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**ВЛИЯНИЕ КУЛЬТУРНЫХ КОНТЕКСТОВ НА
ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ФОРМ ВЕЖЛИВОСТИ НА ДЕЛОВЫХ
ВСТРЕЧАХ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЕЙ КИТАЯ,
ГЕРМАНИИ, РОССИИ И ОАЭ)**

В статье рассматривается влияние культурных контекстов на использование форм вежливости в процессе деловых встреч на примере представителей Китая, Германии, России и Объединенных Арабских Эмиратов. Статья предлагает комплексный междисциплинарный подход к исследованию влияния культурных контекстов на формы вежливости в деловом общении, объединяющем лингвистический, культурологический, прагматический и практический аспекты. С точки зрения прагматического подхода анализируются особенности коммуникативных стратегий, обусловленные культурными ценностями и нормами каждой страны, и их отражение в вербальном и невербальном поведении участников делового общения. Исследование предлагает оригинальные эмпирические данные, собранные в ходе наблюдений за реальными деловыми встречами, что позволяет выявить практические аспекты применения форм вежливости в различных культурных средах. В работе выявляются различия в применении формальных и неформальных обращений, степени прямоты и косвенности высказываний, а также роли иерархии и уважения в речевых актах. Статья выявляет основные формы вежливости, используемые

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деловыми представителями Китая, Германии, России и ОАЭ. Особое внимание уделяется анализу коммуникативных стратегий, обусловленных национальными культурными ценностями и нормами, которые проявляются в вербальном и невербальном поведении участников делового общения. В работе анализируется влияние использованных форм вежливости на эффективность переговорного процесса. Новизна данной статьи заключается в интеграции теоретических моделей с практическими наблюдениями в процессе деловых встреч, что позволяет глубже понять механизмы межкультурной коммуникации. Результаты исследования подчеркивают важность учета культурных особенностей при организации международных деловых встреч для повышения эффективности коммуникации и предотвращения недопониманий. Статья будет полезна специалистам в области межкультурной коммуникации, международного бизнеса и лингвистики.

Ключевые слова: формы вежливости, деловые встречи, межкультурная коммуникация, культурные контексты

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**THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL CONTEXTS ON THE
USE OF POLITENESS FORMS AT BUSINESS MEETINGS
(THE EXAMPLE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF CHINA,
GERMANY, RUSSIA AND THE UAE)**

The article examines the influence of cultural contexts on the use of forms of politeness in the process of business meetings on the example of representatives of China, Germany, Russia and the United Arab Emirates. The article offers a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach to the study of the influence of cultural contexts on the use of politeness forms in business communication, combining linguistic, cultural, pragmatic, and practical aspects. The features of communicative

strategies, conditioned by cultural values and norms of each country, and their reflection in verbal and non-verbal behavior of participants of business communication are analyzed from the perspective of pragmatics. The research offers original empirical data collected through observations of real business meetings, which reveals the practical aspects of applying forms of politeness in different cultural environments. The paper identifies differences in the use of formal and informal appeals, the degree of directness and indirectness of statements, and the role of hierarchy and respect in speech acts. The article reveals the main forms of politeness used by business representatives of China, Germany, Russia and the UAE. Special attention is paid to the analysis of communicative strategies, conditioned by national cultural values and norms, which are manifested in verbal and non-verbal behaviour of business communication participants. The paper analyzes the influence of the used forms of politeness on the effectiveness of the negotiation process. The novelty of this article lies in the integration of theoretical models with practical observations in business meetings, which allows a deeper understanding of the intercultural communication mechanisms. The results of the study highlight the importance of cultural sensitivity in organizing international business meetings to enhance communication effectiveness and prevent misunderstandings. The article will be useful for specialists in the field of intercultural communication, international business and linguistics.

Keywords: forms of politeness, business meetings, cross-cultural communication, cultural contexts

Introduction

Nowadays it is a common phenomenon when business partners and customers reflect diverse cultural origins, and, therefore, understanding the impact of cultural contexts on communication becomes extremely important. One of the main constituents of effective communication in business meetings is politeness, which can vary depending on cultural norms and values of a particular nation. Forms of politeness, involving addressing, use of polite expressions, and nonverbal cues, are crucial in the process of creating a positive image: they can help to build trust, show respect and leave a positive impression of oneself and one's company. However, some forms of politeness may have contrast

meanings across different nations. Cultural features in courteous forms' use can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts during business meetings. For instance, inappropriate understanding of the interlocutor's statement or the use of inaccurate references or phrases addressed to the other party can have negative consequences and affect the outcome of the negotiation process. In this regard, it can be argued that the success of a business meeting is determined not only by the professional background of the parties, but also by their knowledge of the other party's cultural norms.

Recognizing the influence of cultural context on the use of politeness forms in business meetings not only contributes to the successful conclusion of transactions but also allows to create long-term and mutually beneficial relationships in the international business environment. Since nowadays there is a great competition between successful organizations, the representatives of one or another party should have such a quality as cultural competence, which will allow them to avoid conflicts and increase the effectiveness of the negotiation process.

The aim of the research is to examine how cultural contexts influence the use of politeness strategies during business meetings. To accomplish this, the study sets several objectives: to review existing literature on the cultural peculiarities of various nations, focusing on Chinese, German, Russian, and Arab cultures; to examine various politeness strategies employed in intercultural corporate communication; to explore the influence of cultural customs and social expectations on the choice of polite language; to observe video recordings of business meetings involving Chinese, German, Russian, and Arab entrepreneurs; to identify the core features of polite behavior exhibited by representatives of these cultures; to analyze the collected data to uncover main patterns in the use of polite forms across these cultural groups. Ultimately, the research aims to explore the relationship between politeness strategies and the success of business negotiations within different cultural settings.

