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**FEATUERS OF MODERN BUSINESS CULTURE AND
COMMUNICATION OF RUSSIA AND CHINA**

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the features of understanding of modern Russian and Chinese business culture and communication. Modern cultural anthropology, based on the experience of interaction with other cultures, maintains cognitive unity of mankind, which means the similarity of thinking processes in different cultures. Unique individual look of each culture is the result of a special, peculiar only to this culture the system elements, which are not always unique and are repeated in many cultures. Interdependence of cultures in the modern world is becoming increasingly clear each passing day and is manifested at all levels of human activity, particularly in business sphere. Intercultural dialogue and business space are increasingly close to each other. While the impacts of culture on business have been much discussed, the influence of languages and international standards has been underappreciated in international business. We address this paucity by integrating literature from international economics, international business, Chinese and Russian business history, and linguistics to examine influence on business culture of these two countries.

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Keywords: Culture, intercultural communication, Chinese, Russian, language.



1. Introduction

Cultures, as a rule, reveal themselves in situations where much is at stake. Marriage, family obligations, stressful experiences reveal the distinctive and fundamental features of culture. But there is no better platform for observing culture in action than business, business environment in a broad sense. Any business is a joint activity that is mediated by a culturally defined attitude to work, power, trust, wealth and communication. Communication styles vary widely across the world, and they contribute to a stunning variety of business styles. Based on all this diversity, it becomes necessary to determine what business cultures and business communication styles of Russia and China have in common or differ, and what stereotypes are present among Russians about the business culture of China.

Intercultural business communication is a process of direct interaction of business culture, that is carried out within a framework of different (to a greater or less extent) national stereotypes of thinking and behavior (including situations of professional interaction), which significantly affects the mutual understanding of the parties in communication (Astafurova, 1997). It is also an integral part of economic culture, since communication has been a set of norms, knowledge, skills, values that are accumulated and developed in the process of interaction between business entities. Communication is not only a process of exchanging information, meanings, symbols and knowledge; it is a kind of accumulator and a spokesman for the cultural and national identity, traditions and behavioral norms of a particular culture. By comparing cultural dimensions, only a sketch of some common trends between two or more cultures can be given; this can be useful as a starting point for intercultural understanding.

2. Problem Statement

In modern business partnership there are international standards and norms of speech and non-verbal behavior, but the national-cultural characteristics of interacting countries significantly interfere with business processes. We chose the business culture of China and Russia to study. However, over the past quarter century, much has changed in both China and Russia, and the correct prioritizing of business relations has become a necessary component of economic culture.

3. Research Questions

Accordingly, the research questions are:

1. What language is preferable for business correspondence with business partners?
2. What language is most often used in negotiations and business correspondence with Chinese partners?
3. What topics should not be discussed at business negotiations in China?
4. What topics should not be discussed at business negotiations in Russia?
5. What adjectives can you characterize a Russian / Chinese business partner?
6. How to address a business partner and issues related to business rules?
7. The final part of the business letter in Chinese is significantly different from its Russian counterpart. Which of the following expressions do you think are suitable for completing a business letter?

8. A frequent attribute of a business letter is to ask for explanation from the addressee in case of a question to the recipient of the letter. How to answer the question of the Chinese side in a business letter: “We sell your goods at cost and do not earn anything, could you reduce the price a little?” (Table 01).

4. Purpose of the Study

The main goal of any business strategy is to conclude a profitable contract and make a profit. This largely unites Russia and China. Only to achieve this goal, these two cultures use different methods and means. The basic principles of the teachings of Confucianism, to a large extent, left their imprint on the principles, norms and postulates of business culture and communication in China. Values such as duty, obedience, respect and reverence for elders, ritual, benefit and benevolence are the core of China's business culture. In the standard of behavior in Chinese culture, preference is given to collective (group) benefits, but special attention is paid to the principle of a strict hierarchy of “boss-employee”. In the Confucian doctrine, the theme of the state went through all the principles and values, and much attention was paid to it, hence the desire to tie together the person and society. This principle makes the authorities respect and strictly follow the hierarchy, although representatives of Chinese culture in political and business circles do not spread the word about the estate hierarchy. The principle of preserving the “face” or attention to pride determines the self-determination of an individual (Chi-Ho, 2015). In Russia, over the centuries, the influence of Orthodox norms, which defined “work (labor)” as a kind of active prayer and the meaning of labor was a means of perfecting the world and man. But in modern Russia, despite the revival of Orthodox culture, the attitude to work and work is different. Our domestic business, obviously, does not experience an objective need to be guided in its activities by ethical norms, since, apparently, it does not see the connection between adherence to moral and ethical principles and the success of business activity. Vavakina (2013) highlights the following trends such as to assess the principles of other people in a business partnership lower than their own; to evaluate your principles in everyday life outside of business higher than your principles in business partnerships; to evaluate the principles of interaction in a business partnership that other people adhere lower than the seemingly ideal interaction in a business partnership. Most entrepreneurs adhere to the postulate “here and now”.

