



A Cultural Perspective of Negotiation Styles
--- Focusing on Differences between
China and America

文化透视谈判风格----中美谈判风格比较

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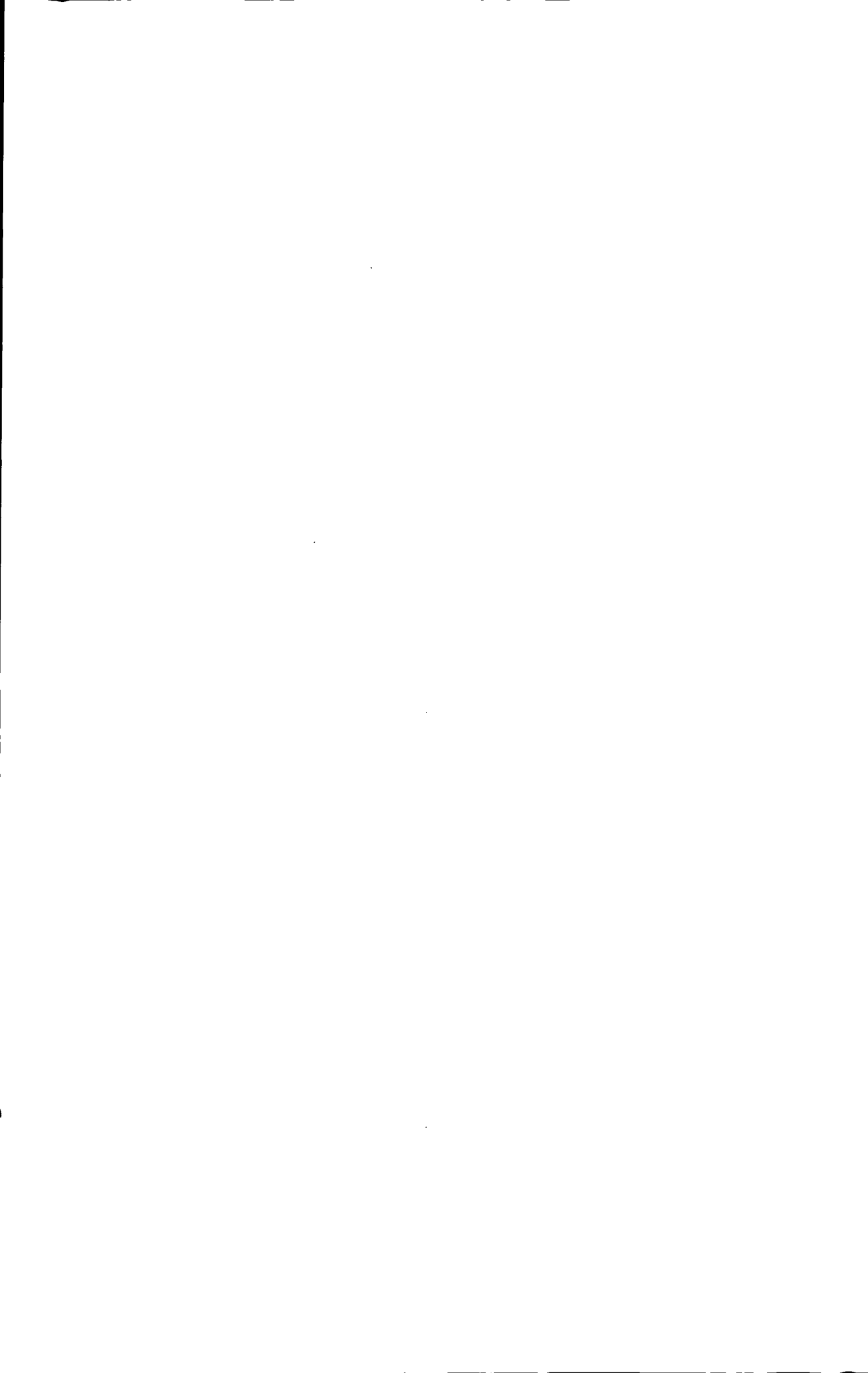
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摘要:

近年来,经济全球化飞速发展,已经深入到人们生活的各个方面,因此作为经济活动重要部分的国际商务谈判变得越来越重要。这样,我们就有必要来了解一些商务风格的基本框架以及在不同条件下的运作方式。为了更好的理解这一点,这篇论文试图分析在不同的社会文化背景下,不同的文化因素对其商务谈判风格的影响,因为文化因素对于分析和比较社会和经济活动来说至关重要。本论文旨在运用文化理论,重点比较中美之间的不同谈判风格,阐明不同文化背景的谈判者在谈判中的不同方式。

中西方尤其是中美双方作为世界上两个重要的贸易伙伴,两国的商务往来也越来越多,贸易数额与日俱增,中美贸易亦成为世界贸易的重要组成部分。中美之间的贸易往来使两国之间的贸易谈判也逐渐增多,但因为双方的谈判者来自两种不同文化背景,存在着不同的价值观和思维方式,有时谈判双方虽然都抱有诚意,但最终还是会产生误解而不能取得任何积极的结果。因此,在中美商务谈判中了解彼此不同的文化,熟悉商业活动的文化差异是非常重要的。它有助于中美方谈判者更好地互相了解,在谈判中尊重对方的文化,从而尽可能避免因为文化差异而导致的冲突,使双方的贸易沿着互惠互利、共同发展的道路健康地发展下去。

论文第一章阐明了本论文的研究目的及研究方法。第二章回顾了文化交流理论和谈判理论,为下一章进一步分析中美文化的形成根源和主要价值观奠定了坚实的理论基础。第三章主要分析在不同的文化背景下,文化差异是如何塑造不同谈判风格的,以及商务谈判中的交流误会或失败是如何因为文化差异而产生的。第四章运用比较分析的方法来阐述文化是如何影响谈判的,并且论文还引用了中美商务谈判中的一些实例来加以比较分析。本章清楚的指出中美文化之间的巨大差异以及其文化差异对商务谈判风格的影响,这些文化差异包括:时间观念,人际关系,面子观,权利影响力,面对冲突的态度,风险倾向及协议形式。

根据第四章的分析,论文第五章为中美双方的谈判者提供了一些实用的建议,并指出了本研究的局限性和未来相关领域的研究方向。

关键词: 中美谈判; 文化角度; 集体主义; 个人主义; 人际关系



A Cultural Perspective of Negotiation Styles

--- Focusing on Differences between

China and America

Abstract:

Recent decades have witnessed a tremendous economic globalization undergoing in every aspect of human life and therefore international business negotiations have become more and more important for they constitute a fundamental part of economic activities. So it is necessary to know and understand the basic mechanisms found in negotiation styles and how they work under different cultural conditions. To better understand them, this research attempts to analyze the cultural elements which influence negotiation styles under different social and cultural circumstances for cultural issues are essential to analyze and compare social and economic actions. And this research is also aimed to apply cultural theories and concentrate on comparing different negotiation styles between China and America to illustrate how people from different cultures manage negotiations in different manners.

China and America, as two most important economic powers in the world, have been cooperating, exchanging and negotiating in various economic areas and Sino-U.S trade now occupies a large proportion of the world trade. As a result, business negotiations between China and America are increasing dramatically. However, the negotiation styles between them are quite different due to huge differences in cultures including value systems, ethical standards and thinking patterns, which may bring about misunderstandings during the negotiation process even if the two sides are quite sincere. Therefore, to learn and know each other's cultures and understand different negotiation styles are of great significance. This may assist the two sides better understand each other, respect each other across their respective cultures so as to avoid conflicts that may arise from cultural differences. Only in this manner can the two parties bring about fruitful and mutual benefits and gain their economic ends

The beginning chapter of this thesis analyzes the purpose or aim of this research.

Chapter Two presents a comprehensive review of theories on culture, communication as well as business negotiations. These theories lay a solid foundation for a further study of the roots and core values of Chinese and American cultures in Chapter Three. In Chapter Three it is found that attention is given to see how cultural differences produce different negotiating styles and how misunderstandings and communication failures occur because of different cultural perceptions. Chapter Four presents a comparative study of how cultures affect in negotiations and it also conducts a case study of actual negotiations that have been performed between Chinese and American negotiators in terms of cultural issues. This chapter clearly indicates that there are great differences between the two cultures, and what a tremendous impact these cultural differences can cause on negotiating styles. The thesis provides the following kinds of cultural differences involving time concepts, interpersonal relationship, face concern, power distance, attitude toward conflicts, risk-taking propensity and forms of agreement.

According to the analysis conducted in the four chapters, Chapter Five offers some practical working advice to both Chinese and American negotiators and points out some limitations found in the research, which would hopefully help to furnish future studies in the related fields

Key words: Sino-US Business Negotiation; Cultural Perspective; Collectivism, Individualism; Interpersonal Relations

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The Purpose and Subject of the Study

Recent decades have witnessed a tremendous economic globalization undergoing in every aspect of human life and therefore international business negotiations have become more and more important for they constitute one fundamental part of economic activities. So it is necessary to know and understand the basic mechanisms found in negotiation styles and how they work under different conditions. To better understand them, this research attempts to analyze the cultural elements which influence negotiation styles in different social and cultural circumstances for cultural issues are essential to analyze and compare social and economic actions. And this research is also aimed to apply cultural theories and concentrate on comparing different negotiation styles between China and America to illustrate how people from different cultures manage negotiations in different manners.