The choice of these countries is determined by the fact that China, Germany, Russia, and the UAE represent diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds: Asian, Western European, Eastern European and Middle Eastern. This diversity enables a comprehensive exploration of various communicative strategies and forms of politeness. Besides, the distinct business etiquette and communication styles found in each of these

nations make a comparative analysis particularly interesting for uncovering national and cultural nuances of polite interaction. Furthermore, the selected countries play a notable role in the global economy and international business relations, so understanding the peculiarities of their communication practices is essential for successful negotiations. In addition, representatives of these countries often enter into business contacts with each other, which requires a deep understanding of their cultural differences. Thus, the choice of these countries is conditioned by their cultural, economic and communicative significance for the study of politeness in international business meetings.

Theoretical background

The study of politeness forms and their functioning in cross-cultural communication is one of the main challenges of modern linguistics and pragmatics since courtesy is considered to be the principal element of speech etiquette. Both domestic and international scientific researches have gathered substantial theoretical and empirical data to examine different types of politeness and their importance in cross-cultural communication.

Thus, the studies by E. M. Vereshchagin (1990) describe and analyze linguistic patterns of politeness in the Russian language. In the research he emphasized that forms of politeness in Russian are closely connected with cultural norms and traditions, as well as with the social status of interlocutors. V. G. Kostomarov (1990) also made a significant contribution to the study of speech etiquette and forms of politeness, considering them as a reflection of cultural values and patterns of behavior characteristic of Russian communicative practice. His works help to understand how cultural characteristics influence the choice of certain polite forms and strategies of communication.

Such scholars as T. V. Larina (2019), V. V. Leontiev (2016), L. V. Shcherba (1974), N. D. Arutyunova (1999) and V. N. Teliya (1991) have also made a significant contribution to the study of forms of politeness and speech etiquette in Russian linguistics.

T.V. Larina (2019) studies the category of politeness in Russian and English contexts and its perception by representatives of different cultures. T.V. Larina emphasizes the importance of adhering to the principles of politeness in electronic communication, which is especially relevant in today's diverse forms of communication. In addition, she emphasizes that politeness is an integral part of successful

communication that promotes harmony and mutual understanding in various social contexts.

V. V. Leontiev (2016) in the framework of his theory of language considered communicative behavior as a purposeful activity, in which forms of politeness act as an important means of regulating social relations and maintaining interpersonal contact. His approach allowed a deeper understanding of the functional role of polite speech acts in communication.

L. V. Shcherba (1974) paid attention to the historical development of linguistic forms and their stylistic features, including forms of politeness. He analyzed how social and cultural changes are reflected in speech etiquette and the choice of polite forms in the Russian language.

H. D. Arutyunova (1999) dealt with the problems of language pragmatics and speech etiquette, studying the mechanisms of politeness realization in various communicative situations. She emphasized that politeness is not only a set of formal expressions, but also a complex culturally conditioned phenomenon, including evaluative and emotional components.

B. N. Teliya (1991) analyzed speech etiquette as a system of normative patterns of communication, in which forms of politeness serve as a means of expressing respect, solidarity and social distance. His research played a significant role in advancing the theory of speech behavior and deepening the understanding of cultural codes in communication.

In the field of foreign linguistics, the contributions of P. Brown and S. Levinson (1978) are particularly influential, as they developed a foundational theory of politeness in the late 1970s. In their publication "Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage", they introduced the concepts of "linear strategies" and "linear acts", and identified two primary types of politeness: positive and negative. Positive politeness is aimed at strengthening friendly and warm relations, while negative politeness is aimed at respecting the personal space and autonomy of the interlocutor. This theory became the basis for many subsequent studies in the field of pragmatics and intercultural communication, as it allows us to analyze universal and culture-specific manifestations of politeness in speech.

Special attention in foreign studies is paid to the works of Edward Hall (1976), who introduced the concepts of "high" and "low" contexts

of communication. Hall showed that in high-context cultures (e.g., Japanese or Arab) politeness forms and communicative strategies strongly depend on context, nonverbal cues, and general cultural knowledge. In low-context cultures (e.g., American or German), communication is more direct and politeness is expressed predominantly through verbal means. This concept has been extremely useful in understanding how differences in cultural codes affect the perception and use of polite forms in cross-cultural communication.

Other foreign scholars, such as J. Hoffman (1972) and R. Jenks (2011), consider the category of politeness in different languages and cultures and its role in the process of intercultural communication. They assert that knowledge of cultural contexts that influence the use of courtesy forms leads to a beneficial outcome of business meetings.

G. Hofstede (2001) in the context of studying politeness in intercultural communication plays an indispensable role due to his model of cultural dimensions, which helps to understand how cultural characteristics influence the norms of communication and politeness. In particular, dimensions such as power distance and individualism vs. collectivism are directly related to how people express respect.

Materials and methods

To accomplish the objectives of the research, the following methods were employed. The first stage involves collecting existing literature sources on the topic of politeness categories in cross-cultural contexts, with a focus on Chinese, German, Russian and Arab cultures. The data were analyzed based on the criteria presented in Table 1.

The second stage is related to content analysis, including the study of video recordings of corporate meetings and negotiations processes involving Chinese, German, Russian and Arab businessmen in order to analyze the forms of politeness used by them during the negotiation process.

