

**FURTHER STEPS  
IN  
BUSINESS ENGLISH**

**ANUL II**

**VOL. I**



**ANDREEA-ILEANA DANIELESCU  
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## CUVÂNT ÎNAINTE

*Lucrarea de față se adresează studenților Facultății de Management Comercial și Turistic din cadrul Universității Creștine "Dimitrie Cantemir", în scopul aprofundării limbajului în domeniul afacerilor și ușurării comunicării și transferului de informații din și în limba engleză.*

*Este de la sine înțeles faptul că pregătirea de specialitate în domeniul economic conduce, nemijlocit, la relații de afaceri și la o carieră bazată pe dezvoltarea parteneriatului, atât pe plan intern cât și pe plan internațional, demers în care cunoașterea limbilor străine este o prioritate, iar a limbii engleze o condiție sine qua non.*

*Autorii acestei cărți s-au străduit să aleagă o tematică atractivă și utilă pentru limbajul business, punând accent pe îmbinarea textelor propuse spre studiu, cu exercițiile de înțelegere a termenilor, expresiilor,*

*sintagmelor, dezvoltarea vocabularului specific, conexiunea logică a ideilor și exprimarea corectă din punct de vedere gramatical. În acest scop, au fost introduse și explicațiile necesare problemelor teoretice de gramatică, insistându-se, însă, pe partea aplicativă.*

*S-a considerat că formarea aptitudinilor de comunicare trebuie să fie în atenția permanentă a cursanților, prin urmare au fost introduse, gradat, subiecte și teme de comentarii, atât pentru pregătirea individuală cât și pentru activitățile la seminarii. S-a urmărit, astfel, ideea încurajării studenților spre exprimarea liberă a opiniilor, spre abordarea subiectelor în discuție și participarea activă la orele de limbă străină.*

*Conținutul acestei lucrări a fost testat pe parcursul unui an de studiu, autorii revenind pe materialele propuse cu noi exerciții, teme, explicații suplimentare, eliminând unele subiecte mai puțin accesibile, pe baza observațiilor permanente asupra modului de receptare, aprofundare și progres al studenților.*

*Urăm tuturor cursanților noștri mult succes în însușirea cunoștințelor și îi asigurăm că îi vom asista cu*

*mult drag și devotament. Nu uitați că ”where there is a will, there is a way”.*

*Autorii,*

*Octombrie, 2008*





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# UNIT 1

## CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

*1. Read the following text and find out the main ideas.*

The key to effective 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.

For example, one should always assume that there is a significant possibility that cultural differences are causing communication problems, and be willing to be patient and forgiving, rather than hostile and aggressive, if problems develop. One should respond slowly and carefully in cross-cultural exchanges, not jumping to the conclusion that you know what is being thought and said.

William Ury's suggestion for heated conflicts is to stop, listen, and think, or as he puts it "go to the balcony" when the situation gets tense. By this he means withdraw from the situation, step back, and reflect on what is going on before you act. This helps in cross cultural communication as well. When things seem to be going badly, stop or slow down and think. What could be going on here? Is it possible I misinterpreted what they said, or they misinterpreted me? Often misinterpretation is the source of the problem.

Active listening can sometimes be used to check this out—by repeating what one thinks he or she heard, one can confirm that one understands the communication accurately. If words are used differently between languages or cultural groups, however, even active listening can overlook misunderstandings.

Often intermediaries who are familiar with both cultures can be helpful in cross-cultural communication situations. They can translate both the substance and the manner of what is said. For instance, they can tone down strong statements that would be considered appropriate in

one culture but not in another, before they are given to people from a culture that does not talk together in such a strong way. They can also adjust the timing of what is said and done. Some cultures move quickly to the point; others talk about other things long enough to establish rapport or a relationship with the other person. If discussion on the primary topic begins too soon, the group that needs a "warm up" first will feel uncomfortable. A mediator or intermediary who understands this can explain the problem, and make appropriate procedural adjustments.

Yet sometimes intermediaries can make communication even more difficult. If a mediator is the same culture or nationality as one of the disputants, but not the other, this gives the appearance of bias, even when none exists. Even when bias is not intended, it is common for mediators to be more supportive or more understanding of the person who is of his or her own culture, simply because they understand them better. Yet when the mediator is of a third cultural group, the potential for cross-cultural misunderstandings increases further. In this case engaging in extra discussions about

the process and the manner of carrying out the discussions is appropriate, as is extra time for confirming and re-confirming understandings at every step in the dialogue or negotiating process.

Salacuse describes six distinctive features of international business negotiations. The author begins by pointing out two mistaken assumptions about doing business in an international setting. Many economic commentators assume that international business deals will happen naturally if only the correct governmental policies and structures are in place. Corporate leaders assume that they can simply extend their successful domestic strategies to the international setting.

