Language - source of all misunderstanding

TEACHING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH

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Vienna-Oxford
International Corpus of English
http://www.univie.ac.at/voice/

ELFA
English as a Lingua Franca in Europe

Each: approximately 1 million items

INTERNATIONAL CORPUS OF ENGLISH
http://ice-corpora.net/ice/
Business correspondence

What do employers want?

Although most jobs in the corporate sector now require English, many of the ‘soft skills’ which make graduates employable are not language specific. Typically, employers ask:

- Are you punctual and dressed appropriately?
- Can you work in a team?
- Do you have a confident, polite manner?
- Are you an analytic but creative thinker?
- Can you explain ideas patiently and clearly?
- Can you handle telephone calls well?
- Can you communicate effectively to other employees who may be more or less senior?
- Are you familiar with standard office software?
- Are you able to learn new technologies and business processes quickly?
- Can you make clear presentations to colleagues?
- Can you communicate well to speakers from another culture or social background?
Current trends in intercultural training and coaching:

- International Team Leadership
- International Conflict Management
- Intercultural Communication Competence
- Intercultural Mediation
- International Negotiation
- Intercultural Coaching 
  & Facilitation

Questioning the concept of “national cultures” e.g. Hofstede, Trompenaars/Hampden-Turner, Schwartz, GLOBE-STUDY etc.

| TABLE 4.1: Long-Term Orientation (LTO) Values for 39 Countries and Regions |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| COUNTRY/REGION                  | SCORE RANK      | COUNTRY/REGION  | SCORE RANK |
| China                           | 118             | Slovakia        | 36            |
| Hong Kong                       | 96              | Italy           | 34            |
| Taiwan                          | 87              | Sweden          | 33            |
| Japan                           | 80              | Poland          | 33            |
| Vietnam                         | 80              | Australia       | 31            |
| Korea (South)                   | 75              | Germany         | 31            |
| Brunei                          | 65              | Canada Quebec   | 31            |
| India                           | 61              | Switzerland     | 31            |
| Thailand                        | 56              | New Zealand     | 30            |
| Hong Kong                       | 56              | Sweden          | 30            |
| Singapore                       | 48              | United States   | 29            |
| Denmark                         | 46              | Spain           | 29            |
| Netherlands                     | 44              | Germany         | 29            |
| Norway                          | 44              | Canada          | 23            |
| Ireland                         | 43              | Philippines     | 19            |
| Finland                         | 41              | Spain           | 19            |
| Bangladesh                      | 40              | Nigeria         | 18            |
| Switzerland                     | 40              | Czech Republic  | 13            |
| France                          | 39              | Pakistan        | 0             |
| Belgium total                   | 38              | Belgium         | 38            |
|                                 |                 |                 |               |

Scores for countries or regions in bold type were calculated from the original Chinese Value Survey database. Scores for other countries or regions were based on applications.

Cultures and Organizations: Software of 

CULTURE = NATION STATE?
“Personality is like love: everyone agrees it exists, but disagrees on what it is.”


Six positions concerning PERSONALITY which most scholars agree on:

(1) Identity is not fixed.
(2) Identity is constructed and may vary.
(3) Contexts are moderated by social variables and are expressed through language.
(4) Identity is salient in every communicative context.
(5) Identity informs social relationships and communicative exchanges.
(6) More than one identity may be articulated equating an interactive system of identities management.


INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE (ICC)
Descriptors of Communicative Competence

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Council of Europe 2001

Domains, scenarios, situations, communicative tasks and objectives, forms of oral and written interaction, interactive strategies, language processes, socio-linguistic skills, intercultural skills...

Training Intercultural Competence in English

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<td>Critical incidents</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• NO LECTURES
• FOCUS ON USE OF LANGUAGE (Discourse strategies, politeness conventions…)
• PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION EXERCISES
TEACHING ONE'S OWN CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

• WHAT IS NORMAL FOR YOU?
• FOCUS ON USE OF LANGUAGE (Discourse strategies, politeness conventions, ...)
• PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION EXERCISES

WHAT'S NORMAL FOR YOU?

Punctuality
Discuss the following questions with your partner:

1. Are you always on time?
2. How long do you wait if someone is late for an appointment?
3. What information do you exchange when you greet someone?
4. When do you say “Good evening”?
5. Do you always wear a watch?
6. What is the following words mean to you? 

Discuss this with your partner [2]: see as many of the following phrases as possible.

- Are you optimistic?
- Do you believe that you are lucky?
- Are your family and friends important to you?
- Do you agree?
- Do you disagree?