The third stage involves analyzing the data collected regarding the forms of courtesy used during business meetings and negotiation processes.

Table 1. Analyzed criteria

Category	Description
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Type of culture	individualist/collectivist; low/high power distance index (PDI); low/high level of country context
Linguistic forms of politeness	polite phrases and addressing
Non-verbal behaviour	kinesics, proxemics chronemics

At this stage, such research methods as discourse analysis, pragmatic analysis, and comparative analysis were applied. Discourse analysis includes the study of speech acts in the context of business meetings to identify politeness strategies, ways and expressions of respect. Pragmatic analysis comprises the study of speech acts and communicative intentions of negotiators, which allows to understand how politeness is realized in specific situations. Comparative analysis involves the comparison of means of politeness in different cultures (in this case – in Chinese, German, Russian and Arab), which allows to identify common and specific features.

The data are gathered through the examination of videos of business meetings and negotiations featuring Chinese, German, Russian, and Arab businessmen, sourced from online resources. A total of 100 videos were selected for the analysis (25 videos of business meetings with the participation of representatives from China, Germany, Russia, and the UAE correspondingly were analyzed).

In the process of observing the videos of negotiations, specific speech acts (for instance, phrases of greetings, requests, apologies, gratitude, small talk, health, family, religious phrases), as well as non-linguistic forms of politeness, such as punctuality and gift-giving, are identified and classified. The article focuses on the following major types of speech acts and forms of politeness identified in the course of observing video recordings of business meetings of representatives of China, Germany, Russia and the UAE: greetings, requests, apologies, expressions of gratitude, small talk, health, family, religious phrases, formal addresses using titles, phrases emphasizing respect and recognition of status, phrases expressing positive attitude and establishing trust, phrases mitigating criticism or expressing alternative opinions, goodbyes and wishes.

For each type of speech act and form of politeness, the number of times they are used during negotiations with representatives of China,

Germany, Russia, and the UAE is fixed. The obtained data are counted and reflected the frequency and share of each element in the overall communication structure for each country.

The categories of gift-giving and punctuality are understood as non-verbal forms of politeness. For gift-giving, it is manifested in the exchange of material signs of respect and establishment of trust during business negotiations. These can be traditional souvenirs, sweets, symbolic gifts that are given to partners in order to create a positive atmosphere.

The category of punctuality reflects the participants' attitude to the time of the meeting and compliance with the schedule agreements.

For each meeting, it is fixed whether a gift is given and whether punctuality is observed (e.g. arriving on time, delay less/more than a certain threshold – 10 minutes). The number of meetings in which this type of courtesy (gift or punctuality) is present is counted. The percentage is calculated as the ratio of the number of meetings with the manifestation of the corresponding category to the total number of meetings, related to representatives of the particular culture (25) multiplied by 100%.

Histograms are constructed based on these quantitative data, visualizing differences and similarities in the use of politeness forms between cultures. Basic statistical methods (e.g. percentages, averages, rounding) are applied for easier understanding of histograms. The percent ratios are calculated in relation to the total number of fixed word combinations and speech manifestations of politeness forms highlighted in the analyzed video recordings.

The article also observes the success of the negotiations which is measured by considering several criteria reflecting both communicative and productive aspects of business meetings. The main indicator of success is the achievement of agreements, including the conclusion of contracts, agreements or mutual understanding on the issues under discussion. A crucial element of the evaluation is the effectiveness of communication, specifically how well participants are able to express their viewpoints clearly and accurately while being culturally sensitive and courteous, thereby minimizing misunderstandings. In addition, the level of mutual understanding is assessed, reflecting the degree of coherence of positions and the absence of serious conflicts or misunderstandings during negotiations. The presence of constructive

dialog and the intention to build long-term business relationships are also taken into account, as well as verbal and non-verbal signals of agreement – confirmation of agreements both in words and through positive non-verbal expressions (e.g. smiles, nods).

Results and discussion

The culture type greatly impacts the ways in which politeness is expressed. Power Distance Index (PDI) reflects the level of hierarchy in a particular culture, and this, in turn, affects the use of forms of politeness in cross-cultural negotiations (Hofstede, 2001). Depending on the level of power distance, which ranges from high to low, politeness and communication style can vary significantly in countries such as China, Germany, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Thus, in examining the literature sources, it was found that in China, which is a collectivist society, politeness is expressed through respect for hierarchy. Since PDI in China is about 80, which is characterized as a high level of power distance, influential point in negotiation process is the use of respectful forms of address. Chinese culture belongs to countries with high context. In such societies, great attention is paid to indirectness, respect for the person and maintaining harmony in communication (Hall, 1976). Therefore, it can be assumed that during negotiation processes in Chinese culture, it is important to respect social hierarchies, so the use of titles and formal addresses is considered the standard. In addition, Chinese businessmen often address people by their title and surname, especially if they are elder or in a higher position. Informal addresses can be interpreted as disrespectful, so one must be careful to be respectful of the hierarchy. In addition, courtesy is expressed through the use of euphemisms and circumlocutions. Chinese businessmen tend to avoid direct criticism, as it is not customary to embarrass the interlocutor. Thus, politeness is often expressed in veiled expressions and innuendos.

The nonverbal behavior of Chinese businessmen can also reflect their cultural norms and values. For instance, they use respectful greetings through a slight tilt of the head, sometimes a bow, and, of course, a handshake. Eye contact in Chinese culture also has its own characteristics. Moderate eye contact is considered a sign of respect, but too intense gaze can be perceived as aggression, so it is important to strike a balance (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013).

