

## Chapter 7

### Business Negotiation Across Cultures

#### 跨文化商务谈判

To make a business negotiation successful, you have to be a good negotiator who has the patience of a clockmaker and does not suffer from prejudices or stereotypes.

谈判是一种特殊的沟通。国际商务谈判已成为企业在国际竞争中不可缺少的一项重要活动。国际商务谈判水平很大程度上决定了企业在国际竞争中能否取得优势，是构成企业核心能力的重要一环。在激烈的世界市场竞争中，要赢得优胜地位，除了拥有价廉物美的产品之外，国际商务谈判也是决定企业国际贸易成败的关键。因此，所有谈判者都应对谈判阶段有所了解，包括如何发展相互关系，如何交流谈判主题信息，如何说服对方接受自己的决定，如何做出让步和达成协议等等。受文化的影响，不同国家商务人士的谈判风格相去甚远。例如，阿拉伯人比较重情感，注重长期的人际关系，在谈判时出手比较夸张，要价高，但乐意让步，而且视谈判让步为必要。相反，俄罗斯人比较死板，一切从理念出发，而不是从实际谈判情况出发，不仅要价高，而且不肯让步，视让步为懦弱，同时对合同的期限不加工理。而美国人与俄罗斯人和阿拉伯人都不同，他们讲求理性，讲求逻辑，只要有道理就愿意改变自己的立场，比较灵活，但不为情所动，愿意建立短暂的商业关系，但不愿建立长久的个人关系，同时视期限为不可更改的承诺，必须遵守。本章主要探讨成功谈判所包含的要素：在谈判中如何进行有效沟通，应保持何种谈判风格，运用什么样的谈判策略等等。另外，本章还从文化角度出发，分析和探讨中西方文化的差异给谈判造成的影响。

# 1. Communication in Negotiation

## 谈判中的沟通

Differences in ways of thinking, behaving, and managing conflict have a profound impact on how successfully the parties are able to negotiate or conduct business transactions. Cultural differences can generate misunderstandings, sow the seeds of distrust, and induce negative emotions among the negotiators. When people differ in their basic thinking processes, misunderstandings are all but inevitable.

Negotiation is a discussion between two or more disputants who are trying to work out a solution to their problem. This interpersonal or inter-group process can occur at a personal level, as well as at a corporate or international (diplomatic) level. Negotiations typically take place because the parties wish to create something new that can't be reached on their own, or to resolve a problem or dispute between them. The parties acknowledge that there is some conflict of interest between them but they think they can use some form of communication to get a better deal, rather than simply taking what the other side will voluntarily give them. They prefer to search for agreement rather than fight openly or give in.

### 1.1 Differences in Focus 谈判焦点差异

Focus may be positive or negative; it may be explicit or implicit; it may be general or specific. Cultures that emphasize communication as a tool for *articulating* specific goals in order to accomplish them tend to look upon negotiations as a series of points to “settle.” Their language in negotiation is explicit and *zeroes in on* what has yet to be agreed. These explicit statements may in fact be questions and emphasize negative points of disagreement, such as, “What do you still not like about this detail of product design?” Americans generally prefer this direct approach. But cultures that use communication to encourage harmony, preserve face, and develop long-term relationships are not comfortable with direct and explicit talk. For instance, in China and Japan, getting straight to some point about which agreement has yet to be reached might result in confrontation and negative emotions, even anger. Someone might lose

articulate v. 清楚地表达 zero in on 集中于……
---

face. The Chinese and the Japanese, like negotiators from other Asian cultures, prefer to emphasize the positive side of agreement. They begin with general terms and seek agreement from the other side about general goals. Then, regardless of the remaining details, the general agreement holds the two sides together in a relationship. They do not ask, and do not enjoy being asked, any pointed questions. They want to develop a relationship, because once a relationship exists, each side has an obligation to consider the needs of the other, so the issue resolves itself.

The concept of “saving face” or “losing face” originates from China. Certain behaviors or actions are done in an effort to save face or to avoid losing face. A person might tell you “maybe,” or agree to something they actually don’t intend to avoid rejecting a request or proposal, which would cause one to lose face. It is important to follow customs and understand polite behavior in order to avoid causing someone to lose “face.”

The approach that focuses on particulars, especially unresolved ones, is typically Western. Negotiators look at the unsettled issues, and address them one by one. That approach is logical to the Western problem-solving mind. But it is not shared by all cultures. In Asia, unresolved issues are part of the whole web of the relationship being woven by the negotiation process. A simultaneous, not sequential, approach means the negotiators look at unresolved issues as potentially resolved because of the developing relationship between the two sides.

Usually, people of different cultures will have differences in focus during negotiation.

**Honor.** Group membership, when it is highly valued, can impact negotiations in a number of ways. Negotiators whose allegiance is to a family group, such as the ruling household of some Arab countries, or to a nation, may be motivated to gain the best advantage for the honor of their group or nation. The fact that something bigger than the corporation seems to be at stake can make a negotiating team less flexible.

