. Also, deadlines are very important and can influence decisions.

Lawyers play an important role in the negotiations. Americans often depend on lawyers to ensure that contracts will not be misinterpreted or broken. Everything must be written down.

The Chairperson

Meetings are led by a chairperson.

The Chairperson, or “chair”, is the man or woman who directs the participation and discussion in a meeting. He or she leads the meeting participants through each stage of the agenda.

The Chairperson opens the meeting by introducing guests, and then asking if there are changes to be made to the agenda. Once the agenda has been changed and accepted, the chairperson announces the first speaker and “gives him or her the floor”.

The Chairperson has three main responsibilities. First, the chair must make sure that every topic on the agenda is discussed. Second, the chair keeps everyone “on topic” and talking about the agenda item. Third, the chair formally moves discussion from one topic and speaker to the next topic and speaker.

The most senior member is not necessarily always the chairperson. The position of chairperson can be held by a variety of people; the specific choice depends on the meeting situation. Some departments have a rotating chair, where each meeting is chaired by a different member of the team.

Body language

Confidence

Nonverbal communication, body language, is very important in all cultures. Americans use eye contact, hand gestures, and body posture to help understand a person’s character. This information help you to appear self-confident, capable, and reliable in American culture.

These characteristics are highly valued in American culture. A firm handshake, welcoming smile, and relaxed, straight posture are all signs of confidence and competence.

Presentations

When making a presentation, it is appropriate to use gestures to help the audience understand what you are communicating. Gestures towards your visual aids whenever you refer to them and gesture toward your audience with your hand palm up to show that the presentation is relevant to them. The American audience will pay attention and trust you more if you look directly at them. Avoiding eye contact may give the impression that you are unsure of your facts. A strong clear voice, straight posture, and relaxed body movements are signs of confidence.

The Handshake

The first greeting between strangers, which includes a handshake and eye contact, is an opportunity for Americans to assess a person’s character. Americans value self-confidence. A firm handshake is interpreted as a sign of mental and emotional strength, self-confidence, and the ability to get things done. A loose handshake is interpreted as a sign of weakness and lack of confidence. Looking directly at the person you are greeting shows confidence and suggests honesty. Avoiding direct eye contact shows lack of confidence and sometimes suggests lack of honesty.

Showing Opinion

Americans value openness and directness (interpreted as honesty) when expressing opinions, and they watch for facial expressions and other body language to determine agreement or disagreement. Nodding the head up and down, smiling, and leaning forward slightly show agreement. Frowning, moving the head from

right to left, leaning back, looking away, and raising the eyebrows show disagreement. Not showing whether you agree or disagree may be interpreted as meaning that you disagree or that you are not being completely honest with the other person. Facial expressions also show that you are interested in and paying attention to the conversation.

Participation

In a meeting where ideas are being suggested and discussed, active participation is appropriate and expected. Each person is expected to suggest his or her own ideas and express opinions on the ideas of others. Silence in this situation may be interpreted as a lack of knowledge, lack of confidence, lack of interest, or as disagreement. Raising a hand or arm slightly above the table, raising the index finger, raising the eyebrows and leaning forward, are used individually or in combination as signals that a person wants to interrupt. Raising a hand, with the palm facing the other person can stop someone else from interrupting you.

Sincerity

When you are trying to persuade or convince someone, eye contact is important. Americans interpret direct eye contact as a sign of honesty and sincerity, especially when asking specific questions. Looking someone “in the eye” when you answer a question is a sign that you are trustworthy. Leaning forward, gesturing with an open hand (palm showing), and turning to face your listener directly are signs of sincerity. Starting or maintaining direct eye contact for long periods, sitting very close, touching, and speaking loudly may be interpreted as aggressive behaviour. Leaning back, raising the eyebrows, and silence are signs of doubt.

The “Poker Face”

In a negotiating situation, facial expressions showing opinions are not appropriate. Americans try to achieve a “poker face” (no facial expression) when negotiating. Maintaining eye contact, controlling hand movements, and having a relaxed posture are all signals of confidence, self-control, and seriousness. Sometimes a casual attitude towards dress occurs in negotiations, with the jacket removed and the shirt sleeves rolled up. This reflects the American desire to “get down to business”. Americans often interpret long periods of silence (longer than five seconds) as rejection of an offer.