Facial expressions and gestures also have a function in nonverbal communication. Smiling can help establish a friendly atmosphere, but excessive use of gestures may be perceived as inappropriate in Chinese culture. Modesty and restraint in nonverbal behavior are important elements, as avoiding self-promotion and demonstrating success emphasizes respect for the interlocutor (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013).

In addition, Chinese businessmen use open postures and relaxed gestures that create an atmosphere of trust, while closed gestures can be perceived as wariness or displeasure. A nod of the head may indicate agreement, but in some cases may be used to express polite attention rather than agreement, which requires careful attention to context.

Mutual respect is another core point in Chinese culture. It is essential to show respect for elders and more experienced negotiators, which can be manifested by listening more attentively and avoiding interruptions. Exchanging gifts in negotiations is also an important element of non-verbal communication. Gifts should be presented respectfully and can be beautifully wrapped (Sai, 2023).

Personal space for the Chinese in negotiations has its own unique characteristics that are important to consider in order to create a comfortable and productive atmosphere. Unlike Western cultures, where the physical distance may be smaller, the Chinese prefer to maintain a certain space between themselves and the interlocutor. This distance is usually around 1-1.5 meters, which helps to create a sense of respect and comfort (Sai, 2023).

Chinese business people's attitudes towards meeting time are culturally specific, as time is often perceived more flexibly in China, and therefore adherence to strict time frames is not always a prioritized issue. Thus, business meetings may take longer due to the importance of discussing all the details. However, if one party is late, it is not necessarily perceived as disrespectful and may be due to other circumstances. The negotiation process in China often involves several stages such as preliminary discussions, formal meetings and final agreements. Each of these stages can take a considerable amount of time, as it is important to weigh all aspects carefully. It is also worth considering that timing may be related to cultural traditions: some days may be considered more favorable for signing contracts, which also affects the timing of negotiations (Sai, 2023).

In Germany, which represents an individualist culture, politeness is shown through directness and honesty (Hofstede, 2001). People value open and honest communication, and names and titles are often used at the beginning of interactions to emphasize respect. Negotiations emphasize facts and arguments, creating a more competitive style of communication.

PDI in Germany is about 35, thus, the culture is characterized by low power distance (Hall, 1976). Therefore, it can be assumed that the use of formal titles may be less strict, especially in informal situations. Informal references, such as the use of first names, may be acceptable once a trusting relationship has been established. Although hierarchy exists, it is less explicit and employees are free to express their opinions, regardless of their status.

Germany is a low-context country. German culture values clarity, precision and directness (Hall, 1976). Linguistic manifestations of this include the use of clear formulas of politeness, standardized addresses (e.g. "Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren"- "Ladies and Gentlemen"), and direct constructions for expressing opinions or refusals. Structured speech, logicity and absence of ambiguity are important in business communication.

Politeness in Germans' non-verbal behavior in negotiations demonstrates their cultural views and business ethics as well. A greeting usually starts with a firm handshake, which should be confident but not too aggressive. It is important for Germans to look the other person in the eye, which demonstrates confidence and respect. Maintaining constant but not too intense eye contact is considered a sign of honesty and openness, which helps establish trust and shows that the listener is attentive to the speaker (Blum-Kulka & House, 2017).

In German culture, gestures are being used moderately: a smile is welcomed, but it should be restrained. Excessive gesticulation may be perceived as inappropriate or even insincere. Germans also prefer modest behavior, avoiding the demonstration of personal successes, which emphasizes respect for the achievements of other negotiators. Attentive listening and nodding of the head during conversation demonstrates interest and respect for the other person's opinion, while interrupting is considered impolite. Openness and honesty in communication are valued by Germans, and body language, such as the use of open hands, manifests

their openness and creates the atmosphere of trust (Blum-Kulka & House, 2017).

Personal space for Germans in negotiations has a special role in creating a comfortable and productive atmosphere. Germans prefer to maintain a certain physical distance, usually about 1.5 - 2 meters between participants. This helps to create a sense of security and respect for personal space. It is also worth remembering that Germans tend to be private about personal information, so it is best to avoid too personal matters and focus on business aspects (Blum-Kulka & House, 2017).

For Germans, punctuality is an influential element of politeness: it is not just an expression of good manners, but an essential aspect of business culture and personal relationships. In Germany, being late is perceived as disrespecting other people's time. Germans consider time to be valuable, and being on time for meetings is a way of demonstrating professionalism and seriousness. At business meetings and events, all participants are expected to be present at the appointed time. If there is a need to be late, it is mandatory to inform the other party in advance. Germans tend to plan their time carefully, including travel time, and often arrive at meetings early to avoid unnecessary stress and make sure everything goes smoothly.

Germans generally organize their schedules meticulously; therefore, they frequently arrive early for business meetings. Punctuality helps create trusting relationships, showing the value and respect of partners and coworkers. At the same time, tardiness can negatively affect the perception of a person as a professional and even affect business relationships. In addition, Germans value order and clarity, so it is important to prepare an agenda in advance and follow it (Blum-Kulka & House, 2017).

Russia, with its mixed culture combines elements of collectivist and individualist cultures. In formal situations, respect for status is shown through the use of titles and surnames, often using first name with a patronymic. Establishing trust and personal relationships can be an important perspective in negotiation (Vereshchagin & Kostomarov, 1990).

Russia, with a PDI of about 93, manifests a high-power distance level (Hofstede, 2001). It is common to use respectful titles, particularly when addressing elders or individuals in higher positions. Hierarchical structures are significant, with elders' opinions often holding greater

influence. Nonetheless, in certain circumstances, it is acceptable to voice personal opinions openly.