On the other hand, negotiators who are motivated by a desire to uphold their individual reputations and records can also be inflexible about **backing down**. The key is for you to understand what motivates your counterparts. Then you can accommodate their needs. If your

back down  
放弃：认输

counterparts are motivated to succeed for the honor of the group, then you need to send messages that show you understand. Your own group membership and loyalty will be important to emphasize. In every case, words that provoke a defense of honor are the wrong words to use.

In negotiation, people of collectivist culture often do not back down. Not backing down is very much related to a team's decision-making process. If it is a consensus-based process, then the team's position will have been determined by lengthy discussions of the group before the negotiations take place. This makes the team less able to change their position spontaneously. They have to go back and consult others in the group before they can agree to changes in their initial position. This practical consideration should not be confused with honor. If individuals have authority to make decisions, the team's position may be flexible and open to change.

**Emotion.** In some high-context cultures, public display of emotion is a sign of immaturity and a potential cause of shame to the group. Japanese negotiators will close their eyes, or look down, or rest their head against their hand and shade their eyes in order to conceal an emotion such as anger. Similarly, Thais keep potentially disruptive emotions from showing in their faces. South Koreans, Chinese, and other Asians along with Japanese and Thais have earned the *descriptor* "**inscrutable**" from Westerners because of their learned cultural practice of avoiding a facial display of strong and disruptive emotions. These cultures value harmony in human encounters and members avoid sending any nonverbal messages that could destroy harmony. Yet some other high-context cultures, for example Middle Eastern cultures, put a high priority on displays of emotions (although not anger) to emphasize the sincerity of the position being put forward.

In low-context cultures, a deliberate concealment of emotion is considered to be insincere or *poker-faced*. Members of low-context cultures habitually use a large vocabulary of facial expressions that signal the emotion a speaker feels. When they see none of the expected indicators of emotion on faces of negotiators on the opposite side of the table, they may presume emotion is not present. If this assumption is discovered to be wrong, and the other has indeed been feeling an emotion such as anger, the member of the low-context culture feels deceived.

<p>descriptor <i>n.</i>  描述符号  inscrutable <i>a.</i>  难以理解的  poker-faced <i>a.</i>  面无表情的。不动声色的</p>
---

**Silence.** Silence as a nonverbal communication tool can be very effective in negotiations. In low-context cultures where ideas are explicitly encoded into words and unspoken ideas are more difficult to respond to, silence makes low-context negotiators uneasy. Silence often means unhappiness in low-context cultures. Even when no message about unhappiness is intended, silence in low-context cultures indicates a *rupture* has occurred, a break in the process of communicating. For these reasons, negotiators from low-context cultures generally are uncomfortable with silence. They often feel responsible for starting a conversation or keeping it going. This is not to say some negotiators in Western countries are not adept at using silence as a tactic.

Japanese speakers are comfortable with silence in negotiations and do not hurry to fill it up with speech. After a speaker from one side has finished, Japanese listeners pause in silence to reflect on what has been said out of consideration for the speaker's feelings and points of view. This is how Japanese show respect for others in oral communication. To interrupt a negotiator who is speaking is to show disrespect. Because of this *protocol* and the value the Japanese place on silence, negotiators with Japanese counterparts must be careful not to speak too hastily or too much.

<i>rupture</i> <i>n.</i> 破裂, 不和
<i>protocol</i> <i>n.</i> 礼仪
<i>default</i> <i>v.</i> 不履行

## 1.2 Styles of Negotiating 谈判风格

Negotiation styles vary with persons, their beliefs and skills, as well as the general contexts in which negotiations occur. Negotiation styles can also vary dramatically due to cultural differences in areas like communication styles and decision-making patterns. Actually, every negotiator has a negotiation style. From competing to avoiding to compromising to accommodating and finally to collaborating, people naturally *default* on one of these styles.

**The Unites Sates.** U.S. negotiators tend to rely on individualist values, regarding everyone as an autonomous, independent, and self-reliant individual. This does not mean that they don't consult. But the tendency to see oneself as a separate individual rather than as a member of a web or network means that more independent initiative may be taken. In negotiation, firstly, American negotiators tend to be competitive in

their approach to negotiations, including coming to the table with a **fallback** position but beginning with an unrealistic offer. Secondly, they tend to be energetic, confident, and persistent; they enjoy arguing over their positions, and see things universally. In other words, they like to talk about broad applications of ideas. Thirdly, they tend to focus on areas of disagreement, not areas of commonality or agreement. Finally, they tend to like closure and certainty rather than open-endedness or **fuzziness**.

