UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

DIPLOMA THESIS

INTERCULTURAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION: THE CASE OF BRAZIL, ARGENTINA AND MEXICO

Ljubljana, February 2010   **MATEJ NEMEC**

STATEMENT

I, Matej Nemec, student of the Faculty of Economics, state that I am the author of this diploma thesis, whose mentor was prof. dr. Irena Vida. I do permit this paper to be published on the faculty's web pages.

In Ljubljana, February 2010   Signature:

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INTRODUCTION

Studying the intercultural issues is by no means a new area. People have interacted with others from different cultures during wars, religious journeys and when exchanging goods throughout our history. They have also been well aware of the difficulties these encounters may have caused. Even though the history of intercultural contact has been long, it has never reached the magnitude of interaction in today's world. Only people in certain professions or status had contacts in foreign cultures before. Nowadays, even the most isolated and marginal groups of people have the opportunity to interact with people all over the world. Intercultural interaction has become a reality of everyday life for almost everyone. The growth of interdependence of people and cultures in the global society of the twenty-first century has forced us to pay even more attention to intercultural issues.

There are several reasons for the development of the world into a global village of today. The development of technology has enabled a constant flow of information and ideas across boundaries. Communication is faster and more accessible than ever. The development of transportation has also increased face-to-face contact with people from different cultural background immensely. These developments have alternately affected world's economy. The business world is becoming more international and interrelated; international economies face a true interdependence. Widespread population migrations have changed the demography of several nations; new intercultural identities and communities have been born. Cultural diversity and multiculturalism are the realities of working and private life almost everywhere.

Due to the facts stated above, the purpose of writing this thesis is to explore the field of intercultural communication, especially in Latin American countries. The objective of writing this thesis is to answer the following questions: 1) To what extent does different cultural background have an effect on behavior of business people around the world? 2) Is intercultural business communication universal? 3) Can we generalize the cultural knowledge gained in one Latin American country to other Latin American countries?

I will try to answer these questions in my thesis that is divided into five chapters. After the introduction the theoretical part follows where I will explain the theoretical bases for understanding cultures. In this chapter, I will focus on the well-known anthropologists that have made their name in research in the field of cross-cultural study, such as Geert Hofstede, Kluchohn and Strodbeck, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner and Edward Hall. Some critical remarks of their research are offered in this chapter, as well. In the second chapter, I will define business communication by analyzing the communication model, describing the elements of business communication and examining the styles of business communication. In the third chapter, I will look further into business communication in different cultures and its barriers. In this chapter, I will explore verbal and non-verbal communication in different cultures. I will particularly focus on the non-verbal aspects of communication where I will give some examples of different cultures and countries, especially Latin American, for better understanding of non-

verbal signs. In the forth chapter, I will introduce the practical part of my thesis. I will focus on analyzing of the three most influential countries in Latin America: Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. In the fifth chapter, I will explain some common characteristics of Latin America, based on the Hofstede's cultural dimensions research. Further on in this chapter, I will face similarities and differences of the countries I analyzed in the forth chapter. The conclusion of my thesis and the summary of the findings I have made will be the last part.

1 THEORETICAL BASES FOR UNDERSTANDING CULTURES

1.1 Hofstede dimensions

Hofstede's "dimensions of culture" were derived mainly from his extensive organizational anthropology research in the late 1970s and early 1980s, where he undertook the most exhaustive cross-cultural study to date, using a questionnaire data from 80 000 IBM employees in 74 counties across the world. The scores are general comparisons of values in the countries and regions he studied and can vary greatly within each country (Hofstede, 2004, p. 7). Although Hofstede's work is somewhat dated and has rightly been criticized on a number of grounds, the dimensions are useful in understanding that members of various societies are likely to behave in different ways in a given situation. Hofstede clarified five dimensions of culture with a help of this research.

Uncertainty avoidance **(UAI)** can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations. A *High Uncertainty Avoidance* ranking indicates the country has a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. This creates a rule-oriented society that institutes laws, rules, regulations, and controls in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty. A *Low Uncertainty Avoidance* ranking indicates the country has less concern about ambiguity and uncertainty and has more tolerance for a diversity of opinions. This is reflected in a society that is less rule-oriented, more readily accepts change, and takes more and greater risks (Hofstede, 2004, p. 167). Table 4 below shows key differences in the society, work place, family and governance between weak and strong uncertainty avoidance societies.

Table 1: Key differences between weak and strong uncertainty avoidance societies

Weak Uncertainty Avoidance	Strong Uncertainty Avoidance
Uncertainty is a normal feature of life, and each day is accepted as it comes.	The uncertainty inherent in life is a continuous thereat that must be fought.
Low stress and low anxiety.	High stress and high anxiety.
Family life is relaxed.	Family life is stressful.
People feel happier.	People feel less happy.
People have fewer worries about health and money.	People have more worries about health and money.
Risky investments.	Conservative investments.
Hard working only when needed.	There is an emotional need to be busy and an inner urge to work hard.
Time is a frame work of orientation.	Time is money.
More ethnic tolerance.	More ethnic prejudice.
Positive or neutral toward foreigners.	Xenophobia.