Are you a tolerant person?

How do you feel about someone who:
- Has no time as planned?
- Has a ring in her / his nose?
- Walks around you think of as part of a team?
- Has more than a child?
- Doesn't send his children to school?
- Intervenes all the time when you are talking?

Discuss this with your partner [3]: try to find a common one as many of the following phrases as possible.

- Are you optimistic?
- Do you believe in yourself?
- Are you a tolerant person?
- Are your family and friends important to you?
- Do you agree?
- Do you disagree?

What do you see in these pictures?

Discuss with your partner [4]: Look at the different pictures and describe:

- Are you optimistic?
- Do you believe in yourself?
- Are you a tolerant person?
- Are your family and friends important to you?
- Do you agree?
- Do you disagree?

Discuss this with your partner [5]: See as many of the following phrases as possible.

- Are you optimistic?
- Do you believe in yourself?
- Are you a tolerant person?
- Are your family and friends important to you?
- Do you agree?
- Do you disagree?
TEACHING COUNTRY SPECIFICS

• TRAINEE’S CHOICE OF TARGET CULTURE
• FOCUS ON INTERCULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT FACTS
• TRAINING OF PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES
• PRACTICAL PRESENTATION EXERCISES

34. Saudi Arabia is the world's largest exporter of
   a. mineral coal.
   b. pure gold.
   c. crude oil.

35. Makkah and Medina are
   a. trade places in Saudi Arabia.
   b. historic battle sites.
   c. Islam's holiest cities.

26. Modern India has been an independent
    nation since
   a. 1965.
   c. 1947.

28. India’s currency is called
   a. Bath.
   b. Rupee.
   c. Peso.
TEACHING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

- FOCUS ON USE OF LANGUAGE: repairing, compensating, cooperating …
- FOCUS ON COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS: politeness conventions, building rapport …
- PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION EXERCISES: face-to-face, telephone, email …

BAD EMAILS

POLETE RESPONSES

ASKING INDIRECTLY

You want to find out the following things, but are not allowed to ask directly. Start a conversation and try to find out who ...

- the driver of the car in front of you
- how much you should tip
- the people's names
- the time
- the next stop

When do you think you should stop? ...
- I'm not sure.
- I don't know.
- It's up to you.
- I'm not sure.
- I don't know.

In what language do you speak?
- Spanish.
- English.
- French.
- German.
- Russian.

In what country do you live?
- The United States.
- Canada.
- Australia.
- France.
- Japan.

In what city do you live?
- New York.
- Toronto.
- Paris.
- Tokyo.
- Osaka.

In what country do you work?
- The United States.
- Canada.
- Australia.
- France.
- Japan.

In what country do you study?
- The United States.
- Canada.
- Australia.
- France.
- Japan.

In what country do you travel?
- The United States.
- Canada.
- Australia.
- France.
- Japan.

In what country do you visit?
- The United States.
- Canada.
- Australia.
- France.
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In what country do you visit?
TEACHING METALANGUAGE

- FOCUS ON USE OF LANGUAGE: negotiation techniques, politeness conventions …
- FOCUS ON COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS: face-saving strategies …
- PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION EXERCISES: role plays, simulations, scenarios …
TEACHING CRITICAL INCIDENTS

• **FOCUS ON COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS:** politeness conventions, building rapport …

• **PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION EXERCISES:** role plays, simulations, scenarios …

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**CRITICAL SITUATIONS**

What would you do in the following situations? Write your answers on a mini-whiteboard.

1. Your colleague has a meeting at the same time as yours. What will you do?
2. Your colleague refers to you as “off duty.” What will you do?
3. Someone asks for a cup of coffee. Do you offer a coffee or ask what they want?
4. Your colleague’s boss asks for your help. What will you do?
5. Your colleague offers a drink but you don’t want one. What will you do?
6. Your colleague offers something to eat. Do you accept or decline?
7. Your colleague has a problem. Do you offer help or let them solve it?
8. Your colleague’s boss asks for your help. What will you do?
9. Someone asks something you don’t understand. How will you respond?
10. Your colleague asks you for help. What will you do?
“International English and the Training of Intercultural Communicative Competence”
Judith Mader, Rudi Camerer
*Interculture Journal* 12/2010
http://www.interculture-journal.com/

Professional Business English Trainers:
*Intercultural Competence in Business English*
Rudi Camerer, Judith Mader
Cornelsen 2012

“Testing intercultural competence in (International) English: Some basic questions and suggested answers”
Rudi Camerer
THANK YOU!

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