**Germany.** Germans are strong-minded. They are thoughtful when considering a transaction. They like to adopt a plan before starting a business. Meanwhile, German negotiators focus on efficiency. When preparing negotiation with businessmen from other countries, the first thing they do is to fix a plan, then according to the plan they arrange their negotiating schedule. German businessmen are very proud, and have strong self-confidence, they attach great importance to the contract, and they make it very clear what the prices, conditions and ways of acting are. In addition, German businessmen have serious principles concerning interpersonal relationship and they focus on personal credit.

fallback *a.*  
后退的; 应变的  
fuzziness *n.*  
糊涂; 含混不清  
sly *a.*  
狡猾的  
redundantly *ad.*  
冗长地; 累赘地  
deadlock *n.*  
僵局

**France.** It is known to all that the French take great pride in their nation and mostly their language French. Therefore, during the negotiation, they persist in speaking French. Of course, the accuracy of French often helps a lot. Usually, French businessmen consider meeting a formal and serious occasion; they will attend the meeting in very formal clothes. At the very beginning, French negotiators tend to make effort to find what their counterparts' demands and requests are, and only at the very end of negotiation they show their cards, which makes negotiators from other countries, especially Americans, consider French businessmen to be *sly*. French negotiators usually raise their opinions in a logical way and they can catch their counterparts when they think they are not logical. During the meeting, French businessmen like to conduct logical analysis about all the subjects, so the negotiation often goes on **redundantly**. Frenchmen never believe in the "friendship" built up in a short period, and they don't like to call people by their first names, or listen to people talking about their personal or family affairs. They are proud of their quick mind when they come across **deadlock** in negotiations. They never compromise, but they can always keep gentle and calm, and state their opinions repeatedly. Apart from that,

French businessmen have no strong sense of time. They don't like to be asked to give quick decision. To them, negotiation is not a hasty affair.

A group of French businessmen were scheduled to have a business negotiation with an American company at 2 pm in New York. The American business people were punctual, but the French businessmen arrived about one hour late. The Americans got angry, but the French did not feel sorry for it. Instead, they felt comfortable and relaxed, and said, "It is our first visit to New York. We want to enjoy more of it. New York is so beautiful."

**Russia.** Because Russian people have taken slow steps in the development of foreign trade, Russian businessmen lack flexibility in trade negotiations, however good they are at bargaining, and they rely on the technological content and *claim clause* in the negotiation subject. Meanwhile, they prefer to adopt the way of *barter* trade.

claim clause *n.*

索赔条款

barter *n.*

易货; 实物交易

intermediary *n.*

调解人, 中间人

paternalistic *a.*

家长式管理的

In the past, negotiation sessions with the Russians have been long with the Russians controlling the agenda. Russians seem to be concerned with age, rank, and protocol. They address others by their full name and tend to be somewhat formal. Like the U.S. people, Russians see time as money, and friendships not crucial to business. Russians are not concerned with equality between business partners but are concerned with maximizing their own profits. Besides, contracts are interpreted rigidly. Some negotiation tactics may remain the same, but now many tactics will probably change as other management practices are initiated.

**India.** Indians are family oriented and religious. Business is conducted in a formal yet relaxed manner. Bribery is common, and having connections is important. Remember to avoid using the left hand in greetings and eating and request permission before smoking, entering the room, or sitting in negotiation settings. Building relationships is important to Indians, and an introduction is necessary. Indians like using titles to convey respect. A knowledge of local affairs is important to them.

**Intermediaries** are commonly used. Since people of India place importance on building relationships, the negotiation process can be rather long by the U.S. standard. Indian management is *paternalistic* toward subordinates. Due to status

differences, group orientations are generally not used by the Indians. Indians, in an effort to maintain harmony, may tell the other part what they would like to hear. People of India do not approve of displays of emotions, and negotiators must use patience and allow the Indians to take the lead in negotiations.

**Japan.** There is a great deal written about Japanese approaches to negotiation, and collisions between American and Japanese approaches are legendary. The following values tend to influence Japanese communication: focusing on group goals, interdependence, and a hierarchical orientation. In negotiations, these values manifest themselves in awareness of group needs and goals, and deference to those of higher status. Japanese negotiators are known for politeness, emphasis on establishing relationships, and indirect use of power. Japanese concern with face and face-saving is one reason that politeness is so important and confrontation is avoided. They tend to use power in muted, indirect ways consistent with their preference for harmony and calm. In comparative studies, Japanese negotiators were found to disclose considerably less about themselves and their goals than French or American counterparts. Japanese negotiators tend to put less emphasis on the literal meanings of words used in negotiation and more emphasis on the relationships established before negotiation begins. They are also less likely than their U.S. counterparts to make procedural suggestions.

An American businessman was negotiating with a Japanese businessman on making a contract of selling the products from the U.S. to Japan. The American said, "We're interested in selling products in Japan. I hope that the price offer of our products can be accepted by your company." The Japanese businessman said, "Hai." Then the American business continued: "I would like to make a contract with your company tomorrow." The Japanese businessman said again, "Hai." The American businessman was much pleased, as he didn't expect that the business would be done so quickly. The next day, the American and the Japanese met again. The American said, "I'm very pleased that we are going to sign our contract." However, the Japanese was surprised and said, "I think it is too early to sign our contract. I haven't discussed over it with my group." Actually, the "Hai" by the Japanese only meant "I heard what you have said" rather than "I agreed to what you have said." For the final decision, he had to go to his group instead of making it himself.