Source: G.Hofstede & G.J. Hofstede, Cultures and Organizations; Software of the mind 2004, p. 176,181,194,203.

Power distance (PDI) can be defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. A *Large Power Distance* ranking indicates that inequalities of power and wealth exist within a society and that the less powerful members of the society accept this situation. Relations between unequals are formal in these societies, and companies are organized in rigid vertical hierarchies. A *Small Power Distance* ranking indicates that the society de-emphasizes the differences between a citizen's power and wealth. Equality and opportunity for everyone is stressed in these societies, relations are opened and informal, and the companies tend to have flat hierarchies and matrix organizations (Hofstede, 2004, p. 45-46). Table 2 below shows key differences in the society, work place, family and governance between small- and large-power distance societies.

Table 2: Key differences between small- and large-power distance societies.

Small power distance	Large power distance
Inequalities among people are minimized.	Inequalities among people are expected and desired.
All members of society treat each other as equals.	Respect is basic and lifelong virtue.
Decentralization is popular.	Centralization is popular.
Subordinates expect to be consulted.	Subordinates expect to be told what to do.
The ideal boss is a resourceful democrat.	The ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat.
Manual work has the same status as office work.	White-collar jobs are valued more than blue-collar jobs.
Mostly wealthier countries with large middle class.	Mostly poorer countries with a small middle class.
All should have equal rights.	The powerful should have privileges.
There are small income differentials in society, further reduced by the tax system.	There are large income differentials in society, further increased by the tax system.
There are fewer supervisory personnel.	There are more supervisory personnel.

Source: G.Hofstede & G.J. Hofstede, Cultures and Organizations; Software of the mind, 2004, p. 57, 59, 67.

The Individual and Collectivism (IDV). Hofstede defines this dimension as the extent to which individuals' behaviors are influenced and defined by others. The vast majority of people in our world live in societies where the interest of the group prevails over the interest of the individual. We will call these societies collectivist (Hofstede, 2004, p. 74). *Collectivism* pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. On the other hand, a minority of the people in our world live in societies in which the interests of the individual prevail over the interest of the group, societies that we call individualist (Hofstede, 2004, p. 75-76). *Individualism* as opposite pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose; everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Extreme collectivism and extreme individualism can be considered the opposite poles of a second global dimension of national cultures, after power distance (Hofstede, 2004, p. 76). Table 3 on the next page shows key differences in the society, work place, family and governance between collectivist and individualistic societies.

Table 3: Key differences between collectivist and individualistic societies.

Collectivist	Individualist
People are born into extended families or in other groups that continue protecting them in exchange for loyalty.	Everyone grows up to look after him or herself and his or her immediate family only.
Children learn to think in terms of "we".	Children learn to think in terms of "I".
Resources should be shared with relatives.	Individual ownership of resources.
High context communication prevails.	Low-context communication prevails.
Social networks are the primary source of information.	Media is the primary source of information.
Harmony and consensus in society are ultimate goals.	Self-actualization by every individual is a ultimate goal.
Occupation mobility is lower.	Occupation mobility is higher.
Relationship prevails over task.	Task prevails over relationship.
Collective interests prevail over individual.	Individual interests prevail over collective.
Per capita GDP tends to be lower.	Per capita GDP tends to be higher.

Source: G.Hofstede & G.J. Hofstede, Cultures and Organizations; Software of the mind, 2004, p. 92, 97,104,109.

Masculinity/Femininity (MAS).This dimension focuses on the degree to which 'masculine' values like competitiveness and the acquisition of wealth are valued over 'feminine' values like relationship building and quality of life. A *Masculinity* ranking indicates the society values assertive and aggressive 'masculine' traits. That is why society is called masculine when gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. On the other hand, a *Femininity* ranking typifies societies in which nurturing and caring 'feminine' characteristics predominate. In these societies that are called feminine, gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede, 2004, p. 120). Table 4 below shows key differences in the society, work place, family and governance between feminine and masculine societies.

Table 4: Key differences between feminine and masculine societies

Feminine	Masculine
Relationships and quality of life are important.	Challenge, earnings, recognition, and advancement are important.
Both men and women should be modest.	Men should be assertive, ambitious, and tough.
Both men and women can be tender and focus on relationships.	Women are supposed to be tender and take care of relationships.
Being responsible, decisive, ambitious, caring, and gentle is for women and man.	Being responsible, decisive, and ambitious is for men; being caring and gentle is for women.
Single standards: both sexes are subjects.	Double standards: men are subjects, women objects.
Children are socialized to be nonaggressive.	Aggression by children is acceptable.
People work in order to live.	People live in order to work.
There is a higher share of working women in professional jobs.	There is a lower share of working women in professional jobs.
Welfare society ideal; help for the needy.	Performance society ideal; support for the strong.
Environment - Small is beautiful.	Environment - Big is beautiful.