Since China's entry into the WTO, more and more American companies have been flourishing in China, and likewise, China's overseas enterprises have been rushing to join the American market. The increasing business leads to more communication across the two extremely different cultures, especially in the field of business negotiation. And a successful business, to a large extent, depends on the mutually beneficial agreement. To reach an agreement, two parties need to negotiate.

Negotiation, a very common and important activity in the business world, can be perceived as a process in which two or more parties come together to discuss common and conflicting interests in order to reach an agreement on the basis of mutual benefit. The awareness of how cultural factors affect negotiation styles will help negotiators better understand how members of different cultural backgrounds can communicate effectively and efficiently with each other and solve conflicts constructively. This can greatly improve the ability of negotiators to foresee the possible pitfalls of international business negotiations.

In a word, the purpose of this thesis is to help the negotiators make an appropriate

plan and employ the proper tactics to reach a favorable or win-win agreement. It is beneficial and significant for both parties to avoid cultural conflicts, enhance intercultural communication and finally achieve an ideal result in business negotiations.

1.2 The Data and Methodology of the Research

In this thesis, a qualitative case analysis and a comparative approach are adopted in the research. The business cases marked as “Case 1, 2...” can be found in this thesis. These cases are from some professional books concerning business negotiations. A comparative approach is also available to compare different styles of Chinese and Americans when they face the same situation or problem, and this may help us understand the impact of different cultural factors on communications.

1.3 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis falls into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the general background, purpose and subject of this thesis and it at the same time describes the source of the data used in this study. Then it goes on to introduce the methodology employed and the structure of the research. The second chapter presents the theoretical foundation of the thesis. First, basic cultural and communication theories as well as cultural dimensions are discussed. Second, negotiation theories are presented to give a general perception of negotiation. In Chapter Three, core factors of Chinese culture and American culture are introduced to help us further understand the cultural differences between China and America. Chapter Four deals in great detail with different negotiating styles found among Chinese people and Americans. From this chapter, we can know that the main negotiation style of Chinese business negotiators is people-oriented, high context and of large power distance. On the contrary, American business negotiators employ a different negotiating style that is problem-oriented, low context and small power distance. A general conclusion of the thesis is provided in Chapter Five, and suggestions for both Chinese and American negotiators are given for consideration.

Chapter 2

Literary Review on

Cross-Cultural Theories and Negotiation Theories

2.1 Definitions of Culture and Communication

As is known to all, definitions of culture are numerous and various, and scholars have performed heated discussions in terms of what culture is in the past decades. For my research I will employ the definition of culture proposed by Bhikhu. Human beings make efforts to make their lives and the world meaningful and wonder at the meaning and significance of human life activities and relationships. To ask what is the meaning of an activity is to ask about its nature and point of purpose; and to ask what is its significance is to ask questions about its worth or value, the kind and degree of importance to be assigned to it, and its place in human life in general (Bhikhu, 2000) The beliefs or views human beings have in their minds about the meaning and significance of human life and its activities affect their specific behaviors in everyday life. Culture is a historically created system of meaning and significance or, what comes to the same thing: a system of beliefs and practices, in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives. It's used for understanding and ruling human life. The understanding it brings has a practical role reflecting a philosophical or a scientific theory. And it also indicates how it rules human life based on a particular manner controlling human beings. (Bhikhu, 2000).

According to Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter (1994), "Communication is a dynamic transactional behavior-affecting process in which people behave intentionally to induce or elicit a particular response form another person." It can be described by the following process:

Behavior Source → Encoding → A Message → A Channel → Responders →
Decoding → Response and Feedback

Behavior source is a person with both a need and a desire to share information with

others or to influence the attitudes and behaviors of one or more others. Encoding is an internal activity in which verbal and nonverbal behaviors are selected and arranged to create a message. So a message is a set of verbal or nonverbal symbols that represents a person's particular state of being in a particular context. A channel is a physical means by which a message moves between people such as e-mails, telephone messages, letters or face-to-face interactions. Responders are those who receive the message once it has entered a channel. Converting external message into a meaningful experience is called decoding. This is an internal activity through which meaning is attributed to a source's behavior. Response is what a person decides to do about a message and feedback is information about the effectiveness of communication.

2.2 Literary Reviews on Cultural Dimensions

2.2.1 Hofstede's Four Dimensions of Work-Related Values

In 1980, Greet Hofstede, one of the most distinguished scholars in the field of intercultural communication, investigated corporate culture in transnational IBM, and then he found that the values across all culture samples can be divided into four underlying dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance and masculinity vs. femininity. Since then, these four dimensions have served as theoretical bases for intercultural studies. As for the area and purpose of this present study, only the first three are discussed and applied in this thesis.

Individualism vs. Collectivism

Individualism-oriented cultures hold individual interests and goals as most important and therefore an "I" consciousness prevails; while in collectivism-oriented cultures group interests and goals proceed over those of the individual and a "we" consciousness prevails. Most western countries value individualism and people strive hard to achieve individual identity in terms of possessions and achievement in their professions. Many eastern countries place a high value on the collective, so group harmony and group cooperation are preferred and stressed rather than competition. Decisions are usually made from the perspective of group interests. Sometimes individuals have to sacrifice their own interests to achieve what is good for the group.

Hofstede (1984) claimed that collectivism and individualism were two poles of the one dimension, and western countries such as those in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand can be categorized as individualistic societies while societies from Africa, Middle East, East Asia and South America can be categorized as collectivist societies.

Uncertainty Avoidance

As the term defined by Hofstede, uncertainty avoidance “defines the extent to which people within a culture are made nervous by situations which they perceive as unstructured, unclear, or unpredictable situations which they therefore try to avoid by maintaining strict codes of behavior and belief in absolute truths.”(Hofstede, 1988)

It is the value dimension by which a cultural group’s reaction to uncertain and ambiguous situation can be examined. According to Hofstede, cultures with high uncertainty avoidance emphasize social stability and security and often feel threatened by new ideas and innovations. They tend to be slow-paced, rigid and formal in problem solving. In contrast, cultures with low uncertainty avoidance do not resist changes and instead encourage new ideas and creativity. People in these countries are more efficient, flexible and informal.

Power Distance

According to Hofstede and Bond (1988), power distance refers to the extent to which a society accepts the idea that power in relationships, institutions, and organizations is distributed unequally. In other words, the power distance dimension involves a culture’s attitude toward hierarchy in social relationships. In high-power-distance cultures, authority and power play an important part in social life and inequality among people with different degrees of power is not questioned. Individuals are often identified by the social groups they belong to and the rights they inherit from these social groups. In low-power-distance cultures, power and authority do not influence the rights of the individual; equality rather than authority is valued. The relationships between people are linear and formalities are considered unnecessary.

2.2.2 Hall’s High-context and Low-context Orientation

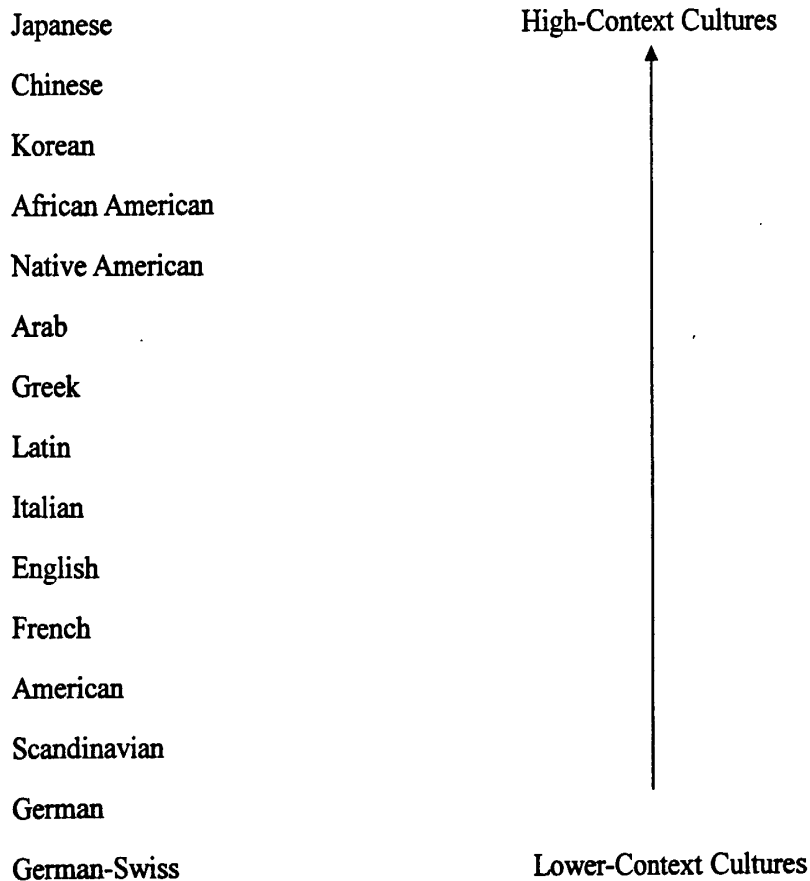
The following important perspective to examine cultural differences is the approach described by Edward Hall, an anthropologist. He distinguishes among cultures on the basis of the role of context in communication. Although Hall categorizes cultures as being either high-context or low-context, context is a cultural dimension that ranges from high to low. Table 1 places various cultures along that dimension.