**South Korea.** The South Korean businessmen are very experienced in international trade, as well as in negotiation. They know how to change unfavorable factors into favorable factors for a dominant position in negotiation, so they are called the “Negotiation Master” in the Western countries. They have the habit of making full preparations before negotiation. Whenever they sit down for a negotiation, they have got everything ready and are confident about what is to be negotiated. In negotiation, South Korean businessmen always try to create a friendly atmosphere even at the very beginning. They offer friendly greetings and introduce themselves first. In addition, they attach importance to business etiquette and the place where the negotiation is held. Usually, South Korean businessmen are a few minutes early when they choose the location of negotiation to show their hospitality, but they are a few minutes late if the location is chosen by their counterparts. When they are offered drinks, they will choose the one which their counterparts are fond of to show their respect and understanding.

## 2. The Influence of Cultural Differences on Negotiation 文化差异对谈判的影响

In Chapter 1, we have covered definitions of culture, cultural differences, and patterns of communication and characteristics of culture. To some extent, these can help us realize that cultural differences really play an important role in negotiation. This section will identify specific negotiating traits in areas where cultural differences may arise. With such knowledge, a negotiator may better understand negotiating styles and approaches of his counterparts from other cultures. Equally important is that the negotiator can anticipate possible reasons of misunderstandings and take measures in advance.

### 2.1 Negotiating Goal: Contract or Relationship 谈判目标：合同或关系

Different cultures may view the very purpose of a business negotiation differently. For many American executives, the goal of a negotiation, first and foremost, is to arrive at a signed contract between the parties. Americans consider a

signed contract as a definitive set of rights and duties that strictly binds the two sides and determines their interaction thereafter. Most Spanish and French negotiators have also claimed that their primary goal in a negotiation was a signed contract.

The Chinese often think that the goal of a negotiation is not a signed contract, but the creation of a relationship between the two sides. Although the written contract does not describe the relationship, the essence of the deal is the relationship itself.

## 2.2 Negotiating Attitude: Win/Win or Win/Lose

谈判态度：双赢或输赢

Because of differences in culture, personality, or both, people appear to approach deal-making with one of two basic attitudes that a negotiation is either a process in which both can gain (win/win) or a struggle in which, of necessity, one side wins and the other side loses (win/lose). Win/win negotiators see deal-making as a collaborative and problem-solving process; win/lose negotiators see it as confrontational. In a reflection of this

**dichotomy**, negotiation scholars have concluded that these approaches represented two basic **paradigms** of the negotiation process: the **distributive** bargaining (i.e. win/lose) and the integrative bargaining or problem-solving (i.e. win/win). In the former situation, the parties see their goals as **incompatible**, while in the latter they consider themselves to have compatible goals.

The difference between a win-win outcome and compromise lies in the negotiator's focus. If the negotiator primarily thinks of his own team's outcome, the attitude will probably be to expect compromise: What we will gain in return for what we will have to give up. The focus is on our loss as well as our gain. If the negotiator looks at both his own team and the other team, then the attitude will probably be to expect each side to gain. The focus is on mutual gain.

Negotiators usually expect movement toward agreement. However, when one side gains everything without giving up anything, and the other side simply agrees, no negotiation takes place. This is a simple agreement without conflicting interests. Without common interests there is nothing to negotiate for, and without conflict there is nothing to negotiate about.

dichotomy *n.*  
二分法  
paradigm *n.*  
示例, 样式  
distributive *a.*  
个体的  
incompatible *a.*  
不相容的, 矛盾的

## 2.3 Personal Style: Informal or Formal

### 个人风格：非正式或正式

Personal style concerns the approach a negotiator uses to interact with counterparts at the table. Culture strongly influences the personal style of negotiators. It has been observed, for example, that Germans have a more formal style than Americans. (Hall & Hall, 1990) A negotiator with a formal style insists on addressing counterparts by their titles, avoids personal anecdotes, and refrains from questions touching on the private or family life of members of the other team. An informal style negotiator tries to start the discussion on a first-name basis, quickly seeks to develop a personal, friendly relationship with the other team, and may take off his jacket and roll up his sleeves when deal-making begins in earnest. Each culture has its own formalities, and they have special meaning within that culture.

While nearly 83 percent of the Americans, 80 percent of the French and 78 percent of Germans consider themselves to have an informal negotiating style, only 54 percent of the Chinese, 52 percent of the Spanish, and 58 percent of Mexicans were similarly inclined. Differences in cultures with respect to the meaning of the terms “formal” and “informal” may have led to this result.

