

# **USING CULTURALLY SENSITIVE AND LINGUISTICALLY ADEQUATE LANGUAGE ACROSS CULTURES**

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# **OVERVIEW**

- **Course context**
- **Culture and communication**
- **Exercises, examples & group activities**
- **Lessons learned**
- **Further suggestions**
- **Q&A**

# **COURSE CONTEXT**

**Study program: Strategic HR Management in Europe  
(4 semesters, part-time, in English)**

**Course: Negotiations (4<sup>th</sup> semester)**

**Students: international student body**

**Course contents: negotiation models (f.ex.: Roger Fisher, William Ury), cross-cultural negotiations, tactics & emotions, conflict management, negotiations, discussions, etc.**



**How can awareness and sensitivity of culturally sensitive and linguistically adequate language across cultures be raised, especially in international classrooms?**





# WHAT IS CULTURE?



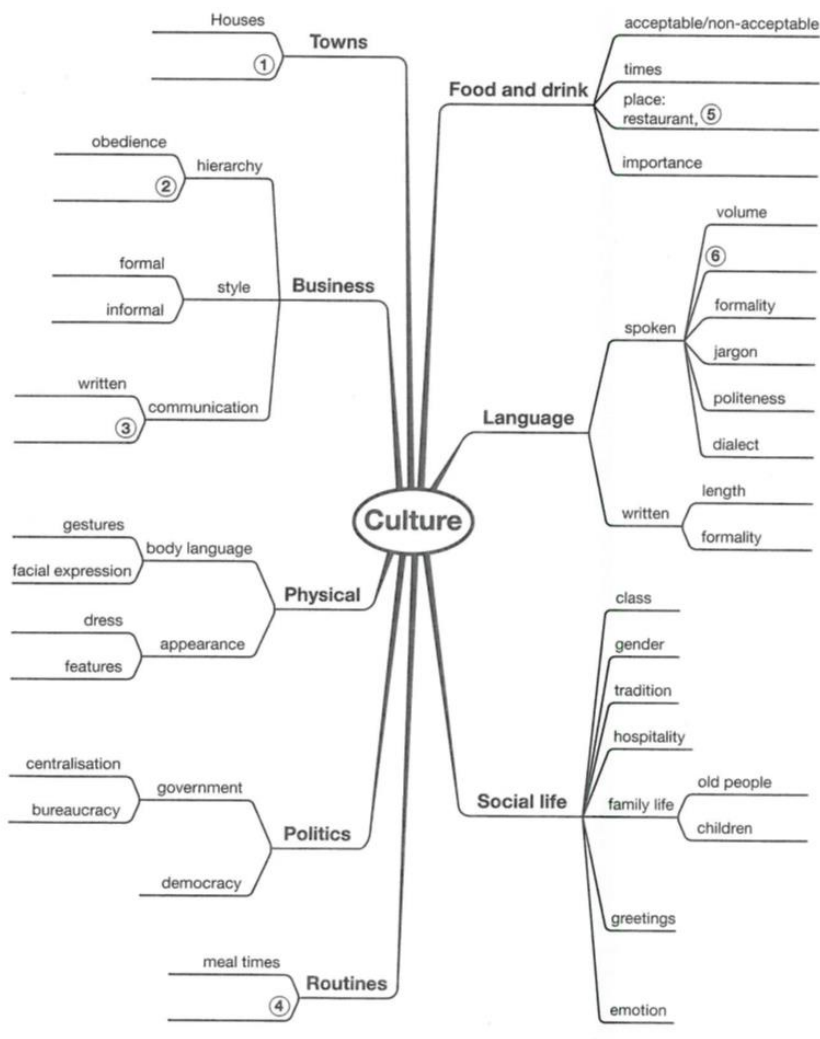
A The sum total of all the beliefs, values and norms shared by a group of people.

B The way you have been conditioned in a society to think, feel, interpret and react.

C The collective programming of the human mind.

D A large pool of experience composed of learned programmes for action and passed on from generation to generation.

E All you need to know and believe in order to be accepted in a society.



Source: Utley, Derek (2012). Intercultural Resource Pack. Intercultural communication resources for language teachers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (p.13).

**EXERCISE: IN WHICH WAYS DO CULTURES AFFECT COMMUNICATION? (5 MINUTES)**

- 1. form small groups (as diverse as possible)**
- 2. take notes**
- 3. discussion**



# HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT ...?

- Direct – indirect
- Formal – informal
- High context – low context
- Groups – individuals
- Time sensitivity
- Risk propensity
- Emotionalism
- Importance of relationships / building trust
- Power distance
- Uncertainty
- Body language
- Etc.



**LET'S TALK ABOUT ...**



# WHAT STEREOTYPES DO YOU HAVE?



## **LESSONS LEARNED**

- **Do not repeat any stereotypes!**
- **Do not reinforce any stereotypes!**
- **Ask the students to reflect on their own beliefs!**
- **Where do stereotypes come from?**
- **In how far are we influenced by them?**
- **What can we do about them?**

## ASK YOUR STUDENTS ...



- Which foreign language/s do you speak?
- What is/are your mother tongue/s?
- If you compare them to one another, which differences have you noticed in terms of directness, politeness, etc.?

# ADVICE

- Understand your own strengths, weaknesses, biases
- Understand the other person's cultural context
- Understand the other person as an individual

**EXERCISE: LOOK AT THE EXAMPLES OF DISAGREEMENT AND DECIDE HOW DISAGREEABLE THEY SOUND ON A SCALE FROM 1 (OKAY) TO 10 (VERY DISAGREEABLE)! (5 MINUTES)**

- a) No.
- b) Certainly not!
- c) I am afraid that would be rather difficult!
- d) That is definitely impossible.
- e) You must be joking, right?
- f) Unfortunately, that is not feasible for us at the moment.
- g) To be honest, we would prefer option number two. Would that also work for you?
- h) Have you lost your mind or something?





**How can you make your English  
sound more diplomatic?**





**EXERCISE: DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE (5 MINUTES)**  
**REWRITE THE SENTENCES TO MAKE THEM SOUND MORE DIPLOMATIC. FEEL FREE TO USE THE WORDS IN BRACKETS.**

1. That's impossible. (unfortunately/ at the moment/ feasible)
2. That is our last offer. (rather unlikely/ at this stage)
3. I want more money. (afraid/ not in the position)
4. You need to make a decision now. (when/ would/ possible?)
5. The deadline is completely unrealistic. (may not/ very easy/ compromise?)

# FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Listen to expert interviews/discussions and analyze them with your students!

Example: TED talks on cross-cultural communication

- Extra tip: Watch videos of (cross-cultural) communication gone wrong and learn more by taking on new perspectives!

Example 1: [Meeting from Hell! Running A Meeting or Drowning in Chaos?](#) (Facilitation Training - Dana Brownlee), source: YouTube

Example 2: [How NOT to run a meeting](#), source: YouTube

- Watch films and list all clichés and stereotypes you see!
- Learning by doing (!)



**Any questions?**



# REFERENCES

Utlej, Derek (2012). Intercultural Resource Pack. Intercultural communication resources for language teachers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR  
YOUR ATTENTION!**

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT  
ME!**

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