Table 1 Contrasting High-context or Low-context

High-context	Low-context
Establish social trust first	Get down to business first
Value personal relations and goodwill	Value expertise and performance
Agreement by relations and goodwill	Agreement by specific, legalistic contract
Negotiations slow	Negotiations as efficient as possible

(Robert Kreitner and Angelo Kinicki, 2001)

Table 2 Cultures Arranged Along the High-Context and Low-Context Dimension



As shown in table 2, the Chinese culture belongs to high-context culture. In the Chinese culture, verbal messages, although important, are only a small part of the total communication context. It is not that words are unimportant in Chinese culture, but rather that the words are inseparably interrelated to social relationships, politics, and morality. From the above table, its purpose in Chinese culture is not to enhance the speaker's individuality through the articulation of words but rather to promote harmony and social integration. In contrast, low-context cultures like the American culture rely on elaborated verbal codes. The western world (northern Europe and North America specifically) has a tradition of rhetoric, a tradition that attaches great importance to the delivery of verbal messages. Gudykunst (1988) tells us that a primary function of speech in this tradition is to express one's ideas and thoughts as clearly, logically, and persuasively as possible, so the speaker can be fully recognized for his or her individuality in influencing others.

In high-context cultures most of the information is in the physical context or is internalized in the people who are a part of the interaction. Though information which is actually coded in the verbal message is reliable people still depend much on the context to make sure. In low-context cultures, such as German and American cultures, however, most of the information is contained in the verbal message, and very little is embedded in the context or within the participants. In high-context cultures such as those of Japan, Korea, and China, people tend to be more aware of their surroundings and their environment and do not rely on verbal communication as their main information source. The context of the message is well understood by both the sender and the receiver.

2.3 Negotiation Theory

2.3.1 What is Negotiation?

Negotiation is a basic human activity in which people bargain with each other to manage their relationships, such as between husband and wife, father and son, employers and employees, buyers and sellers and business partners, and to get what they want. Some of these negotiations are not so vital and do not command much

preparation and expertise, but in some cases, such as business relationships, the stakes concerned are so high that they justify careful homework. This thesis mainly addresses business negotiations.

There is an abundant negotiation literature in the west. Negotiation, a basic human activity, has been approached by scholars from diverse disciplines, such as political science, social psychology, cognitive organization, cross-cultural marketing, and communications. Although there is no agreed conceptualization of negotiation, Ike's(1968) two elements of negotiation are widely cited:

To begin with, two elements must normally be present for negotiation to take place. There must be both common interests and issues of conflict. Without common interests there is nothing to negotiate for, without conflicting issues nothing to negotiate about. (Ike, 1968)

Therefore, negotiation may be understood as a process of two or more parties combining their conflicting points of view into a single decision of mutual interest.

International business negotiation is a consultative process between governments, trade organizations, multinational enterprises, private business firms and buyers and sellers in relation to investment and import and export of products, machinery and equipments and technology. Negotiation is one of the important steps taken towards completing import and export trade agreements.

2.3.2 Why Do People Negotiate?

Negotiation is at the heart of every transaction and, for the most part, it comes down to the interaction between two sides with a common goal (profits) but divergent methods. These methods (the details of the contract) must be negotiated to the satisfaction of both parties. As we will see later that it can be a very trying process that is full of confrontation and concession. Whether it is trade or investment, one party will always arrive at the negotiation table in a position of greater power. That power (the potential for the profits) may derive from the extent of the demand or from the ability to supply. The purpose of negotiation is to redistribute that potential. There is no such thing as "to take it or leave it" in international business. In fact, everything

is negotiable. It all depends on the expertise of the negotiators. (Zhang Li Yu, Wang Hong Wei, 2007)

2.3.3 Negotiation Phases

The process of international business negotiation is made up of the three different stages. A stage is defined as a specific part of the process and covers all actions and communications by either side pertaining to negotiations made during that part. Either side communicates with the other to exchange information within each stage. A specific stage comes to an end where both sides decide to proceed on to the next stage or decide to abandon the communication if they see no point in further negotiations. The three different stages are: pre-negotiation, face-to-face-negotiation and post-negotiation.

The Pre-negotiation Stage

The pre-negotiation stage starts from the first contact between the two sides whose interest in doing business with each other is shown. From this stage on, both sides begin to understand one another's needs and evaluate the benefits of entering into the process of negotiation. This stage is usually more important than the following negotiations in international business relationships. Social and personal relationships between negotiators, trust and confidence in each other are of great help. Both sides now also start to construct their strategy for face-to-face negotiation and as well as try to foresee and take precautions against possible events. To be fully prepared before the negotiation, negotiators shall have to take into consideration the following two aspects: environmental factors and collection of information.

The environmental factors refer to politics, religious beliefs, legal systems, business practices, social customs, and financial conditions, which will all affect the negotiation in a direct or indirect way. The gathering of information includes that of markets, science and technology, policy and regulations, finance and of the opponent, for it may in some way determine the success or failure of the negotiation. (Zhang Li Yu, Wang Hong Wei, 2007)

Face-to-face Stage

At *Face-to-face* stage, both sides know that they can work together for a solution to

a joint problem in spite of the fact that each side may view the situation in its own way and interest. This indicates the importance of having face-to-face negotiation in an open-minded way and getting ready several alternatives. It is time for both sides to explore the differences in preferences and expectations so that they can come closer to each other. Generally, the negotiation process is controlled by the side that has arranged the agenda, for in the process, he can stress his own strengths and the opponent's weaknesses, thus putting the other side on the defensive position. However, the agenda may reveal the preparing side's position in advance and hence permit the other side to prepare its counter-measures. Some people prefer to start negotiations by discussing and agreeing on broad principles. Another way to ensure success at this stage is an initial discussion on items of common interest, which can help create an atmosphere of cooperation between both sides. As for the choice of strategy, it depends on the customer or supplier with whom one is negotiating. (Zhang Li Yu, Wang Hong Wei, 2007)

Post-Negotiation Stage

All the terms and conditions at this stage have been agreed upon with the contract being drawn up to be signed. What is worth noticing is that writing the contract and the wording in it is a negotiation process in itself, for meaning and values may be different between both sides. This stage may lead to a renewed face-to-face negotiation if there is negative feedback from background factors and atmosphere. Therefore, the terms and conditions agreed upon should be read to each other after concessions are exchanged and discussions should be held by means of minutes of meetings, or something unpleasant and unexpected may arise later on in the course of the implementation of the contract unless both sides make sure that they have paid enough attention to every detail. It is necessary that both sides should make sure that they understand everything they have agreed on before they leave the negotiation table. (Zhang Li Yu, Wang Hong Wei, 2007)

Chapter3 Impacts of Cultural Differences on Sino-American Business Negotiation Styles

3.1 The Origins of Chinese and American Cultures

China, as one of the four ancient civilizations, is abundant in land and population. In ancient times, people like to gather and cultivate land together so that agriculture has an immense influence on the Chinese culture. During that period, people seldom migrated and led a stable family life. Therefore, the Chinese culture is based on kinships and patriarch. From Western Han Dynasty, Confucianism was already viewed as the core of the Chinese culture. Confucianism conceives of the self neither as an isolated atom nor as a single, separate individuality, but as a being in relationship. So the Chinese society has formed a special culture which emphasizes authority instead of facts and emphasizes collectivism instead of individualism.

The American culture originated from ancient Greek and Roman cultures. During the long period of development, in ancient Greek and Roman cultures, kinships between people have become increasingly loose due to frequent migration of people. When Christianity came into being, religious faith exerted a tremendous influence on people's relations. The tenet of religion encourages people to attach great importance to individuals so that many people have such tenet: "every man for himself and God for us". The earliest inhabitants in the American continent are Indians. After the discovery of the new continent, people from different European countries flocked into it and began to work by their own hands. Anyone who works hard may turn from a penniless person to a millionaire or even a president at last, realizing their "American dream". In this sense, the concept of freedom and equality has penetrated deeply into people's mind. The American culture originated from English and European cultures, and most migrants suffered a lot in their own countries, so they wanted to try some new beliefs and ideas. However, they couldn't completely be independent of the old traditions. Due to the tough living conditions, they were forced to give up many old traditions and gradually accepted new ideas and the surrounding environments. They have become more realistic and frank.

3.2 Core Values of Chinese and American Cultures

3.2.1 Core Factors of Chinese Culture

China is well known for its long and rich history and it is considered to be one of the four most ancient countries in the world. Although there have been many factors that have contributed to the establishment and change of this culture, Confucianism is generally regarded as the core of the Chinese culture and as the roots upon which any other central perceptions are developed.

Respect for age and hierarchy

One important aspect of Confucianism is its tenet on respect for age and hierarchy. Confucianism emphasizes social hierarchy and order rather than social equality and individual freedom, and this tenet can be seen in Confucius' aphorism *jun jun, chen chen, fufu, zizi* (a social hierarchy in which the emperor tops a minister who tops a father who tops a son) as follows:

When Duke Ching of Chi asked Confucius about government, Confucius replied, "let the ruler be a ruler, the minister be administer, the father be a father, and the son be a son."(Chan, 1963)

According to Confucianism, social order has precedence over individual rights. Social stability and harmony is considered to be the foundation of individual rights, which can be realized only through everyone's commitment to their duty as defined by their positions in the hierarchical society. Traditionally, young people in the Chinese society are not considered reliable, experienced, or capable of doing good business. The Chinese social perception is characterized by training the young for obedience, proper conduct, impulse control, and acceptance of social obligations instead of independence, assertiveness, and creativity (Wu 1996). In this sense, the western conception of democracy finds no logical footing in Confucianism.