Russia occupies an intermediate position - its culture is characterized by moderate or medium level of contextuality (Hall, 1976). In terms of linguistics, this is manifested in the use of formal addresses and respectful forms (e.g., "Dear Ivan Ivanovich"), as well as the possibility of more direct expressions (Locher & Larina, 2019).

Nonverbal behaviour of Russian businessmen also reflects certain forms of politeness. The first point to note is eye contact, which is considered a sign of respect for Russians. However, it should be maintained in a moderate way, as too long gaze can be perceived as aggression, and its absence - as disrespect (Leontiev, 2016).

Body position is also important: an open and relaxed posture, for example when arms are not crossed, signals a willingness to cooperate. Conversely, a closed posture can be perceived as a sign of disinterest or defensiveness. Moderate use of gestures helps to emphasize what is being said, but it is important not to overdo it so as not to distract the other person.

Smiling, a sign of friendliness and greeting, should be restrained and appropriate, since an excessive smile can be perceived as insincerity. Handshake is a common greeting gesture in Russia, reflecting politeness. It should be firm, but not overly strong.

Personal space is also relevant in Russia. During meetings, the distance between interlocutors is usually greater than in some other cultures and being too close can cause discomfort (Bragina, 2018).

In Russian environment, punctuality is greatly appreciated, and being late is often seen as disrespectful during professional and formal settings. Nonetheless, occasional delays are sometimes considered acceptable if caused by unavoidable reasons, and these situations are typically tolerated without any adverse consequences. Russians prefer a structured method to negotiations, which involves setting clear objectives, agendas, and timelines. Nonetheless, while valuing organization, they also recognize the importance of maintaining some flexibility during discussions to address all relevant details and nuances effectively.

Finally, neat and appropriate appearance is also an important aspect of politeness. Russians value professionalism, and appearance can have a significant impact on the first impression.

In the United Arab Emirates, which represents a collectivist culture, an essential aspect of politeness is respect for tradition and hierarchy (Hofstede, 2001). Following local traditions and respecting the status of interlocutors requires the use of formal addresses and titles. As in other collectivist cultures, direct criticism and confrontation are avoided, and politeness is shown through courteous phrases and unobtrusive hints. Establishing trust and long-term relationships is a major aspect of negotiation process in Arab culture.

In the UAE, with a PDI of around 90, the relevance of respectful forms of address and titles cannot be overemphasized (Hofstede, 2001). Respect for status and age is paramount, and informal addresses may not be tolerated, especially in formal settings. Non-verbal behavior should be restrained and polite, and physical contact between men and women may not be appropriate.

The culture of the UAE belongs to the highly contextualized countries (Hall, 1976). Arab societies place great value on respect for personal connections and indirectness. Forms of politeness include the use of long greetings and circumlocutory phrases. Greetings in Arab culture can be quite lengthy and include questions about the health and well-being of the interlocutor and his or her family. A respectful greeting, such as “السلام عليكم - As-salamu alaikum” (peace to you), is the standard.

Physical contact also plays an important role: a handshake is common, but gender differences need to be taken into account. Men can shake hands, but women may be uncomfortable doing it with men, so it is better to wait for a woman to offer her hand (Samarah, 2015).

Eye contact is a respect and sincerity gesture, but it is necessary to maintain a balance (Samarah, 2015).

Personal space is of particular importance in Arab culture, especially in negotiations. Arab businessmen tend to have the shortest physical distance during meetings, which reflects their transparency and confidence. However, it is important to remember that not all participants may feel comfortable at proximity. If someone looks uncomfortable, it is worth stepping back a little to avoid creating tension. Gender differences also play a role in the perception of personal space. Men may be closer together, while women may be uncomfortable being in close contact with men. Respecting these differences is critical to successful communication (Samarah, 2015).

Gestures are also important: open gestures such as open palms are considered polite and friendly. However, some gestures that may be normal in other cultures may be perceived as offensive, so it is important to be careful. In Arab culture, smiling plays a significant role in creating a friendly atmosphere by showing openness and willingness to interact (Samarah, 2015).

Arab attitudes towards time in negotiations differ significantly from the Western approach. Arab culture has a more flexible perception of time, which can influence the style of negotiation. Participants may not adhere to a strict timetable and the start of a meeting is sometimes delayed and discussions may be delayed longer than planned. This happens because the emphasis is on building relationships and trust, which takes time. Negotiations often begin with informal conversations that help to establish rapport between the participants before moving on to the main issues. It is also important to consider local traditions and customs that may influence the perception of time. For instance, during the holy month of Ramadan, meetings may take place at a different time of day or be shortened (Samarah, 2015).

The research of the use of politeness forms across cultures reveals that Chinese business culture emphasizes forms of politeness that help to establish trust, show respect and respect hierarchical relationships. In business meetings, Chinese businesspeople use different ways of showing respect, which significantly affects the course of negotiations and their outcome. The analysis of meetings' recordings identified that one of the most important aspects is the use of titles and surnames. Instead of personal names, it is customary to address the interlocutor by professional or social status, such as "Mr. Director" or "Ms. Manager," and to add the surname. For example, "Mr. Chen, I am very pleased to meet you", "My old friend, Mr. President". This approach of Chinese businessmen shows respect for the partner's status and creates formal and respectful atmosphere. Besides, formal addresses and greetings are also common. At the start of a meeting, Chinese businessmen usually use standard formal expressions like "Hello" (您好) and often add titles, for instance, saying "Good afternoon, Mr. Putin", "I want to thank President Putin for inviting me and thank our Russian friends for their warm welcome. Mr President..." Additionally, Chinese businessmen often exchange gifts with their partners, for instance, small souvenirs or other traditional Chinese, which can foster a positive atmosphere during

negotiations. Furthermore, Chinese culture tends to favor gentle and indirect communication. Instead of outright refusals, they prefer more tactful language: “Is there a possibility to consider another option?” instead of stating “That is not possible.” This style of communication aims to minimize confrontation during negotiations. Besides, Chinese businessmen tend to follow a certain protocol: they keep their distance and avoid excessive informality in dress and behavior. Showing patience and attentiveness is another important aspect of Chinese behavior. Listening attentively, showing interest in the interlocutor's opinion and avoiding hasty decisions help to build trust and foster long-term partnerships.