Source: G.Hofstede & G.J. Hofstede, Cultures and Organizations; Software of the mind, 2004, p. 132,136,142,146,157.

Long-Term/Short-Term Orientation (LTO). Definition of the fifth dimension is as follows: Long term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards - in particular, perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, short term orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present - in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of "face", and fulfilling social obligations (Hofstede, 2004, p. 210). Table 5 below shows key differences in the society, work place, family and governance between short and long term orientation societies.

Table 5: Key differences between short and long term orientation societies

Short-term orientation	Long-term orientation
Efforts should produce quick results.	Perseverance, sustained efforts toward slow results.
Social pressure toward spending.	Thrift, being sparing with resources.
Respect for tradition.	Respect for circumstances.
Concern with personal stability.	Concern with personal adaptiveness.
Living with in-laws is a source of trouble.	Living with in-laws is normal.
Main work values include freedom, rights, achievement, and thinking for oneself.	Main work values include learning, honesty, adaptiveness, accountability, and self-discipline.
Leisure time is important.	Leisure time is not important.
Importance of this year's profits.	Importance of profits 10 years from now.
Analytical thinking.	Synthetic thinking.
Meritocracy, reward by abilities.	Wide social and economic differences are undesirable.

Source: G.Hofstede & G.J. Hofstede, Cultures and Organizations; Software of the mind 2004, p. 212, 217, 225,232.

1.2 Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck dimensions

There is a method which quickly helps people to understand cultural differences. The Value Orientation Method (VOM) is a tool that can help to identify differences in core values across cultures. The foundations for VOM were developed in the 1940s and 1950s by anthropologists Florance Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck. The project team proposed that it is possible to distinguish cultures based on how they each addressed five common human concerns. They did not propose that these were the only five concerns but that they were useful in understanding cultural differences. They also proposed from their study that cultures could respond to the problems in at least three ways and that all cultures would express each of the three responses (Gallagher, 2001, p. 45). Their work has been the basis of much further work in the area.

*1.**Humane Nature**:* What is the character of innate human nature? Are people naturally good or evil? (Guirdham, 1999, p. 52). At one extreme there are those who think that humans are basically evil, and cannot be trusted. There are people in the middle who think there are both good and bad people in the world. The other extreme are those who see humans as basically good (Gibson, 2002, p. 26).

*2.**Man-nature relationship:*** What are human beings in relation to nature? Should people co-exist with nature, attempt to control it, or attempt to dominate it? (Guirdham, 1999, p. 52). At one extreme there is the belief that life is determined by external forces, such as God, fate, or nature. In the middle are those who believe that men should live in harmony with nature. At the other extreme are those who believe that men can control the nature (Gibson, 2002, p. 26).

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3.Time sense: What is the temporal focus of human life? Is time to be reckoned as precisely as possible or more loosely? (Guirdham, 1999, p. 52). This ranges from a tradition-bound, past-orientated view of the world, to a present orientation ('living for the moment''), to a goal-orientated future orientation (Gibson, 2002, p. 26).

4. Activity: What is the modality of human activity? Are people expected to try actively to meet their desires or to accept their fates? (Guirdham, 1999, p. 52). At one extreme there are those who think it is enough to just "be". In the middle are those who look for inner development, and at the other extreme there is action orientation, with a belief in working for rewards (Gibson, 2002, p.26).

5. Social relations: What is the relationship of the individual to others? Is a higher value placed on the individual or the group? (Guirdham, 1999, p. 52). These range from a belief that there are natural leaders and natural followers, to an orientation towards collective decisions, to individualism, and a belief in equal rights (Gibson, 2002, p. 26). The table below shows three possible responses to five elementary human orientations.

Table 6: Description of five common human concerns and three possible responses

Concerns/ orientations	*Possible Responses*		
Human Nature: What is the basic nature of people?	Evil	Mixed	Good
Man-Nature Relationship:What is the appropriate relationship to nature?	Subordinate to Nature	Harmony with Nature	Dominant over Nature
Time Sense: How should we best think about time?	Past	Present	Future
Activity: What is the best mode of activity?	Being	Becoming	Doing
Social Relations: What is the best form of social organization?	Hierarchical	Collateral	Individual

Source:*L.R. Kohls, Developing intercultural awareness, 1981, p. 55.*

1.3 Trompenaars' and Hampden-Turner's cultural factors

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, like the earlier researchers, produced a taxonomy of cultures, drawing in part on the orientations concepts of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck. His analysis was derived partly from fifteen years of training of managers and more specifically on academic research using minimum samples of 100 people in each of 30 counties, with people of similar backgrounds and occupations, from a variety of multinational companies (Guirdham, 1999, p. 55-56). Every culture distinguishes itself from others by the specific solutions it chooses to certain problems which reveal themselves as dilemmas. It is convenient to look at these problems under three headings: those which arise from (Guirdham, 1999, p. 57) our relationships with other people; passage of time; attitudes to the environment. From the solutions different cultures have chosen to these universal problems, we can further identify seven fundamental dimensions of culture.