Advocate harmony and avoid conflict

The Chinese avoidance of conflict and the need for harmony is a product of the Confucian notion of *Zhong Yong*, the doctrine of mean, or taking the middle of the road. Wu (1996) maintains that *Ren* (humanity and benevolence), *Li* (propriety, rules

of proper conduct) and Zhong Yong form the foundation of the Confucian philosophy. The Chinese people avoid passing harsh judgment or giving criticism and find it difficult to have frank dialogues except among trusted friends.

Confucianism stresses the need to achieve harmony in society through moral conduct in all relationships by adapting to collectivity, controlling emotions, and avoiding confusion, competition and conflict.

Put emphasis on interpersonal relationship

Confucians view the world through the lens of Five Cardinal Relationships known as Wu Lun which refers to codes or standards governing five human relationships

There are five universal ways in human relations; the five are those governing the relationships between rulers and ministers, between fathers and sons, between husbands and wives, between elders and younger brothers, and those in the intercourse between friends. These five are universal paths in the world. (Chan, 1963:)

The five cardinal relationships gradually evolve to interpersonal relation as one of the most important cultural traits of Chinese people. It can be translated to “personal contacts” or “personal connections”. Interpersonal relations are considered very important in the business negotiation process, too. Many western businessmen emphasize that doing business with Chinese is not just a matter of price and product. To sign a contract with Chinese people you must attach great importance to friendship and interpersonal relations.

3.2.2 Core Factors of American Culture

Americans emphasize individualism so as a result equality in any social relationship is expected in society. So what are advocated by the Americans are not the obligations and responsibilities ascribed to each member of the society according to his or her social position but humanitarianism and human rights. “Every body is born equal” is their motto.

Individualism

Anglo-Saxon culture is a typical individualistic culture. The concept of individualism puts the “self” above all else. It is the individual person, instead of the

group, community or society to which the individual belongs, that has significance and meaning. Society is but a larger “self”. Individualistic culture attaches greater importance to the individual identity over group identity and individual rights over group obligations.

Americans believe that nothing is impossible and therefore they will try their best to make it at all costs if they are determined to do it. They look down upon people who lose confidence or complain about their fate because they believe that they are the masters of their own selves. There is a general understanding that the value of the individual is supreme and it is the individual who has the capacity to shape his or her own destiny. In terms of business negotiation, American negotiators tend to be self-motivated and their business relationships are based on self-interest while Chinese people base their work relationships on mutual self-interest, seek to advance the interests of the group, and seek group rewards.

Time as gold

Time is of paramount importance to American people. They care more about if they can finish their job on time according to their schedule than spend time on interpersonal relations. Once the working schedule is made they will put them into practice. In America it is considered impolite even if you are late for ten minutes.

Equity and equality

Everybody is born equal so it means that anyone is endowed with the equal right to succeed. However, how to turn ideal wishes to reality varies from person to person.

The value of equality in American social relationships creates communication problems in intercultural settings. Americans like to treat others as equal and choose to be treated in the same manner when they interact in business negotiation. Chinese people have rigid, hierarchical social structures and often find it disconcerting to work with Americans, who they believe negate the value of hierarchical structures within a society.

Competition and readiness to changes

Americans see much of life as a race for success so competition is part of an American's life from early childhood on. Even if they play games in class they will

try to be more attractive than other students. Their competitive nature is encouraged in their educational system. In sports and work, they are also told the importance of "being number one". This character may attribute to their heritage of having to overcome so many difficulties when they immigrated to a new world. American people are ready to compete and achieve success

For Americans, changes are associated with growth, development and progress. Why Americans can achieve so much progress? One reason is that they believe nothing is impossible for them and another one is that they believe, be it man or woman, they all have the obligation to do everything well. They like to embrace changes rather than just following the ancestor's footsteps.

3.3 Impacts of Cultural Differences on Business Negotiation

As we all know, culture is a powerful factor that shapes how people think, communicate and behave. It also influences negotiating styles as an international negotiation is carried out by negotiators from different cultural backgrounds. When you negotiate within your own culture, it is often truly possible to expedite the negotiation process by making reasonable cultural assumptions. However, when negotiations are performed with people from a different culture, there are no longer shared values, goals, interests or ethical standards between the negotiating parties. The negotiating style that you adopt effectively at home can be ineffective and inappropriate when you cope with people from another cultural background.

Different cultures have different attitudes, behaviors, values, ethical principles and styles, all of which have a great impact on the process and the result of negotiations. Therefore, your ability to perceive cultural differences and to properly deal with the conflict is essential for achieving a desirable result. Generally speaking, culture affects negotiation in three ways, namely, negotiation goals, negotiating styles, and methods of communication.

Culture has a great influence on negotiation goals. For instance, from the viewpoint of the Americans; they hold that the goal of a business negotiation is usually to come to a signed contract between the two sides. In contrast, a Chinese tends to hold that

the goal of a business negotiation is not to sign a contract but to create a relationship between the parties. The difference may account for why Chinese negotiators put more emphasis on the beginning phase of negotiation, whereas Americans are usually eager to rush to the face-to-face phase. Therefore, it is important to determine how your partners view the purpose of negotiation.

Culture also influences methods of communication. Another major difference between Chinese and American cultures that may influence negotiation behaviors is low-context versus high-context communication. The Chinese culture tends to be high context while the American culture tends to be low context. Chinese negotiators use more normative statements, relying on personal relationship and social roles to persuade. In contrast, American negotiators use more analytical statement, relying on logics and reasoning to persuade.

Different cultures will form different negotiating styles. Some cultures prefer a deductive approach while others may think inductively. Some cultures are likely to search for compromise, while others will strive for consensus.

Lots of evidence proves that cultures have a great impact on negotiations. This section just gives a brief introduction on how culture influences negotiations. The next chapter is going to analyze major differences in great detail found in Sino-U.S negotiations.

Chapter 4

Impacts of Cultural Differences on Sino-American BN Styles

4.1 Impacts of Cultural Differences at the Pre-negotiation Stage

At the pre-negotiation stage, people try to know each other, get more information and establish a good relationship. But American negotiators and Chinese negotiators put emphasis on different aspects: Chinese negotiators tend to spend a lot of time eating, sightseeing in order to build trust and friendship while Americans regard it as a waste of time, so they like to get down to business as soon as possible.

4.1.1 Different Concepts of Time

Different cultures have different time concepts, so time has different meanings and importance in different cultures. The attitude towards time certainly have an important impact on the pace and process of the negotiations. The Chinese culture traditionally views time as polychronic whereas American culture considers it to be monochronic. Therefore, Chinese negotiators try to discuss all things at one time whereas Americans tend to solve problems one by one. What comes next is a case analysis for illustration.

Case 1

Brown Casual Shoes, Inc., located in Houston, Texas, is a second generation family-owned company that specializes in casual footwear for men, women, and children. The company has been in operation for 30 years and has manufacturing facilities in Houston, Texas, and Cincinnati Ohio. Over the years, the company has expanded its operations throughout the United States and Canada. It sells directly to retail shoe stores such as Payless, to discount stores such as Wal-Mart and Kmart, and to wholesale outlets such as Costco. Though the company prides itself on manufacturing today's shoes for people of various ages, local and international competition is making inroads on the company's niche markets. Sales have been down for the past two years. The president of the company, Robert Brown, Jr. is concerned that if the downward trend in sales continues, the company may be forced to close its doors. Labor costs in the United States have been a major concern. Mr. Brown is aware that the U.S. athletic footwear industry does most of its

manufacturing in Asian countries such as China, South Korea, and Indonesia, where labor costs are appreciably lower.

The company must now find cheaper ways to manufacture its shoes, and it needs to expand its sales by entering the international marketplace. Mr. Brown called a board meeting to review his options. After much discussion, the board decided China was a good place to begin new manufacturing and marketing for a number of reasons: (1) The country has a cheap labor market, (2) the country already has footwear manufacturing contracts with U.S. companies, (3) China represents a potential new market with a population of over 1.3 billion people, and (4) China has been moving toward a free-market economy since the late 1970s. Mr. Brown decided he would visit China and bring with him Harry Livingstone, his senior vice president of operations, and Roberta Jackson, manager of the company's marketing department.

Mr. Livingstone was given the job of setting up the visit. He contacted business associates who had done business internationally to get some ideas of how to go about planning the visit. Mr. Livingstone also contacted several athletic footwear trade associations and was able to identify several Chinese companies interested in talking to his company about a business arrangement. One company, Chang Manufacturing, was located outside Beijing; the other company, Chung Sun Manufacturing, was located in Shanghai. After some discussion with Mr. Brown, the two of them decided to visit the Shanghai Company because Shanghai has one of China's Special Economic Zones and would be supportive of Western ideas and business practices. The Beijing Company was attractive, but Mr. Brown was somewhat concerned about the political and social connections of being so close to the country's capital and the seat of government.

Mr. Livingstone contacted Chung Sun Manufacturing and was eventually directed to Mr. Li Kim Son, who handled international business development for the Chinese company. Mr. Li spoke fluent English and had been involved in signing several footwear manufacturing contracts with US companies. Mr. Livingstone explained Brown Casual Shoes' interest in manufacturing its products in China. Mr. Li indicated that his company would be willing to discuss a business arrangement and invited Mr.