Overall, using these forms of politeness helps to create an atmosphere of respect and trust, which is especially important in Chinese business culture: “I am very happy to be invited by my old friend President Putin to visit Russia again and attend the ceremonial events”, “China and Russia have inherited friendship for many generations”, “Thank you for your attention”. This approach facilitates more respectful and constructive negotiations and minimizes the disputes occurrence and enhances the probability of achieving mutually beneficial agreements.

Additionally, the study revealed that German businesspeople are recognized for their formal and courteous manner during negotiations. A common expression of politeness in their interactions is the use of formal greetings. For example, starting a meeting with the phrases “Good afternoon, Mr. Biden”, “Thank you very much. Good afternoon from my side as well”, “I am very grateful that we had the opportunity to talk in much detail and that I was able to make my first official visit here” creates an atmosphere of respect and professionalism, which helps to establish trust between the participants. It is also important to mention the use of titles and surnames by German businessmen when addressing interlocutors, such as “President” or “Professor.” This demonstrates respect for the status and qualifications of the interlocutor, which can contribute to a more open dialog and constructive interaction.

Active listening is another important form of politeness used by the Germans. Showing interest in the other participants' opinions, such as through head nodding and such phrases as “Thank you very much for your question”, “Thank you very much for raising that question”, “Thank you very much. Appreciate it” show respect and willingness to a dialog,

which contributes to more productive discussions as participants feel that their opinions are valued.

Punctuality is highly valued in the German business environment. Arriving on time or slightly early for meetings is a sign of respect and professionalism, that helps to create a positive first impression. In addition, German businessmen often use the following expressions at the end of a meeting, such as “Thank you for your time” or “I appreciate your input”. Such polite phrases strengthen the relationship and can leave a good impression. Clear and direct communication is another instrument helping to prevent misunderstandings: “I want to be absolutely clear”. For instance, such phrases as “I would like to discuss the specific terms of our cooperation” or “We will work closely” ensure a more effective interaction.

Furthermore, the study shows that Russian business culture also emphasizes certain rules of courtesy that are necessary during negotiations and establishing business relationships. Russian professionals adhere to etiquette norms to demonstrate respect and increase the effectiveness of communication. They usually address the interlocutors by their job title or full name and patronymic, such as “Hello, Mr. Xi, nice to meet you”. In some cases, Russian businessmen tend to use informal addresses such as “Dear friend, I would like to thank you once again for your visit today”. The use of such address emphasizes closeness and friendliness, reduces the distance between interlocutors, creates an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. Besides, they use a handshake with eye contact maintaining. In general, Russian business culture places great emphasis on formality and correctness in communication.

During negotiations, polite expressions are used: “Please”, “Thank you for your attention”, “I will be grateful for your opinion”, “Could you please clarify this question?” These phrases help to create a respectful atmosphere and reduce the risk of conflict situations. Besides, Russian businessmen often use expressions of gratitude and appreciation: “I am very pleased with our new meeting and sincerely appreciate the opportunity to communicate directly with you in person. I am very grateful that, as on the previous anniversary date, which was 10 years ago, you decided to visit us”, “It is of great importance for us. We are happy to see you at the festive events. Thank you”. Furthermore, they make references to common values and principles: “Our relations are

built on the unshakable principles of equality, mutual support and assistance”, “We intend to build good-neighborliness, strengthened friendship and expand cooperation”. Such statements help strengthen the positive face of both sides, emphasize mutual respect and partnership.

Russian businesspeople also emphasize reciprocity and mutual benefit: “From my part, I am grateful to you for the invitation to the ceremonial events dedicated to the eightieth anniversary of the victory...”, “I will be glad to visit friendly China again”. These expressions help to maintain a balance between the interlocutors, demonstrate respect and recognition of the contribution of the other party.

In addition, Russian businessmen show respect for their partner's opinion, even if there are disagreements, avoiding harsh criticism. If it is necessary to express disagreement, they use a mild formulation: “I understand your point of view, but I think it is possible to consider another option” or “Thank you for your suggestion. Let me suggest an alternative approach”.

Punctuality is also important – showing up to meetings on time is considered respectful of the other person's time. Patient listening and attentiveness are valued during negotiations

After analyzing the meetings of Arab businessmen, it was found that one of the common ways of showing respect is to ask about the family of the interlocutor. Questions such as “How is your family?” or “How is your children's health?” are often asked in meetings, which helps to establish a more personal rapport and build trust between the participants.

Religiously colored phrases such as “Insha'Allah” (if Allah wills) and “Masha'Allah” (as Allah wills) are commonly used in conversation. These expressions emphasize respect for the higher powers and humility, which is perceived positively by the interlocutor and contributes to the creation of a friendly atmosphere.