Universalism vs. Particularism contrasts a preference for drawing general principles versus a preference for the anecdotal or itemized (Guirdham, 1999, p. 57). People in universalistic cultures share the belief that general rules, codes, values and standards take precedence over particular needs and claims of friends and relations. In a universalistic society, the rules apply equally to the whole "universe" of members. Any exception weakens the rule. Particularistic cultures see the ideal culture in terms of human friendship, extraordinary achievement and situations; and in intimate relationships. The "spirit of the law" is deemed more important than the "letter of the law". Obviously there are rules and laws in particularistic cultures; but these merely codify here how people relate to each other. Rules are needed - if only to be able to make exceptions to them for particular cases - but we need to be able to count on our friends (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 231-232).

Individualism vs. Communitarianism. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner see this dimension slightly differently from Hofstede - as a conflict between what each of us wants as an individual and the interests of a group we belong to (Guirdham, 1999, p. 57). In a predominantly individualistic culture people place the individual before the community. Individual happiness, fulfillment, and welfare set the pace. People are expected to decide matters largely on their own and to take care primarily of themselves and their immediate family. People place the community before the individual in a predominantly communitarian culture. It is the responsibility of the individual to act in ways which serve society. The quality of life for the individual is seen as directly dependent on the degree to which he takes care of his fellow men, even at the cost of individual freedom. The individual is judged by the extent to which she serves the interest of the community (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 52-54).

Specific vs. Diffuse. This distinction is based on the concept of life space. People have different senses of what is the domain of the public and the private, and of how compartmentalized different aspects of life should be (Guirdham, 1999, p. 57). The public sphere of specific individuals is much larger than their private sphere. People are easily accepted into the public sphere, but it is very difficult to get into the private sphere, since each area in which two people encounter each other is considered separate from the other, in a specific case. On the other hand diffuse individuals have a large private sphere and a small public one. Newcomers are not easily accepted into it. But once they have been accepted, they are admitted into all layers of the individual's life. A friend is a friend in all respects: tennis, cooking, work, etc. The various roles someone might play in your life are not separated. Qualities cherished by diffuse cultures include style, demeanor, ambiance, trust, understanding, etc. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 83-89).

Affective vs. Neutral. The main emphasis on this dimension is the display of feeling rather that the level or range of emotions experienced. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner contend that emotional display is a major difference between cultures and argues that there is a tendency for those with norms of emotional neutrality to dismiss anger, delight or intensity in the workplace as unprofessional (Guirdham, 1999, p. 57). In an affective culture people do not object to a display of emotions. It is not considered necessary to hide feelings and to keep them inside. In a

natural culture people are taught that it is incorrect to show one's feelings overtly. This does not mean they do not have feelings, it just means that the degree to which a feeling may become manifest is limited. They accept and are aware of feelings, but are in control of them. Neutral cultures may think the louder signals of an affective culture are too excited, and over-emotional. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 70-73).

Achievement vs. Ascription. This is a matter of the importance attached to what a person has done or is doing - what people have achieved through their own efforts - versus their position resulting from external factors (Guirdham, 1999, p. 58). Achieved status refers to what an individual does and has accomplished. In achievement-oriented cultures, individuals derive their status from what they have accomplished. A person with achieved status has to prove what he is worth over and over again: status is accorded on the basis of his actions. Ascribed status refers to what a person is and how others relate to his or her position in the community, in society or in an organization. In an ascribed society, individuals derive their status from birth, age, gender or wealth. A person with ascribed status does not have to achieve to retain his status: it is accorded to him on the basis of his being (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 111-117).

Sequential vs. Synchronic cultures. Every culture has developed its own response to time. The time orientation dimension has two aspects: the relative importance cultures give to the past, present, and future, and their approach to structuring time. Time can be structured in two ways. In one approach time moves forward, second by second, minute by minute, hour by hour in a straight line. This is called sequentialism. In another approach time moves round in cycles: of minutes, hours, days, years. We call this synchronism. People structuring time sequentially tend to do one thing at a time. They view time as a narrow line of distinct, consecutive segments. Sequential people view time as tangible and divisible. They strongly prefer planning and keeping to plans once they have been made. Time commitments are taken seriously. Staying on schedule is a must. People structuring time synchronically usually do several things at a time. Time is flexible and intangible. Time commitments are desirable rather than absolute. Plans are easily changed. Synchronic people especially value the satisfactory completion of interactions with others (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 140).

Internal vs. External. Every culture has developed an attitude towards the natural environment. Internalistic people have a mechanistic view of the nature. They see the nature as a complex machine and machines can be controlled if you have the right expertise. Internalistic people do not believe in luck or predestination. Externalistic people have a more organic view of the nature. Mankind is one of nature's forces, so it should operate in harmony with the environment. Man should subjugate to nature and go along with its forces. Externalistic people do not believe that they can shape their own destiny (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 156).