Livingstone's company to visit the Chung Sun facility in Shanghai.

Mr. Livingstone was elated to hear this and immediately informed Mr. Brown. The meeting was scheduled for the following month, and the team went to work developing the business proposal. Some thought was given to hiring the service of a Chinese translator, but this was deemed unnecessary since Mr. Li spoke fluent English and had been involved in US business negotiations.

The day of the departure finally arrived, and Mr. Brown and his team boarded their flight to Shanghai, China. They arrived in Shanghai at 9:30 in the morning. Upon their arrival, they were met by a company representative, who took them off to the hotel. A business meeting was scheduled for 3 P.M. The company representative would pick up Mr. Brown and his team at 2:30 PM.

Upon arrival at the Chinese company's headquarters, Mr. Brown and his team were met by Mr. Li, who graciously greeted them with a bow and a handshake. They were immediately ushered off to a conference room to meet the company's president, Mr. Deng. Again, there was a cordial exchange of handshakes, bows, and business cards. After the introductions, Mr. Brown presented Mr. Deng with a small gift, beautifully wrapped in white paper and a ribbon, as a token of friendship. Mr. Deng seemed somewhat embarrassed to accept the gift. Mr. Brown insisted a second and third time before Mr. Deng accepted it. The team was introduced to Mrs. Wang Chun Jiang, who would be their Chinese translator throughout the visit. Almost immediately, Mr. Deng got into a discussion with Mr. Brown about his trip while Mr. Li engaged Mr. Livingstone and Mrs. Jackson in conversation. While talking to Mr. Deng, Mr. Brown gently touched the forearm of Mr. Deng in a gesture of friendship. At times, the U.S team felt very uncomfortable because they knew very little Chinese. Refreshments were brought into the room, and everyone was invited to sit down. Before long, it was 5 P.M. and there had been no mention of why the US team had visited the company. At this time, Mr. Li announced that an evening banquet in honor of the American guests had been arranged at 7 P.M. at the Great Wall of China Restaurant. Upon hearing this, Mr. Brown motioned with finger for Mr. Livingstone to come to see him. Mr. Brown had not expected such gracious hospitality and was

unsure about how to reciprocate. The meeting came to a close, and Mr. Brown and his team returned to their hotel, not far from the restaurant.

The banquet was very lavish and lasted for several hours. Mr. Brown, in appreciation for such hospitality, offered the first toast of the evening to his host. During the banquet, there was no mentioning of business. Conversations focused on China and its culture, the United States, family issues, and the team's flight to China. As the night came to a close, Mr. Brown wondered who should leave first.

The meeting began the next day at 9 A.M. again, and the meeting started with pleasantries. Thirty minutes into the meeting, Mr. Brown was asked to present his proposal to the company. With the assistance of his team (and some occasional help from Mrs. Wang), Mr. Brown explained how he would like to manufacture his shoes in China and that he was also interested in marketing his shoes in China. As Mr. Brown went through his presentation, Mr. Deng and his staff repeatedly asked questions; Mr. Brown thought he would never get through his presentation. By noon, it was time for a break. As Mr. Brown reflected back on the progress made at the morning meeting, he knew that more than one trip to China would be required to reach a business agreement with Chung Sun Manufacturing. (Cellich 2004)

In the above mentioned case, we can see that American negotiators were confused with those irrelevant issues and are eager to get down to business. Usually they are puzzled and at a loss at the Chinese traditional way of warm reception and hospitality so that they do not know what Chinese negotiators want to talk and to do. They think that spending time on non-business matters or on unrelated issues are regarded as a violation of their cultural norms. And they want to handle all the business issues at one time

For Americans, the saying that "time is gold" is regarded as an operative motto in both work and living, so that they always try to make the best of the time and never waste any time. American negotiators are known for their speed and strive for getting through the content of the negotiation as efficiently as possible. They live by schedules and thrive on being punctual for meeting and also efficient in doing business. And they usually begin their business at the appointed and decided time. So

when negotiating, they always seemed to be in a hurry and under pressure for results. American negotiators are sequential in terms of time concept while Chinese negotiators are synchronic in this aspect. Americans view schedule of the negotiation as an important principle that the two parties should follow and expect the negotiation process to go right according to the schedule.

However, Chinese negotiators consider time to be only a method to achieve their key goals such as establishing good relationship with American negotiators, building friendship and mutual trust and collecting enough information about American companies before they really get down to business.. For them, time is not limited and not vital to the success of business. Not being hasty is seen as a sign of wisdom and sincerity.

For Americans, time permeates the whole process of the negotiation, and they hope to negotiate in consistent with their schedules or timetable. As a result, they expect a much faster pace of negotiating. Americans' view of time, strongly economical, accounts for the fact that to them spending time on building personal relationships is considered to be improper actions. Time has been viewed as a precious resource not to be wasted. On the contrary, Chinese negotiators view time as a synchronic concept so that they prefer to spend a lot of time eating, resting and sightseeing. They do not view time as a constraint or a limit in which a particular task must be completed. They think it is better to spent time letting the two parties get familiar with each other.

To facilitate the negotiation process, I think the pre-meeting arrangement and correspondence is of vital importance. Some of the American companies are totally unprepared and send a large delegation to China and waste a lot of time trying to find out what they will be talking about. So I think some pre-preparations such as using e-mail to American partners to pre-view the schedules, arrangements, or other activities of the negotiation or even conversation on the telephone would be helpful for a more efficient progress of the negotiations. If you are in the process of negotiating with Chinese people, you'd better show enough patience in establishing good relationship with Chinese people because a good business relationship will certainly bring about a lot of good orders and profits in the future.

4.1.2 Different Attitudes towards Personal Relationship

From Case 1; we may also see the differences of the two cultures towards interpersonal relationship. In China, interpersonal relations are considered very important in the business negotiation process. As mentioned is earlier, the Chinese culture is deeply influenced by Confucianism, so collectivism and interpersonal relationship are the core values of it. In a word, the Chinese culture is considered as relationship-oriented. In another way round the American culture emphasizes individualism and the relationships among American people are typically contractual-oriented. In other words, everything in the American culture is based on contracts signed and relationships do not affect business much.

Some western observers of Chinese negotiating behavior emphasize the long-term relationship rather than short-term issues. Richard Solomon argues that:

“The most fundamental characteristic of dealings with the Chinese is their attempt to identify foreign negotiators who are sympathetic to their cause, to cultivate a sense of friendship and obligation in their business counterparts, and then to pursue their objectives through a variety of stratagems designed to manipulate feelings of friendship, obligation, guilt or dependence. This reflects the workings of a culture that has developed to a high level for the management of interpersonal relations (*guanxi*); a society that stresses interdependence rather than individuality; and a political system that sees politics as the interplay between superior and dependent and the rivalry of factions rather than the association of equals”. (Solomon, 1985)

So in the above case, “Mr. Li announced that an evening banquet in honor of the American guests had been arranged for 7 P.M. at the Great Wall of China Restaurant. Upon hearing this, Mr. Brown motioned with finger for Mr. Livingstone to come to see him. Mr. Brown had not expected such gracious hospitality and was unsure about how to reciprocate. The meeting came to a close, and Mr. Brown and his team returned to their hotel. The banquet was very lavish and lasted for several hours. Mr. Brown, in appreciation for such hospitality, offered the first toast of the evening to his host. During the banquet, there was no mentioning of business. Conversation focused on China and its culture, the United States, family issues, and the team’s flight to

China. As the night came to a close, Mr. Brown wondered who should leave first. ”

From the above story, we can see that Chinese try to establish a good personal relationship in order to build long-term business contacts. They spend a lot of time on reception dinner, talking about each other’s cultures and pleasantries, which they think will assist in the creation of a suitable climate for interaction. But during the process there is no mentioning of business, which may confuse the American negotiators. They are contractual oriented so that they would like to get down to business as soon as possible.

4.2 Impacts of Cultural Differences at the Face-to-face Stage

Face-to-face interaction is the phase in which formal practical and direct negotiation sessions take place, which is characterized by the two parties’ exchanges of information, recognition and concern over conflicting issues and common interests.

4.2.1 Different Styles of Communication

As we have mentioned in the previous chapter, high-context or low-context communication refers to the degree to which communications are indirect or direct. We already know that the American culture belongs to the low-context while the Chinese culture belongs to high-context. In high-context cultures little information is in the words themselves, and message should be inferred rather than directly interpreted from the communication. On the contrary, low-context cultures is context free, action oriented and solution centered and therefore the information is contained and expressed in explicit words.

Americans always express themselves directly and explicitly. “Americans are identified throughout the world by their plain speaking and direct style of communication” (Acuff, 1993). But in eastern cultures like China, members tend to negotiate in a high-context style that involves more implicit messages embedded in the context. “In high-context cultures such as Japan and China, people expect the person to whom they are talking to know what is on their mind. They give the other person all the necessary information except the crucial piece” (Acuff, 1993).