It is also a common practice in Arab culture to bring small gifts, such as traditional souvenirs or sweets, which symbolize respect and the desire to establish good relations. An important part of the meeting is also a long goodbye, when participants exchange good wishes and discuss informal topics, which helps to create a sense of closeness and mutual respect.

Active listening with affirming phrases such as “I understand” or “That’s interesting” demonstrates respect for the interlocutor's opinion and helps to have a constructive dialog. In addition, engaging in cultural traditions, such as sharing tea or treats together, contributes to a more friendly atmosphere. Arab businessmen also tend to discuss current events taking place in the region of their interlocutors.

Besides, in the speech of Arab businessmen, there is a frequent use of expressions of hospitality and joy at the meeting: “I would like to welcome you, Mr. President, to the UAE”, “It is a pleasure to meet you again”. These phrases demonstrate a positive attitude towards the interlocutor, express respect and joy from a personal meeting. Addressing by title (“Mr. President”) emphasizes formality and respect. The expression of appreciation and gratitude “I greatly appreciate your visit” demonstrates recognition of his efforts and the importance of the visit. Emphasizing common values and partnership as in the following phrases “The UAE and the US have shared a multi-dimensional strategic partnership and a long-standing friendship founded in a shared commitment to advancing prosperity and stability in our countries”, “Over the decades, the UAE has been a trusted partner of the US and in matters of shared concern, we are keen to continue deepening this friendship for the benefit of both nations” creates a sense of unity, mutual respect and common goals, which strengthens the positive impression of both sides. Using formal expressions of respect “My honor, Mr. President” expresses deep respect and recognition of the status of the interlocutor, emphasizes formality of communication.

The practical material analysis revealed new cultural peculiarities that complement and expand the existing theoretical positions presented in the previous studies.

The theories about static norms of politeness were confirmed, but the practical material showed that representatives of all four cultures demonstrate considerable flexibility. For example, in Russia and the UAE, more informal communication is allowed when establishing trusting relationships, which does not always coincide with the generally accepted standards of politeness. Practical analysis revealed that German representatives also showed greater tolerance for less formal forms of communication compared to classical notions of national norms.

In addition to existing theories, it was found that China and the UAE emphasize personal relationships and trust, which influences the choice

of politeness forms. In practice, this is manifested in the use of warmer or more respectful forms when communicating with close partners or seniors.

The article noted that nonverbal displays (gestures, facial expressions, distance role) take an essential place in conveying respect or recognition. In some cultures (e.g., Chinese and Arab participants), nonverbal cues may carry more weight than verbal expressions. This fact expands the understanding of the role of nonverbal communication in the context of cultural characteristics.

These new findings support the importance of considering the dynamics of cultural traits and their variability in real-life business situations. They complement existing theoretical models by emphasizing the need for a flexible approach to the study and practice of intercultural communication in business meetings.

Conclusions

As a result, it was found out that In Chinese culture, a significant proportion of politeness forms are related to questions about family (30%) and gifts (30%). China with 60% punctuality shows a more flexible attitude to time, which may be related to the emphasis on interpersonal relationships and harmony in communication.

In Germany, punctuality predominates (90%), while personal questions and religious phrases are rarely used (10% and 5% respectively). This reflects a more formal and reserved style of communication.

In Russia, there is a noticeable balance between personal questions (15%) and the use of polite phrases (85). Gifts exchanging takes a moderate place (15%). Russia with 70% of punctuality shows that although time is not always strictly adhered to, there is still an awareness of the importance of punctuality in a business context. This indicates a mix of personal and formal approaches in business communication.

In the UAE, gifts (30%) and religious phrases (25%) play a significant role due to the cultural and religious traditions of the region. The UAE also shows a high level of punctuality (85%), reflecting a growing business environment and the significance of international connections.

The results are presented in Figure 1.

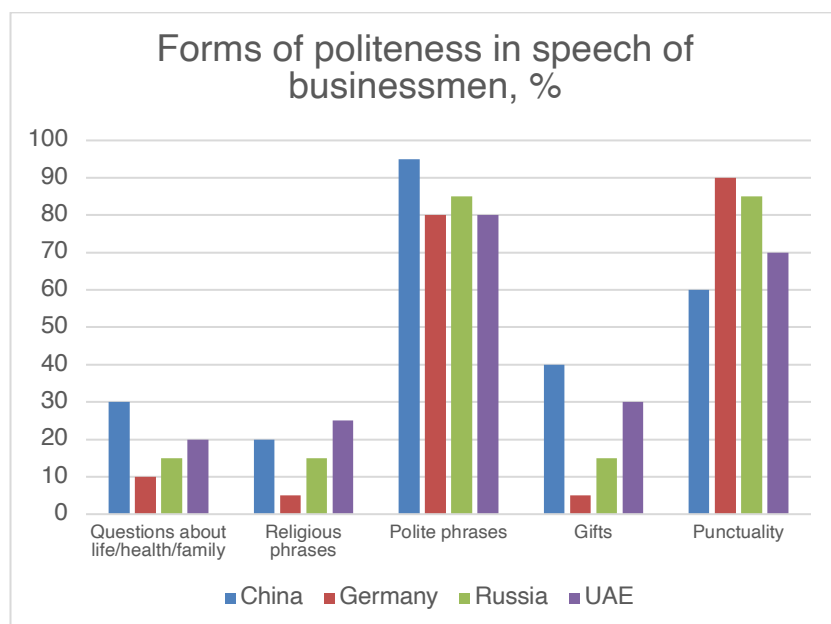


Figure 1. Forms of politeness in the speech of businessmen

To sum up, each culture has its own unique preferences in the use of forms of politeness, which is important to consider when conducting business negotiations to establish trust and effective interaction.