1.4 Hall's cultural factors

Edward T. Hall was an anthropologist who made early discoveries of key cultural factors. In particular he is known for his high and low context cultural factors, and of different concepts of time. He used communication styles to provide a taxonomic approach to analyzing cultures (Gibson, 2002, p. 26). Cultural context is a pattern of physical cues, environmental stimuli, and implicit understanding that convey meaning between two members of the same culture. However, from culture to culture, people convey contextual meaning differently (Thill et al., 2002, p. 51). As it can be seen in the table 7 on the next page, he drew a distinction between high-context communication and low-context communication and used the distinction as the basis to differentiate cultures.

Table 7: High and low context cultures differences

Factor	High-context culture	Low-context culture
Messages	Many covert and implicit messages, with use of metaphors and reading between the lines.	Many overt and explicit messages which are simple and clear.
Locus of control and attribution for failure	Inner locus of control and personal acceptance for failure	Outer locus of control and blame of others for failure
Use of non-verbal communication	Much nonverbal communication	More focus on verbal communication
Expression of reaction	Reserved, inward reactions	Visible, external, outward reaction
Cohesion and separation of groups	Strong distinction between in-group and out-group. Strong sense of family.	Flexible and open grouping patterns, changing as needed
People bonds	Strong people bonds with affiliation to family and community	Fragile bonds between people with little sense of loyalty.
Level of commitment to relationships	High commitment to relationships. Relationship more important than task.	Low commitment to relationship. Task more important than relationships.
Flexibility of time	Time is open and flexible.	Time is highly organized.

Source: T.E.Hall, Beyond Culture, 1976.

In a **high- context culture** there are many contextual elements that help people to understand the rules. As a result, much is taken for granted. This can be very confusing for person who does not understand the 'unwritten rules' of the culture (Hall, 1976, p. 105). People rely less on verbal communication and more on the context of nonverbal actions and environmental settings to convey the meaning (Thill et al., 2002, p. 51). In **low-context culture** very little is taken for granted. Whilst this means that more explanation is needed, it also means there is less chance of misunderstanding (Hall, 1976, p. 105). People rely more on verbal communication and less on the circumstances and cues to convey meaning (Thill et al., 2002, p. 52). Contextual differences are apparent in the way cultures approach situations such as negotiating, decision making and problem solving (Thill et al., 2002, p. 52). The figure below shows which are low and which high context cultures and which of those, explicit and implicit way of sending messages apples to.

Figure 1: Low and high context cultures
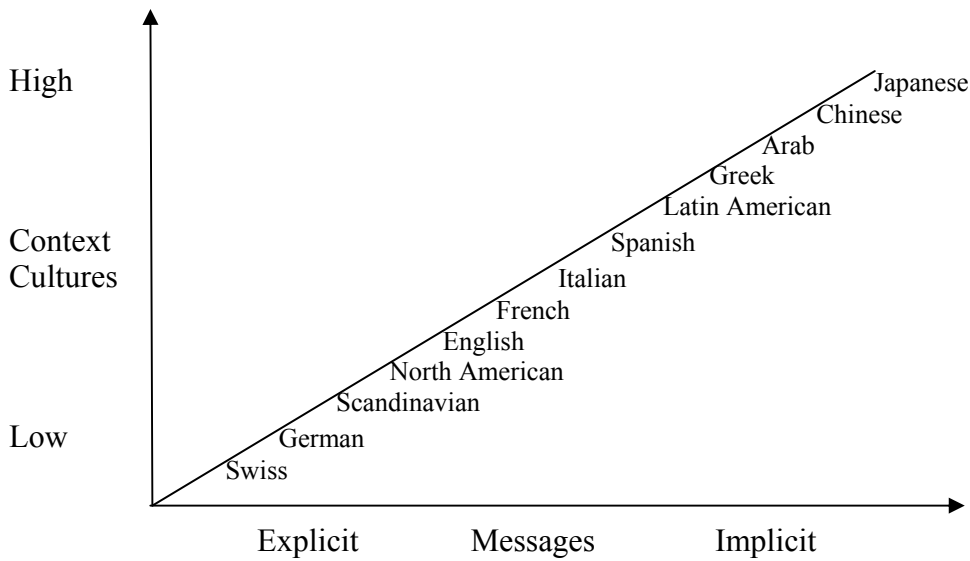
Source: J.V.Thill et al., Excellence in Business communication, 2002, p. 53
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Monochronic time and Polychronic time. "Time talks, it speaks more plainly than words" (Hall, 1959, p 1). *Monochronic time* or M-Time, as author called it, means doing one thing at a time. Monochronic people tend also to be low context. In Polychronic cultures, human interaction is valued over time and material things. They are less concerned about getting the things done, they do get done, but more in their own time. Polychronic people tend also to be high context (Hall, 1976, p. 173).