## 2.4 Communication: Direct or Indirect

### 交际方式：直截了当或含糊其辞

Methods of communication vary among cultures. Some groups place emphasis on direct and simple methods of communication; others rely heavily on indirect and complex methods. It has been observed, for example, that whereas Germans, Americans and the Spanish are direct, the French and the Chinese are indirect. (Hall & Hall, 1990)

Persons with an indirect style of communication often make assumptions about the level of knowledge possessed by their counterparts and to a significant extent communicate with *oblique* references, *circumlocutions*, vague *allusions*, figurative forms of speech, facial expressions, gestures and other kinds of body language. In a culture that values directness such as the American, one can

oblique <i>a.</i> 转弯抹角的
circumlocution <i>n.</i> 婉转曲折的说法
allusion <i>n.</i> 间接提及

expect to receive a clear and definite response to proposals and questions. In cultures that rely on indirect communication, such as the Chinese, reaction to proposals may be gained by interpreting seemingly indefinite comments, gestures, and other signs.

## 2.5 Form of Agreement: General or Specific

协议方式：笼统或具体

Cultural factors may also influence the form of the written agreement that parties try to make. Generally speaking, a majority of negotiators preferred specific agreements to general agreements. This result may be **attributable** in part to the fact that multinational corporate practice favors specific agreements and many of the negotiators, regardless of nationality, have experience with such firms.

attributable a.  
归因于……的

However, Americans prefer very detailed contracts that attempt to anticipate all possible circumstances and eventualities, no matter how unlikely. Because the “deal” is the contract itself, and one must refer to the contract to handle new situations that may arise in the future. Other cultures, such as the Chinese, prefer a contract in the form of general principles rather than detailed rules. Because, it is claimed, the essence of the deal is the relationship between the parties. If unexpected circumstances arise, the parties should turn to their relationship, not the details of the contract, to solve the problem.

Michael was an American economist working in a Chinese university. Because of his good reputation, he was invited to do some consulting for a province by the provincial government. Through discussion, an oral agreement was reached about Michael serving as a consultant for the province. Michael was pleased with the opportunity and asked for a contract. It soon came. The contract was a very formal document, with several seals on it. Besides describing Michael's responsibilities, it said that Michael could bring his wife to the province for a free trip during the years of his service. Michael was pleased about it but wondered about details such as the length of the trip, the means of transportation. Michael called the person in charge and asked whether there would be a more detailed document. The person at the other end was very surprised, “Isn't it detailed enough?”

### 3. Negotiation Strategies 谈判策略

We know that there are various negotiating goals, attitudes, styles, etc., in different culture groups. Therefore, we can be sure that negotiation strategies vary from culture to culture. International business negotiations involve different respects and the contents are very complicated. In order to achieve a favorable outcome, preparation of strategies must be done in an effective way.

#### 3.1 Aims of Negotiation 谈判目的

Defining the aims of negotiations means that the negotiators should know well their desired results according to their own practical conditions so as to avoid *manipulation* by their counterparts.

manipulation <i>n.</i> 操纵, 控制
----------------------------------

Before business negotiations, there are three different aims to be decided: the best aim, the satisfactory aim and the acceptable aim. The best aim is the ideal aim that will benefit you best and help you achieve all desired results planned at the beginning of the negotiation. If the world market is beneficial to you, as a negotiator, you should seize every opportunity to firmly maintain the desired objectives from the beginning to the end until achieving the best aim. When you find it difficult to get the best aim, as a negotiator, you had better make a good preparation to get your second aim, the satisfactory aim, which is fairer for both parties, although it provides you with lower interests than the best aim. When you find you have no advantages in the world market, or you have met a skillful negotiator in the business activities, or you have to export or import some products, you have to face the reality, to accept the third aim, i.e. the acceptable aim.

#### 3.2 A Practical Negotiation Plan 实用谈判计划

It is very important to make a practical negotiation plan after establishing the aim for negotiation. It is quite advisable that you should have a practical and effective plan before you go for a negotiation. Effective planning is crucial to meeting negotiation objectives. If the parties are to reach a stable agreement, specific events

must take place before the parties ever come to the table.

- Designing your own agenda most suitable to you and letting all the negotiators be very familiar with the plan.
- Comparing your own agenda with your counterpart's when you have got his agenda and considering how to adopt new strategies and *tactics*, which should be used with caution.
- Anticipating different ways of packaging issues. You can balance the issues you regard as most important by being more flexible about items you deem less important. You should also decide which items you can abandon to get what you really want with respect to the most important issues.
- Involving the development of supporting arguments. You must be able to present supporting facts and arguments, anticipate how the other side will respond to these arguments, and respond to the other party's claims with counter-arguments.
- Choosing the location of negotiation which is favorable to you, i.e., choosing the "*home court*" which is convenient for you to get an advantage; or at least choosing a neutral location which is equally convenient to both parties.

tactics	<i>n.</i>
策略	
home court	
主场	
arduous	<i>a.</i>
艰巨的, 困难的	

### 3.3 Strategies of Negotiation 谈判策略

International business negotiation is a process that is complicated, *arduous*, and of course interesting. You will meet with the language barrier, the foreign trade policies of various countries, and different negotiation styles and tactics, which may bring you something difficult in your negotiations. However you will get great joy and satisfaction once you overcome those difficulties. At the negotiation table, the price is usually the key point. Many difficulties center on pricing problems. Parties will have to bargain before acceptance. In order to achieve a favorable outcome from the negotiation, the following points should be paid attention to:

- Making a high offer at the beginning of negotiation. If you are an exporter, you should make a high offer at the beginning of the negotiation and try your best to achieve your best aim through negotiation. Even if the best aim could not be achieved, you could reduce your price step by step without taking any financial

risks because your first **quotation** is high enough. Meanwhile, as reducing your prices step by step will make a good impression on the other party, he will be pleased to cooperate with you.

quotation <i>n.</i> 报价 upper hand 上风, 优势
---

- Making no compromise in the matter of prices at the beginning of negotiation. If you are an exporter, remember never to make compromise in the matter of prices at the beginning of negotiation, or you will lose other advantages, such as the product's quality, and other conditions of transaction being of benefit to you.
- Rejecting an exporter's price at the outset of the negotiation. As an importer, you should reject the exporter's price at the outset of the discussion in order to get **upper hand** from the start of negotiation, thereby helping to obtain maximum concessions on other matters, or to test the reality of the offer, or to find out how far the exporter is willing to lower the price. At least, you may force your counterpart to cut down the high price he offered.
- Making no concession on price at once when the importer doesn't accept the offer. If the importer has not accepted the price quoted by the exporter, the exporter should react positively offering price concession or taking defensive objections, instead of immediately offering price concession. Explore the real reasons behind the importer's attitude. Only by knowing the causes of the importer's disapproving of the offer can an exporter make a new offer acceptable to the importer or make other arrangements.
- Constituting the price package. After discussing all of the non-price issues, the exporter can shift the discussions in the final stage of the talk to financial matters affecting the price quotation, such as credit terms, payment schedules, currencies of payment, insurance, commission rate, warehousing costs, after-sales serving, costs of replacing damage goods. Agreement reached on these points constitutes the price package. Any change in the buyer's requirements should require a new price package.

## 4. Physical Context of Negotiation

### 谈判的客观条件

Where a negotiation takes place, the physical context of the communication has an impact on the outcome. For example, if the negotiation takes place by telephone or fax, the nonverbal messages have a diminished impact. However, most negotiation involves meetings between parties.

### 4.1 Site and Space 地点与空间

The host team for the negotiations has an advantage because the environment is under their control. The guest team doesn't have the same degree of control. For example, the hosts can determine in which city, which building, and which room the meetings will be held. If it is the **boardroom** of the building where the host organization members work, all the resources are at the disposal of the host team—photocopiers, telecommunications, files, and assistants. So the hosts have an advantage of convenience.

boardroom <i>n.</i> 董事会会议室
jet lag 时差
insomnia <i>n.</i> 失眠

Whatever the space is, such as an open office, a cramped space, or a meeting room with chairs lined against the walls, it will be familiar to the hosts. It will not be familiar to the visitors. The visitors will be getting used to a new environment, and this can distract them from their concentration on negotiating goals. The language, food, work style, and the beds in which they sleep may be unfamiliar. With **jet lag** and unfamiliar food and beds may come indigestion and **insomnia**, and the visiting team may suffer a loss of physical well-being.

### 4.2 Schedule and Agenda 日程与议程

Jet lag can prevent the visiting team from adapting well to the hosts' schedule. People whose internal clock says "it's midnight" find it difficult to stay alert even if the clock on the wall says "it's 11" in the morning. Russians, for example, have been known to conduct very long sessions when a visiting team is suffering from jet lag.

Control of the schedule often leads to control of the negotiating agenda. For



example, hosts may suggest postponing certain discussions until guests are well rested, with the result that the hosts control the order in which issues are addressed, while indicating the concern for the guests' comfort. The order of the items to be discussed on the agenda can have an impact on the outcome. If the two sides agree to one principle or goal, then subsequent points may be presented as simply subsidiary to what has been agreed on. If the decision has been made to use a particular supply source of a raw material in a joint-venture manufacturing project, then the inclusion of a member of the supply organization on the board may seem a logical subsequent decision. But if the issue of membership on the board was addressed first, the decision might be different.

The power of the keeper of the agenda is considerable in determining when meetings take place and what amount of time is allotted to discuss which issues. An issue that isn't on the agenda may never be discussed. The visiting team has to be alert when it comes to setting the agenda.

#### 4.3 Use of Time 时间利用

Use of time is related to the agenda. Russians often use time to their advantage as part of the nonverbal communication in negotiations. They may delay negotiations in order to make the other side anxious. This behavior toward North Americans, for instance, is based on two assumptions: Americans regard compromise as both desirable and inevitable, and Americans feel frustration and failure when agreements are not reached promptly.