In addition, the impact of politeness forms' use on the success of negotiations was also analyzed. The results are presented in Figure 2.

The observation shows that a high level of use of politeness (85%) correlates with high negotiation success (90%), indicating the importance of polite and respectful communication in the Chinese business context. The UAE also shows a high level of politeness forms' usage (75%) and high negotiation success (80), which confirms the importance of cultural and religious traditions in business communication. The average level of use of politeness forms (70%) by Russian businessmen is accompanied by moderate negotiation success (60), which may indicate the need for increased attention to cultural norms to improve effectiveness. Despite the relatively low level of use of politeness forms (60%) by German businessmen, negotiation success

is rated higher than in Russia (70%), which may reflect the more direct and formal style of communication acceptable in German culture.

To sum up, there is a positive correlation between the use of politeness forms and business negotiation success, but the degree of influence depends on cultural characteristics. Negotiation strategies in an international environment can be optimized by taking cultural factors of different nations into account.

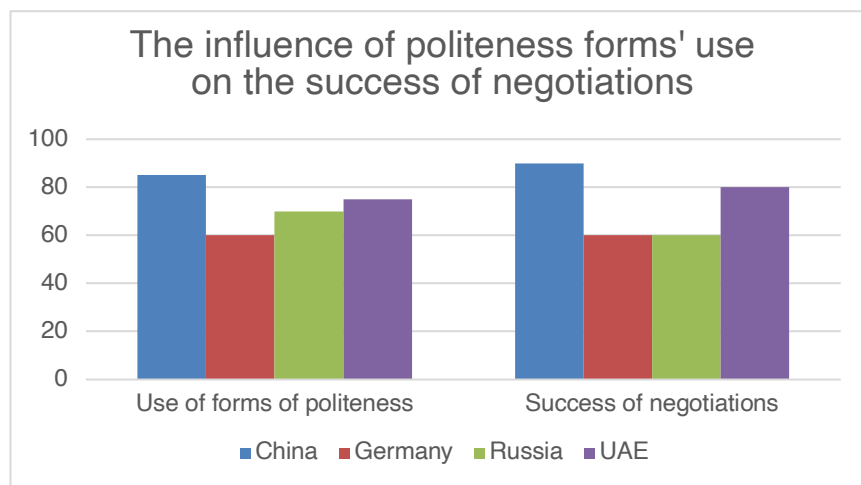


Figure 2. The influence of politeness forms' use on the success of negotiations

In conclusion, it should be noted that the study of cultural contexts' impact on the use of courtesy forms in business meetings between representatives of China, Germany, Russia and the UAE revealed several features that must be taken into account for beneficial interaction. Every culture has its unique set of rules and expectations, regarding politeness concept, which requires business meeting participants to be flexible and adaptable to different communication styles.

In Chinese culture, hierarchy and social status significantly influence the ways politeness is expressed. Conversely, in Germany, a focus on equality often results in a more straightforward communication style, although maintaining courtesy remains a significant value. Indirect and direct communication styles also vary: in Chinese and Arab cultures, the

indirect approach is predominant, requiring participants to have a more nuanced understanding of context and non-verbal cues.

It is important to recognize that nonverbal cues may have different meanings in different cultures. Successful business meetings require participants to be flexible and willing to adapt to each other's cultural expectations. Understanding these differences and active using forms of politeness can strengthen business relationships and reduce misunderstandings.

Thus, national and cultural peculiarities rooted in the representatives of different nations are significantly reflected in the process of business negotiations. These features are manifested in various aspects of communication: in the choice of dialog strategies, use of politeness forms, style of expressing positions. Cultural norms influence perceptions of time, approaches to decision-making, and expectations about etiquette and rituals, such as gift-giving. Depending on cultural traditions, negotiators may use direct or indirect communication style. For example, some cultures prefer to express their thoughts and demands openly, while others tend to be diplomatic and avoid direct criticism.

Some cultures value strict adherence to time and punctuality, which affects the structure and pace of negotiations. In other cultures, time is perceived more flexibly, which can lead to different expectations about timing and duration of meetings.

In cultures with a strong hierarchical structure, negotiations often involve senior individuals and respect for status plays a central role. In more equal cultures, decisions may be made collectively, without emphasis on the formal status of participants.

In some cultures, decisions are made individually and quickly, in others collectively and after lengthy discussions, reflecting differences in values and approaches to cooperation.

Gestures, facial expressions, communication distance and eye contact can vary significantly and affect mutual understanding and trust.

The degree of openness in expressing disagreement varies across cultures, ranging from direct discussion to avoiding open confrontation.

Prospects for future research include the necessity to a better analysis of the influence of cultural contexts on other aspects of business communication, such as negotiation and conflict resolution.

In addition, it was revealed that despite the existing standards of using forms of politeness, the model of behavior of a business representative

may vary depending on the situation, and it cannot be assumed that representatives of a particular culture will behave exactly as they did in most cases. In certain circumstances, they adapt to a new situation, depending on which their behavior regarding the forms of politeness may also change.

The novelty of the study is manifested in the identification of the fact that the models of using forms of politeness are not static and universal for representatives of a certain culture but can change depending on the specific situation and context of interaction. This refutes traditional stereotypes and demonstrates the adaptability of cultural behavior, which allows for more accurate prediction and effective management of communication in cross-cultural business negotiations. This approach enhances cultural understanding and facilitates the development of more flexible and contextualized negotiation strategies.

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