So in the low-context American culture, facts and information are considered

important, and therefore, direct communication is preferred. They tend to communicate in a straightforward and direct way. Evidence can be seen in their daily expressions, such as “get to the point”, “do not beat around the bush” and “get down to business” so that everything is on the surface of the message, and indirectness is not welcomed. They prefer a direct and clear style of communication rather than a vague one. However, the high-context Chinese culture emphasizes indirect communication for it works in the collectivistic society and regards interpersonal relationship as extremely important. So there is a tendency to pay attention not only to what is said but also to the context of what is said-nonverbally like gestures, silence and so on. In the Chinese language there are many well known expressions such as “maybe”, “perhaps”, “I will consider it” and these can be interpreted as “impossible”. We may conclude that Chinese people have a tendency to communicate in an indirect, ambiguous and roundabout way.

Let see the following examples to further understand the different styles:

Example 1

Mr. Liu: Zao Shang Hao, Mr. Brook!

Mr. Brook: Excuse me?

Ms. Liu: Zao Shang hao means “good morning” in Chinese. Did you have a nice rest?

Mr. Brook: yes, my hotel suite was very comfortable. And “zao.shang hao” to you also.

Ms. Liu: I’ve made arrangement in the private guest room for us to resume our negotiation.

Mr. Brook: Great! Now, let’s get down to business.

Ms. Liu: In response to our enquiry last month... (Wang Yong Mei 2001)

Example 2

American: Mr. Chen, shall we now discuss the packing?

Chen: Very well, we decide ways of packing garments. (Zhu Ge Lin 1998)

From the above two examples, we can see clearly the different communication styles between Chinese people and Americans. The Chinese indirectness and the

American directness are more obvious. In the first example, Mr. Liu tries to show his hospitality to Mr. Brook He used Chinese expressions “zao shang hao” to create a harmonious atmosphere and tried to establish friendship, which is contrary to Mr. Brook who is eager to begin their real negotiation and said “now, let’s get down to business”. The second example is a negotiation about the packing of silk blouse between a Chinese company and American company. The American negotiator goes directly to the point and asked “shall we now discuss the packing?”

4.2.2 Different Concerns about Face

Another cultural difference between America and China, which has influences at the negotiation table, is different concerns about the face or self image. The Chinese concept of face is embodied in the Confucian notions of shame and social harmony. Face in China is often associated with “honor”, “dignity”, “esteem”, social power and status, etc. so people are expected to protect the face of others and meanwhile they are concerned that their own face maintained and accepted. Face is also related to one’s position and social status in the hierarchy. The higher a person is in the social hierarchical structure, the more he is concerned about his face. To have face means to have high social status in others’ eyes while losing face is to depreciate one’s prestige and reputation. As an old Chinese proverb goes, “A scholar prefers death to humiliation.” And another proverb goes like this “every person has a face, for the same reason that every tree has a bark”. Losing one’s face is compared to a tree being stripped of its bark, which is an deadly situation, or a matter of life and death. Given this sensitivity, they are hesitant about engaging in an aggressive interaction that may challenge the face of others and their own face. The Chinese often avoid saying the word “No” to save face for both parties. It is important to save face to maintain dignity and harmony in their cultures.

In contrast, people in the United States, like those in western societies, value directness, frankness, freedom of expression, individualism very much. During the negotiation procedure, if conflict arises, aggressive behavior from either party can damage the face of the other. Americans believe that the individual is free to pursue its own personal wishes and desires. American negotiators view loss of face as a personal

failure, loss of self-pride on an individual basis.

Since China and America have different concepts of face, conflicts may arise during negotiations. Many American negotiators complain about the fact that their Chinese partners tend to use vague, ambiguous and indirect expressions, whereas Chinese negotiators complain that Americans tend to become very aggressive in negotiation, because they frequently interrupt people and tell them directly that they are wrong, which makes the Chinese negotiators uncomfortable. To facilitate the negotiation, both sides should bear it in mind that an awareness of different face-saving behaviors can determine the final result, which will be more beneficial to both parties.

Case 2

A U.S. company had a contract from a German buyer to sell Chinese bicycles in Germany. When the first shipment was ready, there was a problem. The bikes were found with problems because they rattled. The American buyer did not want to accept the shipment, knowing that with the rattle, the bicycles would not be acceptable to the German customer. In the American culture, the normal approach would be to tell the manufacturer that the rattling bikes were unacceptable and that the problem had to be fixed. However, in China, such a direct confrontation would be extremely rude and cause much loss of face. The American company was put in a difficult situation, knowing in the Chinese culture face-saving was very important in every means. But if he did nothing, his Chinese partner would ship the rattling bicycles and his German buyer would reject them. Finally the American manager went to the Chinese plant, inspected the bicycles, and rode round and round. The bicycle rattled. Usually the Chinese managers and assembly workers would not be able to see how their products work after they finished the products. But now they got a chance to hear it and they frowned, looking at each other. At this moment the American buyer asked about the rattle. "Is this rattle normal? Do all the bikes rattle? Do you think the German buyer will think there is something wrong with the bike if it rattles?" and then he left. The American buyer knew that he had drawn enough attention of the Chinese manufacturers to the problem and they would immediately solve the problem. Surely,

the next shipment of bikes had no rattles. (Jeanne M. Brett, 2000)

In this case, the American was quite familiar with Chinese cultures and tried to save face of his Chinese counterpart. As he knew if he directly pointed out the problem, it would be considered extremely rude and cause much loss of face. He would be put in a difficult situation, knowing in Chinese culture face-saving was very important in resolving the conflict. Therefore, Instead of directly pointing out the problem, he adopted an indirect way and succeeded in saving face of his Chinese colleagues.

In this case, the American also fears that if he says nothing about the problem, his Chinese partner will never notice it and will ship the rattling bicycles. So he went to the Chinese plant and showed them the problem and asked indirectly "Is this rattle normal? Do all the bikes rattle? Do you think the German buyer will think there is something wrong with the bike if it rattles?" so as to save their face. At last, the Chinese manufacturer realized the problem and fixed it immediately.

So if Americans want to do business with Chinese people they should be fully aware of their concern about face for their Chinese partners have a strong desire to gain face in a business negotiation. If you try to save their face it will probably lead to a good result. Otherwise, it mostly will turn out to be a failure. Just like an American negotiating expert suggests: we can get a great deal by means of helping the Chinese get face; a great deal will be lost if we do not give face to the Chinese. Face orientation is of great significance to Chinese negotiators in dealing with conflicts in business negotiations. So try to understand the Chinese face-saving culture and behave in a way that saves the Chinese face or image.

Case 3

A 32 year-old engineer called Bob Andretti was in Shanghai on his first visit to the PRC. He was there to negotiate on a joint-venture agreement with a Chinese state-owned company. On the fourth day of the meetings the two sides were discussing the factory equipment worth about US \$7.5 million.

At one point the American could see that the Chinese side apparently did not understand the shipping term "Free on Board" (FOB), thereby understanding the value of the US firm's contribution to the project.

To clear up the misinterpretation Bob turned to the Chinese company's 55 year-old senior engineer. "Mr. Li, I guess you don't understand what we mean by F.O.B. Let me explain it to you briefly..." Having successfully helping his partner out of confusion of the term, Bob expected the meeting to get back on track. But to his surprise, the Chinese negotiators suddenly seemed to lose interest in the proceedings and adjourned the meeting without setting a date for the next session. (Gavusgil, S. Tamer. Ghauri, Pervez N. Ghauri. & Agarwal Milind R., 2002.)

This is another example concerning face, for in this case, the young American negotiator, though helped his Chinese partner out of his confusion in front of others, had hurt the senior engineer's face unintentionally. In China, superiors are not expected to be criticized or even challenged in public. The young American negotiator's act had caused the Chinese senior engineer to lose face in public. To avoid such communication failure, it will be better if the young American adopted a more indirect way, for example, he may call for a break, and talk with the senior Chinese engineer in private so as to save his face.

4.2.3 Different Power Distance

As we have mentioned in the previous chapter, in high-power-distance cultures, authority and power play an important part in social life and inequality among people with different degrees of power is not questioned. Individuals are often identified by the social groups they belong to and the right they inherit from these social groups. In low-power-distance cultures, power and authority do not influence the rights of the individual; so equality rather than authority is valued.

The Chinese culture is characterized by large power distance, which means that organizations in the Chinese culture have a great centralized power; great importance is placed on status and rank; in a large proportion of supervisory personnel, a rigid value system determines the worth of each job. (Adler, 1997)

Many Chinese negotiators think that negotiations should be held between people of similar ages and ranks. In the Chinese culture, respect for age and power is one of the core values of Confucianism, because it is believed that age means wisdom and must be respected by the young. If we send a 20-year-old young man to talk with a

50-year-old American, we would consider it impolite and vice versa. Therefore, such big difference in age between negotiating partners should be avoided as much as possible. Generally speaking, the authority has the right to tell their subordinate what to do and the subordinate usually accept the orders. Arguing with the authority is not encouraged in China.

On the contrary, the American culture is characterized by a small power distance. It is held that everyone was born equal and inequality should be minimized as much as possible. They believe that all people are equal and no person is superior to another. During the negotiation process, the American negotiators usually have the right to make the final decision on spot instead of asking for further advice from their supervisor.