Table 8: Monochronic and polychronic time differences

Factor	Monochronic	Polychronic
Actions	One thing at a time	Many things at once
Focus	Concentrate on the job	Are easily distracted
Attention to time	Think about when things must be achieved	Think about what will be achieved
Priority	Put the job first	Put relationships first
Respect for property	Seldom borrow or lend things	Borrow and lend things often and easily
Timeliness	Emphasize promptness	Base promptness relationship factors

Source: T.E.Hall &M.R.Hall, Understanding cultural differences; Germans, French and Americans 1990, p 15.

Space: Hall was concerned about space and our relationships within it. He called the study of such space *Proxemics*. Some people need more space in all areas. People who invade into that space are seen as a threat. Personal space is an example of a mobile form of territory and people need less or greater distances between them and others. Some people are ***more territorial*** than others with greater concern for ownership. They seek to mark out the areas which are theirs and perhaps having boundary wars with neighbors. This happens right down to a desk-level, where co-workers may do battle over a piece of paper which overlaps from one person's area to another. At a national level, many wars have been fought over boundaries. Territoriality also extends to anything that is 'mine' and ownership concerns extend to material things. Security thus becomes a subject of great concern for people with a high need for ownership. High territoriality people tend also to be low context. People with ***lower territoriality*** have less ownership of space and

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boundaries are less important to them. They will share territory and ownership with little thought. They also have less concern for material ownership and their sense of 'stealing' is less developed (this is more important for highly territorial people). People with low territoriality tend also to be high context (Hall, 1976, p. 119).

1.5 Critical remarks of dimensional approaches to culture

Treatments of culture such as those of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, Hofstede and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, which provide lists of shared backgrounds characteristics such as worldviews, values and behavioral characteristics, have been criticized for being oversimplified, static and lacking a basis for determining whether two cultures are different. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner work also attracts the criticism that, while his variables are intended to be a continuum of prior research of other authors, not a lot of attention is paid to this. Hofstede work, although much admired and widely applied, has been criticized primarily on two grounds: that it omits important values and that it is non-dynamic enough, because of the fact that the research was made just on one profile of employees (Guirdham, 1999, pp. 58-59).

Some other criticisms are:
- A country's culture is too vibrant and complex entity to be simplified and described only in terms of these dimensions (Tayeb, 1996, p. 17).
- When broad dimensions such as individualism-collectivism … are invoked to account for cultural differences, it is uncertain exactly how or why these differences occur (Kim, 1988, p. 87).
- Taxonomic conceptualizations do not supply answers to how many of these characteristics need to be deferent for there to be cultural differences, because the characteristic vary in their impact on different cultures and their salience is not usually attended to and because such definitions may not capture the experience of the participants (Collier & Thomas, 1998, p. 118).

These criticisms certainly have some force, but despite their limitations, dimensional approaches have generated a large amount of empirical research and provided the most widespread increase in our awareness and understanding of cultural differences and its applications to cross cultural communication (Guirdham, 1999, p. 59). In intercultural communication, culture can act as a filter when confronting the other. Hall equated culture with communication to make explicit the close links between the two concepts.

2 DEFINING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Word communication comes from the Latin word, *communicare* meaning to impart, share or make common. Communication can be defined in many ways and was defined by quite a few authors. In an English dictionary, the word communication is described as science and practice of transmitting information. Communication is also the process of sending and receiving messages (Thill et al., 2002, p. 3). Myron W. Lustig and Jolene Koester defined communication as a symbolic process in which people create shared meanings. A symbol in this definition refers

to a word, action or object that represents a meaning. Meaning, then, is a perception, thought or feeling experienced and communicated by a person. Meaning can be a personal experience which cannot be shared with others as such but needs to be interpreted as a message. A message, in turn, is a set of symbols used to create shared meanings (Lustig & Koester, 1996, p. 29). According to Samovar and Porter, communication is a dynamic transactional behaviour-affecting process in which people behave intentionally in order to induce or elicit a particular response from another person (Samovar & Porter, 2003, p. 8). However, effective communication occurs when the information is received as accurately in terms of content and meaning as intended by the sender (Rouse & Rouse, 2002, p. 24) or when people understand each other, simulate others to take action, and encourage others to think in new way (Thill et al., 2002, p. 3).
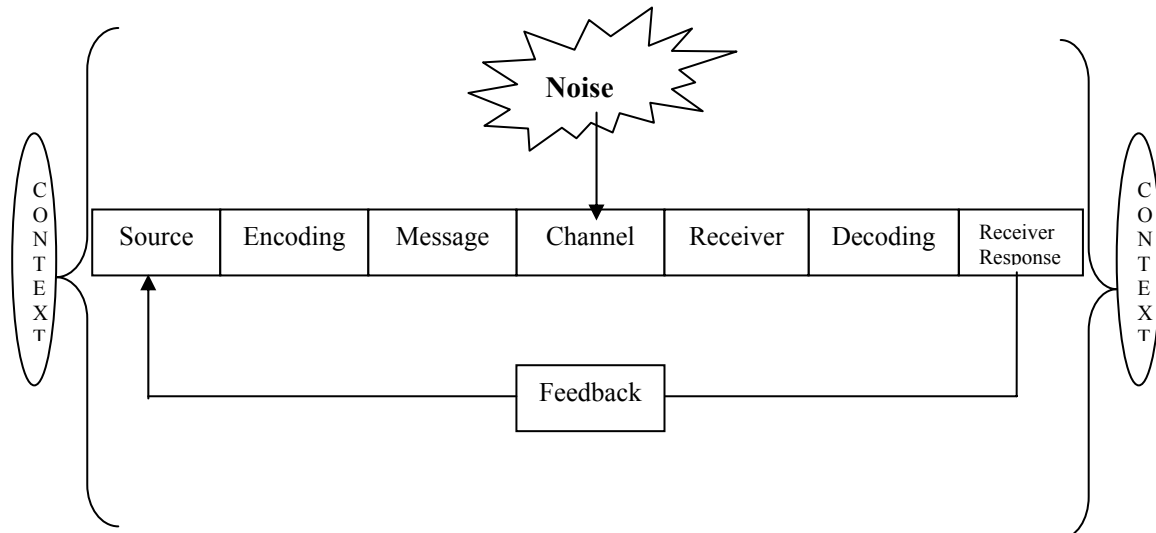
2.1 Communication model