Negotiators from the United States are well known for their impatience. Timothy Bennett, a trade negotiator for the United States to Mexico, characterizes his countrymen and women as thinking that some solution is better than no solution, which leads them to compromise more than their Mexican counterparts. Decades of negotiations have taught Japanese that Westerners and especially delegates from the United States are not patient. If the Japanese prolong the negotiations sufficiently, the Westerners will probably agree to whatever the Japanese want. In Japan, however, to take time is to show maturity and wisdom. Haste shows poor judgment and lack of genuine commitment. Foreign negotiators in the Middle East often complain they don't get to meetings. Foreign negotiators in Latin America complain they have to wait.

In Asia, foreign negotiators complain they do too much sightseeing and not enough negotiating. In the United States, foreign negotiators complain they feel rushed.

## 5. Phases of Negotiation 谈判阶段

The foregoing aspects of communication style are employed in specific phases of negotiation. Exchanges proceed through four phases of negotiation in all cultures; the emphasis and time spent on each phase are really what differ.

### 5.1 Development of a Relationship 发展关系

In the first phase, where the relationship between negotiating teams is being established, trust is the goal and the critical factor. In cultures where relationship is a high priority, time may be spent in nonbusiness activities so you can get to know each other. Sightseeing and a welcome banquet are two typical activities in Chinese business interactions with foreigners.

In order to develop trust, you need openness in your communication and also need to experience openness from the other side. This usually involves some gentle questioning by each side to see how willing the others are to reveal themselves. Often the answers are already known to the questioners, and the **probes** are not for gathering information so much as for testing the openness of the other side. Usually each side displays apparent **candor** in these exchanges; whether it can be trusted or not is what each side has to determine.

probe <i>n.</i> 探寻
candor <i>n.</i> 坦率

Face is an important consideration in developing a relationship with someone from a high-context culture. Most international businesspeople would probably associate the concept of “face” with Asian and Middle Eastern cultures. The reality, however, is that “face” is a universal concept. It’s just that other cultures call it something different. In the West, for example, it is self-respect, self-esteem or dignity.

Since face can be lost even without the awareness of the other party, negotiators need to take care. Asking questions that seem designed to expose weakness, or making comments that assume familiarity, or giving responses with the wrong degree

of coolness can all lead to loss of face for the other party and together with it, loss of trust.

## 5.2 Information Exchange About the Topic Under Negotiation 谈判中的主题信息交流

One way to obtain information is to ask questions rather than wait for disclosure. You can ask some questions. Firstly, you can ask questions related to common ground determination, showing you are listening and interested. These questions particularly have to do with developing relationships. Secondly, you can ask questions related to information clarification, which has to do with the understanding of facts. Thirdly, you can ask questions related to **bluffs**, to control the direction of the discussion and to **broach** potentially controversial issues. These questions have to do with managing the negotiation process.

Asking questions can be risky, however. In order not to seem aggressive you may need to “frame” your questions. It means putting a frame of explanatory language around a request that does not change the meaning but makes it less aggressive, for example, “I hope you don’t mind my asking for your unit price, but our estimates were much higher and our head office will ask why we were so far off.” The frame softens what could be a very **hard-nosed** question: “Where did you get that unit price?”

bluff *n.*  
虚张声势  
broach *v.*  
开始讨论, 提出  
hard-nosed *a.*  
执着的  
BATNA  
谈判协议最佳替代方案

Another problem with asking “why” questions is that in some cultures, if you expect a “cause” answer, the typical response is not a cause but an explanation of a pattern—of organizational structure or market consumption or economic policy, for instance.

Let’s assume you want to negotiate a purchase from a supplier in another culture. You will need to ask about technical information, price, discounts, quantity, shipping dates, insurance, payment method, shipping method, repeat orders, and quality control. You will ask questions about all these items, and each is potentially an issue to be negotiated. As you question, you are refining your idea about the importance of each item to the other side, and what the other side’s **BATNA** (best alternative to a negotiated agreement) is. You are discovering what items the other team is willing to yield to, and what items the other team is inflexible about.

Now we come to the third communication phase: persuasion. At this point we have made clear the items we need to focus on in order to reach an agreement. In other words, you have a clear idea where the conflicts lie as well as the concord. Now you will attempt to persuade your counterparts to accept a settlement that ensures you what you need and perhaps more. They will do the same.

The language of persuasion varies among cultures, and you can employ the language strategy of inclusiveness in order to persuade. For example, if your counterparts need to appear tough and persistent because those are cultural values that drive their behavior, you can avoid using language that forces them to back down. Use inclusive language (together we can) rather than exclusive language (you'll have to accept... and we absolutely require...). Avoid centered messages and "must," "should," "ought" messages. In other words, indicate you understand the others' point of view. Encourage your counterparts to focus on what they can gain, not what they may have to give up.

Persuasion tactics in low-context cultures' negotiation include:

- Supporting your argument with data.
- Offering *counter*-proposals.
- Ceasing communication (silence).
- Disagreeing.
- Threatening the opposing side.
- Attacking the characters of the other side.
- Avoiding and *dodging* certain issues.
- Expressing emotion.
- Insisting on a final position.
- Making a final offer.

counter a. 相反的, 对立的 dodge v. 躲避
--

Obviously they won't all work in all cultures. For example, many cultures are not persuaded by objective facts. Silence may signal only a comfortable pause during which you ponder and meditate. Some disagreement is inevitable since that is why you are at a negotiating table, but how it is communicated varies culturally. Threats, personal attacks, insistence, and being emotional may all be taken very differently according to cultural priorities.