4.1. The current trend of development of business culture and communication in Russia and China

Exploring the problems of intercultural business interaction between Russia and China, the question arises: if all the countries have changed, then what language is business communication conducted and what has changed in the traditions of business communication and business culture? In the modern period of globalization, the features of traditional ceremonies in China are erased and give way to modern standards. When greeting there is just shaking hands and using Mr. / Madam; Mr. / Miss / Mrs with last name. Dress code in China at international business negotiations is always official: a gray / black business suit, shirt, tie, high-quality expensive shoes. Gifts at the talks can be things such as good Russian vodka or any other expensive alcohol, good varieties of green tea (it is very important to be able to understand the varieties of tea), chocolate, art, high-quality perfume. In Russian business culture, a

handshake is also acceptable when greeting and using a formal greeting, such as Mr. / Madam; Mr. / Miss / Mrs with last names. Dress code is often a business suit of dark shades, but Russian businessmen like to experiment with the colors of shirts and ties, they love to show their wealth with expensive accessories in the form of cufflinks and watches. As a gift it is possible to present good alcohol, art, jewelry, business accessories in the form of pens and stationery.

Representatives of Chinese culture are willing to spend a lot of time achieving the goal and making a profit if they are interested in the project, like representatives of Russian culture, for whom the proverb “time is money” does not lose its relevance. Despite the fact that English is becoming very popular in China, it has specific features and is often called Chinglish, since Chinese traditional thinking and its own grammar of phrasing interfere with English grammar standards. During the negotiations, the Chinese partners use indirect speech and invite their translator.

The level of English in Russia varies greatly. Although learning English at school and university is becoming very popular. It is possible to confirm this trend by the fact that the Russian authorities plan to introduce English as the main subject for passing exams in school. It is possible that in higher educational institutions this subject will take the leading place among the leading disciplines. But in the provincial centers it is often possible to meet business people who speak little English, the language of international standards. Representatives of the Russian business culture prefer direct speech, clear concise phrases expressing the essence of the issue. When negotiating they invite a translator. The contract for both countries is concluded in two languages, the mother tongue and the language of the partner. Both countries are trying in every possible way to adhere to the terms of the contract, but there are often cases of non-performance.

4.2. Intercultural business communication and culture

The presence of cultural differences can have a great impact on relationships and communication between groups of people.

Many scholars have studied culture and the impact of cultural values on business (Hofstede, 1980; Kitayama & Cohen, 2007; Nisbett, 2007). During communication, culture can influence communication styles. The impact of different cultures on business can add complexity in the work of professionals who manage multicultural teams or interact with representatives from other countries.

One of the main researchers in the field of culture and its impact on management and business is Hofstede (1980). He found that there are many definitions of culture. During his research, Hofstede (1980) explored the relationship between culture and values. He stated that values represent the tendency of an asocial group to choose “a certain position over others” (p.19).

Trompenaars, who works on understanding business diversity with his colleague Hampden-Turner, emphasized that culture is more than just a product of society, but contains many layers “like an onion” (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012), and its other layers are its values and beliefs. As with these many layers, culture can also be applied in various contexts, such as that of a nation. Culture is usually viewed in a national context, as a country is a fairly easily defined collective group. However, culture can also be applied at lower levels, for example, in the context of business. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) defined culture through several dimensions, although they were quite different

dimensions than those of Hofstede (1980). Pointing out that comparison of cultures is usually determined by their differences, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner explained how certain problems arise due to differences between cultures. These problems stem from the way people from a particular culture act in relation to their relationships with other people, society's understanding of time and their relationship with the environment.

But Hofstede (1980) tried to capture the nature of the individual within the group culture. Looking at any one collective social group, there are usually traits or values that are relatively obvious.

In his initial study, Hofstede (1980) identified four specific dimensions by which the value system of a culture can be characterized. They are:

- Power distance is related to the reaction to unequal power distribution.
- Individualism / Collectivism is the level at which the concept of self-identity or collective directs the behavior of the individual.
- Masculinity / Femininity is the pursuit of achievement compared to caring for others.
- Uncertainty prevention is the degree to which a society faces the risk present in mundane situations.

The cultural dimensions of individualism / collectivism explain the behavior of individuals in relation to themselves within the group and to other members of the group. Since collectivism was recognized as dominant among Eastern cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Robertson, Al-Khatib, Al-Habib, & Lanoue, 2001), it is assumed that the participants in our study represent collective behavior, that is, by definition they will take into account the well-being of their colleagues, and this accounting will be even stronger than their own (but only within the framework of intra-group relations) (Triandis, 1988). In modern Russian society there are only minor changes in the development of individualism, which, apparently, is associated with the deep historical, religious and philosophical roots of Russian collectivism as one of the fundamental national and cultural values. The main values for collectivists are goodwill, conformity and traditions (Ralston et al., 2012; Schwartz, 1994).