Case 4

In the 1980s, the Chinese Ministry of Culture negotiated a contract for an exhibition of China's archaeological treasures that were to tour a number of U.S. cities. The treasures needed to be insured, but the insurance companies from China and U.S. wanted to accomplish the tasks. The Chinese insisted that they should insure with China's People's Insurance Company, which was quite happy to provide insurance at \$2 million, but it would not cover the exhibits in the event of malicious damage, which was a key consideration. Thus the two sides were locked in an impasse in the negotiation. The Chinese negotiators said that they would be waiting for the instructions of higher authorities and suggested that the two sides put this issue aside for a time and shift to other items. Since there was no other way to break this deadlock, the American side agreed to delay discussing the exhibition insurance. (Carolyn Blackman, 1997)

In this case, we can see that when the Chinese negotiators met some difficulties, which they can't cope by themselves, they would wait for the higher authorities to make the final decision or give some crucial advice. This confuses many American negotiators, because they have the power to decide anything on the spot and do not have to ask for the higher authorities for advice. Some American negotiators complained that it seemed that you were negotiating with a person who did not have

the position and power to negotiate. You really could not understand why you are going through all this trouble in the first place, because convincing him was useless.

To a large extent, Chinese negotiators do not express their own view of points, but the opinions of their leaders. So the actual expressions made by Chinese negotiators represent only the joint action based on a group consultation and decision-making. However, American negotiators bring their own ideas to the negotiating table. They can make the decision on the spot because they are entitled to make decisions.

4.2.4 Different Attitudes toward Conflicts

According to Bai Yuan's *International Business Negotiation Theory and Case Simulation*, the definition of conflict in the context of business negotiation consists of three points. "First, parties in conflicts are interdependent, which means there is a relationship between the parties developed by interrelated interests and concerns. There would be no conflict if the parties were not interrelated and had nothing to do with each other. Second, both different and common interests coexist, because if there were only contradictions and no common interests, negotiations would be groundless and hopeless. Third, parties in a conflict will naturally fight for their own interests and make every effort to gain more from the other side; as a result it would block each other's ability to satisfy their interests." (Bai Yuan, 2002) The above was about the general definition of conflict in international negotiations. There are several ways to manage conflicts, such as: competing, compromising and avoiding.

For collectivists, maintaining social relationships is highly cherished and harmony often takes precedence over task accomplishment and personal wishes. In the Chinese tradition, a Confucian gentleman is not supposed to quarrel with others. If certain circumstances force him to be in a quarrel, he will then argue in a gentle and polite manner. Chinese people tend to build up a conflict-free system of social relations, which is the principle of Confucian philosophy. Avoidance of conflicts and a need for harmony are a product of the Confucian notion of *Zhongyong* or a middle course which means not offending others but to keep harmonization. For Chinese negotiators, they mostly follow a face maintenance model: confrontation is regarded as damage to social face and relational harmony and should be avoided as much as possible; and

therefore confrontations and conflicts should be dealt with discreetly and subtly. Effective management of conflict can be viewed as a win-win game.

On the contrary, according to Ting-Toomy (1985), "members from individualistic cultures tend to approach conflicts from the mind; while members of collectivistic cultures tend to approach conflicts from the heart" (Ting-Toomy,1985). Individualistic culture members tend to prefer a direct mode of conflict-solving style like the use of confrontational strategies or solution-oriented strategies. For American negotiators, conflicts in business negotiations follow a "problem-solving" model; conflict is viewed as an expressed struggle to air out major differences and problems, and should be dealt with openly and directly.

Case 5

One American company negotiated on a joint-venture contract with a Chinese company. After their first real negotiation, the two sides signed a set of minutes at the Jinbi Hotel in Shenzhen, which was named as the "Jinbi Minutes." In the following three years of doing business , when the two parties negotiated on other issues the "Jinbi Minutes" were recalled over and over again by the leader of the Chinese negotiation team. As the negotiation turned out to be not very easy and successful so the Chinese side insisted on observing the principles of the "Jinbi Minutes". However, the head of the American negotiation team, who was on the point of a nervous breakdown, screamed, "Damn it!" Those Jinbi Minutes were signed three years ago and we didn't even know what the situation was then. Over these three years, this deal has changed. Over these years, the capital required has changed. Over these three years, the technology has changed. Over these three years, the market in China has changed. So why can't you stop insisting on those Jinbi Minutes?" The head of the Chinese negotiation team said to him in anger "are you betraying what you've promised?" the American retorted, "It's not a contract. It is only a letter of intent!"

The atmosphere at the negotiating table turned to be rigid and frozen and neither of the two sides was willing to make a concession. The negotiation came to a breakdown.

After that, considering the mutual interest of their cooperation, the American side accepted the Chinese advice to ask a third party for resolution. Through the third

party's conciliation and mediation, the two parties returned to the negotiating table and finally reached an agreement.

Later when the deal was finally done, the contract signed, and business license issued, the leader of the Chinese party's negotiation team personally wrote the Chinese characters of "Jinbi Minutes" in calligraphy, had the calligraphy mounted on a Chinese scroll, and presented the scroll as a gift to the head of the American negotiation team, to humorously remind him of the tough negotiating process. (Laurence J. Brahm, 2004)

This case can illustrate the different attitudes of the two countries toward solving conflicts between people and between time and technology.

In Chinese view, the moral issue or the ethical standard should never change. So they believe that the minutes of a meeting were more important than technology change, capital change or the market change. It may serve as a norm to cope all the conflict issues. So the Chinese negotiators tended to establish their own rules at the beginning of the negotiation so as to force the American negotiators to agree to certain initial principles agreed by both sides in the form of the "Jinbi Minutes".

However, in the American negotiator's eye, the "Jinbi Minutes" was only a letter of intent, which had no legal effect. They couldn't understand why it could play such an important role in the negotiation. In their opinion, the "Jinbi Minutes" was too general and lacked specific details upon which the two sides could act. They didn't view it as a commitment and didn't realize the moral influence of these minutes until the Chinese negotiators pointed it out as a moral issue. When the conflict arose, the Americans showed their dissatisfaction directly, which showed their typical direct competing style. In their cultures, these direct expressions are viewed as the most effective way to address the problem, while for a Chinese, it would be considered rude and offend the face.

When the negotiation came to a deadlock, the Chinese side advised to take the third party mediation. It showed that Chinese negotiators tried to avoid direct confrontation with the Americans and realize harmony through a roundabout way. In terms of a conflict, a Chinese will do everything possible to resolve disputes through mediation

by a third party. In this way, he could avoid further conflicts and thus save each other's face, which would bring about a productive achievement.

4.2.5 Different Risk-taking Attitudes

Risks imply a chance of injury, damage, or loss. Negotiators are subject to several kinds of losses, including "image loss" in the eye of other negotiators, present and future. They even include "position loss", for the negotiator cannot move back after making concessions; or "information loss", for opponents can use candid *information* against the negotiator; and the loss of opportunity for competitive behavior. (Moran&Stripp: 1991) Risk taking here means to try new approaches or tolerate uncertainties and unexpected ideas. Different cultures view uncertainty and risks differently. Some groups are open to new ideas and unexpectations while others prefer to accept expected opinions and accustomed agreements.

The Chinese society is a collectivist society with high power distance among its members. The Confucian tradition emphasizes the idea of fitting into one's environment, which means to comply with the environment's expectations rather than realize one's own personal aims. They learn from an early age to be modest, humble, and passive in the society where to be different is viewed as dangerous and detrimental to social harmony. In such a cultural background, taking risk is strongly to be avoided. This may also account for why Chinese negotiators do not want to take risks

The western culture attaches importance to self-realization and self-creativity. They learn at an early age to get ahead in a fierce competition. You must take charge of your own life and destiny. In such a social environment, individuals are likely to take risks for self-fulfillment

An American manager once commended on the risk-taking behavior of Chinese people as:

The Chinese are reluctant to talk because they all think talking especially before many people may bring them troubles.

The mentality is that the best and safest way is to avoid making a mistake and do

nothing. This idea can date back to thousands of years. It is ingrained in the culture in history. That's why people do not want to take risks, have their names in print, or take assignment. (Thomas, David C, 2003)

4.3 Impacts of Cultural Differences at the Post-negotiation Stage

4.3.1 Form of Agreement

Cultural factors may also influence the form of the written agreement that the parties involved try to make. Generally, Chinese negotiators prefer an implicit oral contract in general which builds up and expresses mutual cooperation and trust between the concerned parties. If unexpected circumstances arise, the parties should look to their relationship, not the details of the contract, to solve the problem (Salacuse, 1998). American negotiators, on the other hand, prefer an explicit, detailed written contract that attempts to anticipate all possible circumstances and eventualities, no matter how unlikely. Because the "deal" is the contract itself, and in a law-base and text based society, one must refer to the contract to handle new situations that may arise in the future (Salacuse, 1998). According to Salacuse, the reason for Americans to value detailed written contracts is that the deal is the contract itself, while in the Chinese perception; the essence of the deal is the relationship. They prefer to establish a long-term relationship rather than just sign a contract.

For Chinese businessmen, their primary goal of negotiation is to create and establish relationships so that Chinese negotiators put more emphasis on long-term relations and trust which are regarded as the basis of successful negotiation. They always believe that mutual trust for doing business is not based on a piece of paper but on partnership and friendship. To them the establishment of trust and long-term friendship with their partners could help Chinese negotiators avoid possible disputes resulting from contingency in the future. Chinese people do not like open conflicts, let alone disputes or lawsuits. They have a strong aversion to litigation, which is seen by many Chinese as time-wasting and energy-exhausting. Moreover, In China, most of

Chinese people run their business through a network of personal relations, so that a conflict is always addressed through informal channels, such as bilateral negotiation and conversation. Disputes or lawsuits should be averted as much as possible.