All Finished

In general, Americans use both verbal and nonverbal cues to show that the discussion of the topic is finished. Sitting back in the chair, closing a folder, organizing papers, putting down a pen or pencil, and looking at the chairperson, are all signs that the speaker is finished talking. The chairperson may signal the end of the meeting by gathering papers together and preparing to stand. However, near the end of a meeting other members may start to use some of the signals listed above, as well as look at the clock or look around the room, to show that they are ready to, or need to, stop the meeting.

Conclusion. Thus, in our article, we presented a set of cultural notes that help Business English students be aware of peculiarities of cross-cultural communication. The results of the experiment proved that the students equipped with the knowledge of peculiarities of this or that culture and effective strategies to overcome difficulties and misunderstandings in communication are able to analyze and apply them in real business situations, such as business meetings, negotiating, and socializing.

References

1. Robinson-Stuart, G., Nicon H. (1996). Second culture acquisition: Ethnography in the foreign language classroom. *Modern Language Journal*, 80: 432-433.
2. Ting Toomey, S. (2009). *Communicating across cultures*. Guilford Publications.
3. Brown, H. Douglas. (2010). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New York: Longman.
4. Colombo, M. and D. Furbush. (2009). *Teaching English language learners: Content and language in middle and secondary classrooms*. ThousandOaks, CA: Sage.

Material received on 25.05.22.

М.В. Новожилова¹, И.Г. Лошкова²

^{1,2}*М.Х. Дулати атындағы Тараз өңірлік университеті, Тараз қ., Қазақстан*

**ІСКЕРЛІК АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІ САБАҚТАРЫНДА
МӘДЕНИЕТАРАЛЫҚ КОММУНИКАЦИЯНЫ ОҚЫТУ**

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада студенттерді нақты мәдениаралық іскерлік қарым-қатынас жағдайында жұмыс істеуге дайындау мәселелеріне арналған. Авторлар кейбір жалпы мәдениаралық теорияларды сипаттайды және оларды іскери ағылшын тілінде қалай қолдануға болатындығын көрсетті. Мақала материалы мәдениетаралық коммуникацияға баса назар аудара отырып, іскерлік ағылшын тілін оқыту мен үйренудің негіздерін қамтиды. Мақалада сонымен қатар, сабақтарда алынған лексика, оқу, сөйлеу және жазу дағдылары мәдениаралық бизнес контекстінде кейстерде, жобаларда және іскери ойындарда қалай қолданылатындығы көрсетілген. Авторлар студенттерге мәдениаралық хабардарлықты жақсартуға және іскерлік кездесулерде өзін-өзі ұстауға көмектесетін ұқыптылық, презентация стилі және презентациясы, сендіру стратегиясы, ымдау тілінің маңыздылығы және т.б. сияқты бірқатар мәдени мәліметтерді ұсынады.

Тірек сөздер: мәдениетаралық коммуникация, ынтымақтастық, іскерлік қарым-қатынас, коммуникативтік стратегиялар, ауызша және ауызша емес сигналдар.

М.В. Новожилова¹, И.Г. Лошкова²

^{1,2}*Таразский региональный университет им. М.Х. Дулати, Тараз, Казахстан*

**ОБУЧЕНИЕ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ
НА ЗАНЯТИЯХ ДЕЛОВОГО АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА**

Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена вопросам подготовки студентов к работе в условиях реального межкультурного делового общения. Авторы описывают некоторые распространенные межкультурные теории и показывают, как их можно применять на занятиях делового английского. Материал статьи охватывает основы преподавания и изучения делового английского языка с упором на межкультурную коммуникацию. В статье также показано, как словарный запас, навыки чтения, разговорной речи и письма, приобретенные на занятиях, используются в кейсах, проектах и деловых играх в межкультурном бизнес-контексте. Авторы представляют ряд сведений культурологического характера, таких как пунктуальность, стиль и подача презентации, стратегии убеждения, важность языка жестов и т. д., которые помогают обучающимся улучшить межкультурную осведомленность и вести себя соответствующим образом на деловых встречах.

Ключевые слова: межкультурная коммуникация, сотрудничество, деловое общение, коммуникативные стратегии, вербальные и невербальные сигналы.