Communicating can be defined as the exchange of meaning. This involves the sending and receiving of information between a *sender* and a *receiver*. This happens not only through the use of words, but also through non-verbal factors, such as gestures, facial expressions, and so on. The message received can be very different from the message that was send. The idea or feeling comes from the *source* (Gibson, 2002, p. 9). Turning the formulated thoughts into spoken or written words constitutes *encoding*. Thoughts and ideas have to be in some form of code to form transmittable *message*. Getting the message to the receiver is critical. Unless the communication goes from one person to another (or others), there is no communication. Messages travel via a *channel*. Channel refers to the particular technology or method used to get message to the receiver. Major communication channels are letters, e-mail, face-to-face conversation, telephone, fax, film, radio, television, and websites …

Another term that is also mentioned in communication theory is medium. Medium is not the same as channel in a communication context. Medium or code refers to the way in which a message is encoded (Rouse & Rouse, 2002, p. 26). Thoughts can be translated into many codes or media, or e.g. spoken or written words, other sounds, colors, images, smells, textures or any number of these combinations.

The sender sends the message (an idea in a code) which is then transmitted via a channel to the *receiver*. Ones the message gets from the sender to the receiver, the message has to be understood. Understanding occurs when the receiver *decodes* the message. Decoding is the act of interpreting the encoded message whereby meaning is attributed to and extracted from the symbols (sounds, words) so that the message is meaningful. *Feedback* helps both the sender and the receiver determine the clarity of the message. Feedback is a response from the receiver. The term feedback comes to communication theory from cybernetics where it refers to information required to control systems (Rouse & Rouse, 2002, p. 27). Feedback provides the opportunity to ensure that communication is effective by narrowing the differences between the intended meanings of send messages and the interpreted meaning of received messages. With feedback, the process becomes a conversation or two-way communication. *Noise* here means anything which distorts the message. Noise can be technological or human problem, from gaps in mobile phone communications to poorly printed documents. Anything that disrupts the transmission and

receipt of the encoded message so the intended meaning does not stay intact is due to the noise (Rouse & Rouse, 2002, p. 29). The **context** is the environment in which the communication takes place (Gibson, 2002, p. 9). The process just explained is visually presented in the figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Communication model

Source: F.Jantd, Intercultural Communication; an Introduction, 1995, p. 28.

2.2 Business communication

There are quite a few forms of communication. Most commonly used is so called social or non substantive communication that includes conversation of individuals in the society that have no predetermined goals and would include chitchat at social gatherings and light conversation. On the other hand, we have business communication or substantive interaction that has predetermined goals and would include discussion on price and terms, during intercultural negotiations (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 17). Business communication is communication in organizations, between organizations and people in them for the purpose of carrying out business activities. Messages sent to people within the company or organization is called internal business communication. Messages created within the company and send out to people outside the company is called external business communication. Internal communication carries information and ideas up, down and across the organization. Communication among the members of organization is essential for its effective functioning. Internal communication consists of formal and informal communication network. The formal flow of information follows the official chain of command, on the other hand, informal communication network or a grapevine carries information along the organization's unofficial lines of activity and power. External communication, on the other hand, carries information into and out of the organization. Companies constantly exchange messages with customers, vendors, distributors, competitors, investors, journalists, and community representatives. Although companies often communicate with outsiders in a formal manner through carefully constructed letters, informal contact with outsiders are important for learning about costumers needs (Thill et al., 2002, pp. 7-10).

2.3 Styles of business communication

The code used to produce the message is both verbal and non-verbal. As the figure below indicates, communication does not include only words, but also non-verbal factors such as body language, eye contact, touch, body distance, paralanguage, appearance, chronemic, and so on. Verbal communication has a written and oral component. In business communication, usage of written and oral communication has a predominant role, especially if individuals or groups in communication process are not meeting in person. But even so the effect on non-verbal communication should not be underestimated. Written and oral communication skills can be learned; meanwhile, non-verbal communication is in most cases unintentional, we are not aware of it.