When members of low-context cultures communicate with members of high-context cultures, they need to be especially aware of the cultural context of communication: concerns for harmony, for status, and for respect. When members of high-context cultures communicate with members of low-context cultures, they need to pay special attention to the words and what the words actually say, not what may be implied by the words or inferred from the words.

People from cultures that prefer explicit communication that is direct and to the point tend to persuade with facts. This is true of businesspeople in the United States, where arguments that are based on fact have greater credibility than arguments that are based on opinion or inference. Facts are true. So strong is the attitude that facts count that a sufficient number of facts often seems to make an argument *irrefutable*.

irrefutable a.  
不能反驳的

Skilled negotiators make more frequent references to long-term concerns than average negotiators. The negotiator who appears to be after a short-term, in-and-out business deal is less likely to succeed than the negotiator who makes reference to long-term goals. This is true in low-context as well as high-context cultures, but perhaps more in the latter with their long-term view, concern for relationships, and sense of being rooted in the past.

#### 5.4 Concession and Agreement 让步与同意

Finally, the negotiators' communication task turns to concession and agreement. When making a concession, skilled negotiators link that to a counter-concession, using "if" language. For example, "We'll accept your shipment dates if you'll agree to a discount on future orders." Many experienced negotiators warn that you can't come back and ask for a counter-concession after your concession has been granted and the discussion has moved to another issue. Or you will be at risk of losing the agreements and trust you have already gained. Once you agree without condition or without "if" clauses, the issue is settled.

Sometimes the final agreement arrives more quickly than you expect. Chinese negotiators, for example, may probe the other side's position, testing for firmness and the other side's final position. Then suddenly, the other side may find the Chinese side offers a final agreement that solves many of the issues raised, without the need

to *haggle* or persuade. When this is the case, it probably isn't a good idea for the other side to offer too many counter-proposals or alternatives, because that weakens their position. On the other hand, good advice to Chinese negotiators would be to hold back from commitment to unattractive points, to see if the other side will offer counter-proposals or if they are really firm. American negotiators are known to be under pressure from their own cultural priority to settle. They want to achieve an agreement; in some cases they seem to feel any agreement is better than no agreement. They can be impatient, but they can also be imaginative about solutions.

**haggle v.**  
(在价格、条件等方面) 争论不休  
**escape clause**  
例外条款

Some cultures are not interested in settling the negotiations in a way that terminates them. To these context-oriented cultures, the relationship between organizations is what makes negotiations and agreements possible. Each side has an obligation to nurture the relationship and keep it going. Signed agreements cannot do that. Japanese negotiators, for example, prefer *escape clauses* in contracts—when contracts are necessary. Western negotiators are dismayed when Japanese or Chinese counterparts begin making changes immediately after contracts are signed. But in Asian cultures, documents are far less important than keeping the interdependent, interwoven organizations involved in a good relationship.

Negotiators from Western cultures, on the other hand, are keen to sign agreements. Contracts are firm and go a long way toward eliminating ambiguities and misunderstandings. Low-context negotiators see unwritten and informal agreements as unenforceable. They may not allow the other side to conceal something; low-context cultures give openness a high priority.

## Summary

### Communication in Negotiation

1. Negotiators from Asian cultures prefer to emphasize the positive points of agreement. They begin with general terms and seek agreement from the other side about general goals. While Western negotiators focus on particulars, esp. unresolved ones.

2. Honor, emotion and silence should be remembered as the differences in the focus of negotiation.
3. Negotiation styles vary with persons, their beliefs and skills, as well as the general context in which negotiations occur. It also varies due to cultural differences in areas like communication styles and decision-making patterns.

### **The Influence of Cultural Differences on Negotiation**

Cultural differences display in the following aspects of negotiation: negotiating goal; negotiating attitude; personal style; communication; and form of agreement.

### **Negotiation Strategies**

1. Before business negotiations, there are three different aims to be decided: the best aim, the satisfactory aim and the acceptable aim.
2. It is very important to make a practical negotiation plan after establishing the aim for negotiation.
3. International business negotiation is a process that is complicated, arduous, and of course interesting.

### **Physical Context and Phases of Negotiation**

1. The location of negotiation and the physical context of the communication have an impact on the outcome of negotiation.
2. Exchanges proceed according to four phases of negotiation in all cultures: information exchange about the topic under negotiation, persuasion, and concession and agreement; the emphasis and time spent on any one phase are really what differ.

## **Exercises**

### **I. Matching the terms with their definitions.**

- |                                       |                   |                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| A. win/lose negotiators               | B. negotiation    | C. satisfactory aim |
| D. win/win negotiators                | E. personal style |                     |
| F. international business negotiation |                   |                     |