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the research is the significant ideas, concepts, and methodological possibilities provided by classical and modern cultural studies of internal and external intercultural communications, including intercultural communications in modern China and Russia.

The essence of the study would be interview questions to be distributed within professional community of Chinese and Russian businessmen, teachers and students from four universities of the city of Krasnoyarsk, including Chinese students studying at these universities, as well as representatives of the Chinese community of Krasnoyarsk. The questions would made the study of the business communications in multicultural global environment more concise and fruitful.

6. Findings

In order to understand how interconnected are the traditions and stereotypes of traditional perception of Chinese business culture in the understanding of Russians, and Russian business culture in

the understanding of Chinese, an anonymous survey of respondents was conducted using Internet services. We are interested in Chinese and Russian' attitudes towards the role of traditions and stereotypes in business culture. Questions for the research were formulated on the basis of theoretical data, as well as the results of direct interviews with Chinese / Russian businessmen. A qualitative assessment method was applied to determine the relationship between the real requirements of Chinese business culture and the Russians' perception of these requirements. In addition, a number of additional questions were also raised related to business culture and communication between the two countries. The interview questions are in table 01.

Then the data provided by the respondents were processed to form a more complete understanding of the situation. The results of the analysis are presented below.

To the first question the majority of respondents from both the Chinese (83%) and the Russian side (66.7%) answered that the language of negotiations is English. But at the same time, negotiations in the language of that country were being negotiated with the counterpart, it was considered correct by 17% and 33.3% of respondents, respectively. The answers show that both Chinese and Russian respondents are in the current field of business culture, understanding that the language of business negotiations is English.

However, the answer to the next question showed that with respect to China, this rule is not respected.

When answering the second question the responses of the Chinese and Russian respondents revealed discrepancies. Chinese respondents believe that when negotiating with the Chinese side, it is necessary to use both Chinese and English simultaneously (100%). Opinions of respondents from Russia were divided: the majority (66.7%) believes that negotiations should be conducted only in Chinese, the rest - only in English. This result confirms, observed by Chinese researchers, the tendency of the Chinese business culture to be oriented toward Western standards (Heidi von Weltzien, 2007). Russian respondents for the most part still adhere to the classical views on Chinese culture, without taking into account new trends.

However, the answers to the third question show that the traditions in Chinese culture are very strong. Respondents from China noted that topics such as politics, family and personal life are not discussed at the talks. At the same time, the remaining topics - history, any Chinese traditions, peculiarities of Chinese cuisine, comparison of cuisines of different provinces, varieties of Chinese tea and rules for Chinese or foreign enterprises in a particular area, were open for discussion. The Russians agreed that the policy should not be discussed (50%). Expectedly, it is unethical to discuss their family or personal life in China (66.7%), as well as discussing history and any Chinese traditions (16.7%). Just like the Chinese themselves, the Russians are not against discussing varieties of Chinese tea or cuisine. However, with the change of the negotiating country, the views change.

When conducting business negotiations in Russia, all respondents agreed that politics and family are not the topics for discussion. But, if for the Chinese, the policy is 100% complete ban, for Russians, this is already family and personal life (100%). Discussion of Russian traditions, history or Russian cuisine is quite acceptable.

The views of Russians and Chinese on their business partners are significantly different from theory. So, when we asked to describe a Russian / Chinese business partner using adjectives, the answers were distributed as follows: Chinese (100%) said that Russians are polite. The Russians considered Chinese businessmen sly (83.3%) and polite (33.3%). Such answers allow us to assume that respondents are not very confident in their answers, because they understand that there are changes in the behavior of one side or the other, but cannot yet formulate them. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the number of business contacts with China has significantly decreased compared with the 90s of the 20th century, and those that have existed already require a good knowledge of not only the economy, but also culture, diplomacy, legislation, etc.

Knowledge of the fundamentals of business culture was confirmed by respondents' answers to questions about business correspondence. Both parties answered the question: "How should we address to a business partner?" on the basis of their traditions and attitudes of their own business culture. The Chinese have traditionally considered that it is necessary to address a business partner through a polite title (Mr. / Mr., Mrs. / Mrs. / Miss) and a surname (100%), but the option is possible by first name (50%). The Russians answered the same way (66.7% and 33.3% respectively).