On the contrary, for Americans, the purpose of negotiation is to sign a contract between the parties with explicit details that legally bind the two sides. America is a law-oriented country and Americans have a strong awareness of how laws can protect them from losses. As soon as a business dispute arises, the first weapon they protect themselves with is law court, so they attach great importance to the contract, which can serve as a piece of evidence for proof in the court. That explains why American contracts are in such details that every contingency is carefully anticipated and be considered thoroughly in advance. If any disagreement occurs later, their first resort will be "to going to the court". Therefore, American people regard the legal means as their life line and always bring a lawyer with them at the negotiating table.

Chapter 5 Conclusions

5.1 Summary

Intercultural negotiation is a field of considerable interest in this age of global economy. Culture is of great significance and importance in intercultural business communication or to be exact it is the base on which analysis and investigations are performed in this study. The goal of this thesis is to bring out what differences lie in western and Chinese negotiation styles in terms of related cultural perceptions, and how much cultural differences can influence the negotiation styles between Chinese and western business negotiators so that effective and efficient ways to enhance intercultural communication or negotiations can be found and proposed between Chinese negotiators and their western partners.

As is known to all, negotiation is not an easy task, which involves people born and brought up in different cultural backgrounds. Different cultures shape different ways to perceive the world, thus leading to different negotiating styles. Successful business negotiations between Chinese people and westerners, or in this case Americans, require both knowledge and an understanding of some core concepts in both cultures in terms of communications and their preferred negotiating styles. Some concepts of one culture, though have been commonly accepted, shared and practiced in one society, may not be viewed as practical and may not work in another culture. Therefore, conflicts caused by cultural differences may occur, and may lead to communication failures if the cultural difference is not understood by or known to people from another culture. That explains why sometimes, Chinese people see Americans as aggressive, direct, and cold while Americans see Chinese people as indirect, inefficient and even dishonest.

The comparative studies and the case studies of Chinese and American cultures clearly show how differences of cultural values held by Chinese and American negotiators involving concepts of time, interpersonal relationship, high-context versus low-context communication, power distance, face concern, attitudes toward conflicts, risk taking propensity as well as forms of agreement as discussed in the previous

chapters. Through the analysis of culture values, the Chinese negotiating style is seen to be a high-context and implicit style featured by hierarchy, collectivism, relationship orientation, while the American negotiation style is considered to be low-context, explicit and characterized by individualism, egalitarian and problem orientation.

Nowadays, negotiators in the world become more and more aware of the differences between different cultures, so they would adapt their styles accordingly to their partners'. More and more Chinese negotiators are learning and to get trained in negotiating skills especially those suggested by American scholars. The cultural discrepancies between nations are increasingly narrowing, although cultural differences still produce more than enough problems in the process of negotiation. However, some knowledge and perception of cultural differences at least provide a chance to function in order to avoid some unnecessary conflicts that result from cultural discrepancies. It should also be mentioned that not all individuals behave in the same way, so one should not expect values of a particular culture to be the values of all as indicated in this thesis. It can be concluded from the comparative analysis of the cases studies that it is vital for negotiators from various cultural backgrounds to understand, learn and respect the culture of their partners. Avoiding cultural conflicts and enhancing intercultural communication in negotiations will assist them to finally achieve an ideal and profitable result in business.

In this last chapter, some useful suggestions are given to those who are involved or will be engaged in Sino-U.S business negotiations

5.2 Suggestions for Sino-U.S. Business Negotiations

5.2.1 General Suggestions for a Successful Business Negotiation

(1) Fully study each other's cultures

Preparation is of great significance to gain the negotiating power, facilitate the negotiation process and achieve a fruitful result. As an old Chinese proverb goes: "If you know yourself and your enemy, you will never lose a battle." Cultural awareness refers to an understanding of one's own and the other side's cultures that influence people's thought and behaviors. This includes understanding and studying both the

commonly shared acts of human behaviors and the different acts and values, which are highly decisive in conducting intercultural negotiations. Although an understanding of different cultures does not ensure you to completely overcome troubles caused by different values, a perception of your partner's culture may help you in some way or to some extent avoid serious problems or complete failure that may arise from cultural conflicts.

First of all, try to have a clear perception of your own culture and become aware of the values, ethical standards, social norms, thinking pattern in your own culture. However, it should also be noticed that a negotiator should never judge his counterparts by his own culture. A negotiator is expected to learn and respect the culture of your counterparts.

Secondly, it is also vitally important to get oneself familiarized with the target culture of his counterpart when you prepare for an international business negotiation. Comparing one's own culture with the target culture is the second action to be taken in terms of the value systems, ethical standards, social norms and thinking pattern. You may find this producing an important impact on your own negotiating styles. Consultation with experts who provide you with some advice and experience is also helpful for you as part of the stage of pre-preparation. You can even hire a local interpreter or consultant to work with you because they know how their local culture affects the negotiating process, and can help you overcome troubles, facilitate the negotiation and get a desirable result.

(2) Try to avoid stereotypes of the target culture

Lippman, who called attention to this concept as early as 1922, indicated that "stereotypes were a means of organizing our images into fixed and simple categories that we use to stand for the entire collection of people." (W. Lippman, 1957) The stereotypes of the target culture we have learned may not work and be practical in any case because of individuality of the person and of the case. The world is too big and complex for us to know it in details so people tend to form a stereotype of general concept to base on for further and future actions.

However, to some extent, stereotypes may mislead the negotiators to a negative

effect as described by Adler (Adler, 1991):

“Stereotypes become counterproductive when we place people in the wrong groups, when we incorrectly describe the group norm, when we inappropriately evaluate the group or category, when we confuse the stereotype with the description of a particular individual and when we fail to modify the stereotype based on our actual observations and experience.”

Therefore, when a negotiator goes to work in the counterpart's country, he should be careful and cautious not to rely on his learned cultural stereotypes to cope with any relations with the local negotiators. The stereotypes learned from books, or consultants may work most of the time but it is too simplistic to take it for granted that they are useful for any personality, state of the mind in a particular case and so on. So we should try to concentrate on the negotiator as a special individual with a specific perspective.

(3) Try to bridge the culture gaps in negotiations

Culture differences sometimes can cause cultural conflicts or discrepancies during a business negotiation, which may lead to communication failures to both parties. Therefore, the negotiator should find various ways to bridge the cultural gap so as to pull the negotiation back to its bright side.

5.2.2 Suggestions for American Negotiators

(1) Try to understand and establish a friendly relationship or partnership with your Chinese partners before the actual negotiation takes place. If necessary, get to know them before the negotiation begins. This may take time but it will be beneficial for the two parties in a long term

(2) When negotiating with Chinese people, be cautious when “face” issues come along, for saving face of the Chinese counterpart's decides whether the deal can be done or not. When conflict arises, try to adopt an indirect approach or find a third party as a mediator, which will be helpful for further negotiation and a fruitful result. Avoid expressing dissatisfaction in the public to anyone and control your speech in a mild and implicit manner.

(3) Be patient. Negotiation often takes time in China because they usually spend a lot

of time in building friendship, etiquette, and so on before negotiation starts. Socializing into a good relationship or partnership is part of the process of negotiation and careful consideration or hesitance is part of the Chinese character. Rushing the Chinese negotiators into a contract with anyone whom they do not know much will only bring an end to the negotiation sooner than expected and nothing will be achieved.

(4) Be alert to the non-verbal communications. Be careful about your own body language and try to notice the non-verbal communications such as: tone of voice, silence, facial expressions, and gestures of your counterparts.

(5) Try to figure out the different positions and ranks of your Chinese partners and follow the routine standards of behaviors accordingly.

5.2.3 Suggestions for Chinese Negotiators

(1) Arrange a tighter schedule for the negotiation. From the viewpoint of the western people time is money and should not be wasted. Shorten the process of friendship building and go to the point as soon as possible. And understand the importance of signing a written contract instead of too much lobbying.

(2) Don't be concerned about face issues too much. If you have any questions ask your counterparts directly. Do not care too much about your social status and do not be afraid of face-to-face confrontation.

(3) State your opinion directly and in a straightforward manner. Don't use language which is ambiguous and indirect, which may confuse your counterpart during the business negotiation.

(4) Draft all the written documents, agreements, contracts seriously and execute them rigorously. To westerners or Americans any written documents will carry legal effect either to bring about ideal profits or to resolve any disputes through legal system. Never expect that conflicts can be easily settled through personal relations when doing business with western counterparts.

5.3 Limits of the Thesis and Suggestions for Further Study

The limitations of this research lie in the following aspects:

(1) Cultural perceptions are an appropriate and effective perspective to study negotiation styles but other disciplines or theories are equally useful such as history, sociology, politics and psychology. It would be more insightful and practical if a broader knowledge base could be provided for the study of negotiation styles.

(2) Personal experience would better facilitate the study of negotiation styles. Negotiation is an action to be performed and then studied, summarized and concluded. And if more comparison of different cases in various cultural circumstances could be illustrated, not only cases between Chinese negotiators and American negotiators, the conclusions and findings would be more convincing.

With the economic booming and development happening in China and China's entry into the WTO, the marketing environment and the economical and political relationships between China and many western countries including America will be better and better facilitated and improved so further studies for more efficient business negotiations should be carried out in a broader and more comprehensive sense.

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