Both of these assumptions are mistaken. Policies alone do not create business deals; companies do. Business executives will need to be much better educated about international negotiating in order to make successful deals. International business negotiations are fundamentally different from domestic negotiations, and require a different set of skills and knowledge. Salacuse explains that "domestic business dealings probably have

about the same relationship to international business as domestic politics do to international diplomacy."

Salacuse identifies six elements which are common to all international business negotiations, and which as a set distinguish international business negotiations from domestic negotiations. The first is that in international negotiations the parties must deal with the laws, policies and political authorities of more than one nation. These laws and policies may be inconsistent, or even directly opposed. For example, in the early 1980s U.S. companies operating in Europe were caught between the American prohibition on sales to the Soviets for their Trans-Siberian pipeline, and European nations' demands that these companies abide by their supply contracts. International business agreements must include measures to address these differences. Such measures typically include arbitration clauses, specification of the governing laws, and tax havens.

A second factor unique to international business is the presence of different currencies. Different currencies give rise to two problems. Since the relative value of different currencies varies over time, the actual value of

the prices or payments set by contract may vary, and result in unexpected losses or gains. Another problem is that each government generally seeks to control the flow of domestic and foreign currencies across their national boundaries. And so business deals will often depend upon the willingness of governments to make currency available. Unexpected changes in such governmental currency policies can have dramatic effects on international business deals.

A third element common to international business negotiations is the participation of governmental authorities. Governments often play a much larger role in foreign business than Americans are accustomed to. The presence of often extensive government bureaucracies can make international negotiation processes more rigid than is usual in the American private sector. Sovereign immunity can introduce legal complications into contracts. State-controlled businesses may have different goals from private companies. Whereas private firms are usually primarily concerned with profits, state entities may be



willing to sacrifice some profitability for social or political ends such as greater employment.

Fourth, international ventures are vulnerable to sudden and drastic changes in their circumstances. Events such as war or revolution, changes in government, or currency devaluation have an impact on international businesses which is much greater than the impact that the usual domestic changes have on national businesses. These risks "require that international business negotiator to have a breadth of knowledge and social insight that would not ordinarily be necessary in negotiating a U.S. business arrangement." International businesses try to protect against these risks by employing political risk analysts, by foreign investment insurance, and by force majeure clauses which allow for contract cancellation under certain conditions.

International business negotiators also encounter very different ideologies. In particular, different countries may have very different ideas about private investment, profit and individual rights. Effective negotiators will be aware of ideological differences. They will present their

proposals in ways that are ideologically acceptable to the other party, or that are at least ideologically neutral.

Finally, cultural differences are an important factor in international negotiations. In addition to language differences, different cultures have differing values, perceptions and philosophies. As a result, certain ideas may have very different connotations in different cultures. For instance, Americans and Japanese tend to have a different view of the purpose of negotiations. Americans see the goal of negotiations as to produce a binding contract which creates specific rights and obligations. Japanese see the goal of negotiations as to create a relationship between the two parties; the written contract is simply an expression of that relationship. What the Japanese see as a reasonable willingness to modify a contract to reflect changes in the parties relationship, Americans see as a tendency to renege. American insistence on adherence to the original terms of the contract may be perceived as distrust by the Japanese.

Some cultures prefer to start from agreement on general principles, while other prefer to address each issue

individually. Some cultures prefer to negotiate by "building up" from an initial minimum proposal; other prefer to "build-down" from a more comprehensive opening proposal. Cultural differences also show up in the preferred pacing of negotiations and in decision-making styles. Salacuse cautions, however, that individual negotiators do not always conform to cultural stereotypes.

***2. True or false? Indicate if the following statements are true or false, after having read the text attentively.***

1. Intermediaries who are familiar with both cultures can make communication more difficult. (T/F)

2. Knowledge cannot be a key to cross-cultural communication. (T/F)

3. A mediator of a third cultural group may increase further understanding. (T/F)

4. Business negotiations at international level are not different from domestic negotiations when business executives are better educated. (T/F)

5. Changes in currency policies can dramatically influence international business deals. (T/F)

6. Bureaucracy at the level of government may create a more rigid process in the international negotiations. (T/F)

7. Salacuse is a scale of identifying value, common to all international negotiations. (T/F)

8. Intermediaries cannot often translate both the substance and manner of what is said during cross-cultural communication situations. (T/F)

9. Ury suggests “to stop, listen and think” when in a tense circumstance. (T/F)

10. Effective business should not consider cultural differences as an important factor in international negotiations. (T/F)

### ***3. Conversation practice.***

***A. Answer the following questions, expressing your point of view:***

1. What does communication mean to you?
2. Do you communicate easily?