The final part of the business letter in Chinese is significantly different from its Russian counterpart. Therefore, the choice of the final phrase is very important. And here opinions diverged. The Chinese respondents chose the options "Regards" and "Thank you for your cooperation" (70%), "My best wishes" and "Yours sincerely" (30%). The Russians considered the most acceptable completion of the letter to the Chinese partners with the phrase "we would appreciate a quick response" (50%), "we hope to receive your answer in the near future" and "thank you for your cooperation" (33.3%). Other options: "Sincerely, ...", "Yours sincerely ...", "Thank you in advance", "Keep in touch with us" - selected 16.7% of respondents. In our opinion, this question has shown that the rules of politeness are more important for the Chinese, but the Russians more clearly show their business interest.

A greater desire to get the result from the transaction as soon as possible showed the answers to the question from the Chinese side about a slight decrease in the price of goods. The Chinese side in its responses showed greater rigidity than the Russian. So, the answer "I discussed our problem with the general and financial directors, and they are ready to give you a 5% discount on the next order," 70% of Chinese and 50% of Russians have chosen.

Answer: "We have hundreds of thousands of customers in Europe and the USA, and they all buy at this price, so you either buy or not," selected 30% of Chinese and 33.3% of Russians. But the answer: "Our company has not yet received the services promised by your company", was noted by the Chinese as unacceptable (0%), while the Russians felt that this could be answered (16.7%).

Table 01. Interview questions

Questions	Variants	Chinese	Russian
1. What language is preferable for business correspondence with business partners?	a. English b. Russian c. Language of the country being negotiated	83% - a. 17% - c.	66.7% - a. 33.3% - c.
2. What language is most often used in negotiations and	a. Chinese b. Russian	100% - c.	66.7% - a. 33.3% - c.

business correspondence with Chinese partners?	c. English		
3. What topics, in your opinion, should not be discussed at business negotiations in China?	a. Politics b. History c. Family or personal life d. Any Chinese traditions e. Peculiarities of national cuisine	100% - a., c.	50% - a. 66.7% - c. 16.7% - d.
4. What topics, in your opinion, should not be discussed at business negotiations in Russia?	a. Politics b. History c. Family or personal life d. Any Russian traditions e. Peculiarities of national cuisine	100% - a., c.	100% - a., c.
5. What adjectives can you characterize a Russian / Chinese business partner?	a. Polite b. Sly c. Aggressive d. Your variant	100% - a. (about Russians)	83.3% - b. 33.3% - a. (about Chinese)
6. How to address a business partner?	a. By last name b. By first name c. Polite Title (Mr. / Mr., Mrs. / Miss) d. Polite title and surname	100% - c. 50% - b.	66.7% - c. 33.3% - b.
7. The final part of the business letter in Chinese is significantly different from its Russian counterpart. Which of the following expressions do you think are suitable for completing a business letter?	a. My best wishes ... b. Regards ... c. Yours sincerely ... d. We should appreciate a quick response. e. We hope to receive your answer in the near future. f. Thank you in advance g. Keep in touch with us; h. Thank you for your cooperation!	70% - b., h. 30% - a., c.	33.3% - d., f. 66.7% - c., b., f., g.
8. A frequent attribute of a business letter is to ask for explanation from the addressee in case of a question to the recipient of the letter. How to answer the question of the Chinese side in a business letter: "We sell your goods at cost and do not earn anything, could you reduce the price a little?"	a. We have hundreds of thousands of customers in Europe and the USA, and they all buy at this price, so you either buy or not b. I discussed our problem with the CEO and CFO, and they are ready to give you a 5% discount on the next order. c. Our company has not yet received the services promised by your company.	70% - b.	50% - b.

7. Conclusion

As our research has shown, all norms are determined by the notions of correct and expedient behavior based on the experience of real situations. Culture forms norms regarding the preference of one or another form of interaction in various situations. However, the level of knowledge of Russians about the norms of the business culture of China is insignificant, but it is still different from the ideas of the Chinese. With direct business interaction, people should decide for themselves how to act, how to build relationships with partners, but should take into account:

1. Culture undergoes changes over time, and changes, as a rule, occur slowly. Sometimes there are “quick” changes. However, they are often not “natural”, but due to external pressure, for example from the government. To understand a culture, it is necessary to understand its origin, history, structure and functioning; how its artifacts arise, how cultural institutions develop, how the geographical environment influences culture, to assess the impact of the processes of acculturation and assimilation.

2. Business communication is an important component of business culture, which, in turn, is a variation of popular culture. Therefore, an important point in business communication is the concept of a national character as a set of stereotypes associated with a given people in the eyes of its representatives and representatives of other cultures associated with the bonds of joint activity and communication. It is the national culture that ensures the norms of behavior of partners, and these norms control the behavior in the business world.

3. Modern China and Russia, despite the old traditions and customs, are influenced by Western culture and accepted modern business international standards. Modern Western business models and business norms are being introduced into the business culture of these two countries, but despite this, they are “hewn” by the national mentality and take root with some changes and are also implemented in a specific form.

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