Figure 3: Forms of business communication

COMMUNICATION

VERBAL — Oral, Written

NON-VERBAL — Kinesics, Paralanguage, Chronemic, Dress and Appearance, Chromatics
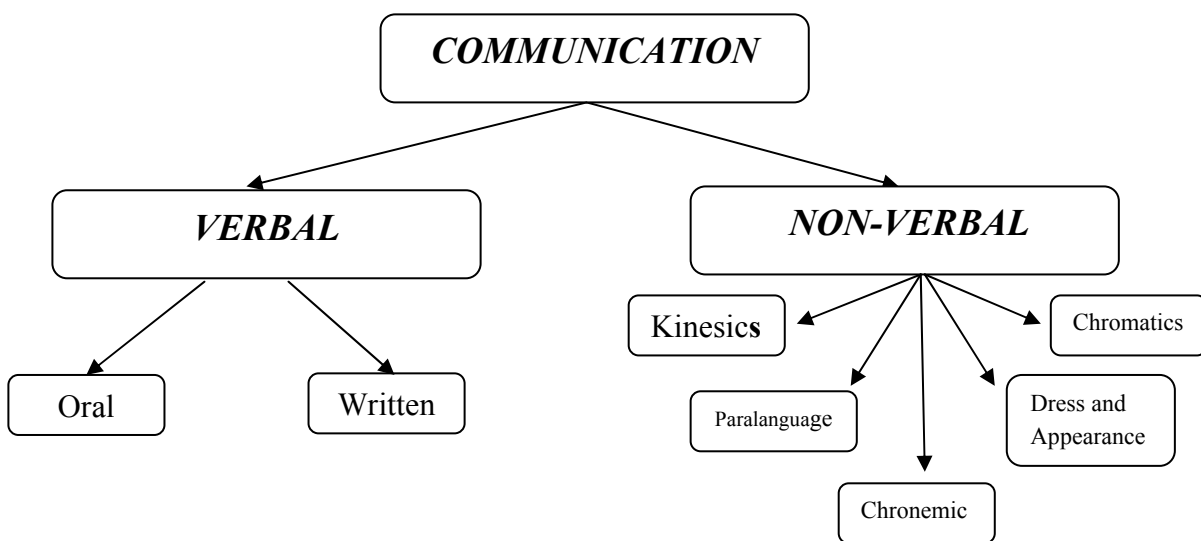
Speeches, formal conversations and interviews, conversation in a group and informal conversation are all ways of oral communication. But in every oral message sent there is some part of non-verbal communication, as well. Of course depending on the situation, conversing in person, non-verbal communication plays a larger role than talking to someone on the telephone. Major communication channels in written communication are letters, e-mail, magazines, newspapers, and many other electronic devices that transmit written messages. Advantages of written communication are that are long lasting, the massages are clear, in most cases fairly understandable and its content can be examined for a long time after it has been send. When we refer to non-verbal communication, we refer to all methods of communication that do not include words. Non-verbal communication consists of many things such as body language or Kinesics (eye contact, facial expresions, gestures, posture, space, touch, and so on), apparance, paralanguage, chronemics, chromatics and many more. Most of these channels are used simultaneously. To even talk about non-verbal communication, it is obvious that people in communication process have to meet in person and be in direct contact. A good business man has to acknowledge signs of non-verbal communication, especially during business meetings or negotiations where a verbal message may not be consistent with the signs of nonverbal

communication. This indicates that other person may not be truthful. Another characteristic of non-verbal communication is that it is less systematized than verbal communication; it is culture-bound and ambiguous.

In communication, everything is based on an interpretive processing. Communication is not always intentional. In fact, we send messages unconsciously all the time. Still people around us interpret and give meaning to these symbolic behaviors of ours. Non-verbal communication refers to all intentional and unintentional stimuli between communicating parties, other than a spoken word (Možina, 1998, p. 46).

3 BUSINESS COMMUNICATION ACROSS CULTURES

Intercultural communication is the process of sending and receiving messages between people whose cultural background leads them to interpret verbal and not verbal signs differently (Thill et al., 2002, p. 48). When writing or speaking with someone from another culture, we encode our message using the assumptions of our own culture. However, members of the audience decode our message according to the assumptions of their own culture, so there may be misunderstanding. The greater the differences between cultures are the greater the chances of a misunderstandings. Effective intercultural communication depends on recognizing ways in which people differ (Thill et al., 2002, p. 51). According to Samovar and Porter, intercultural communication occurs whenever a message produced by a member of one culture for consumption by a member of another culture (Samovar & Porter, 1991, p. 10). Because of cultural differences in these kinds of contacts, the potential for misunderstanding and disagreement is high. The figure below is showing the interdisciplinary of intercultural communication, and disciplines that influence the field the most.

*Figure 4: Disciplines involved in intercultural communication*
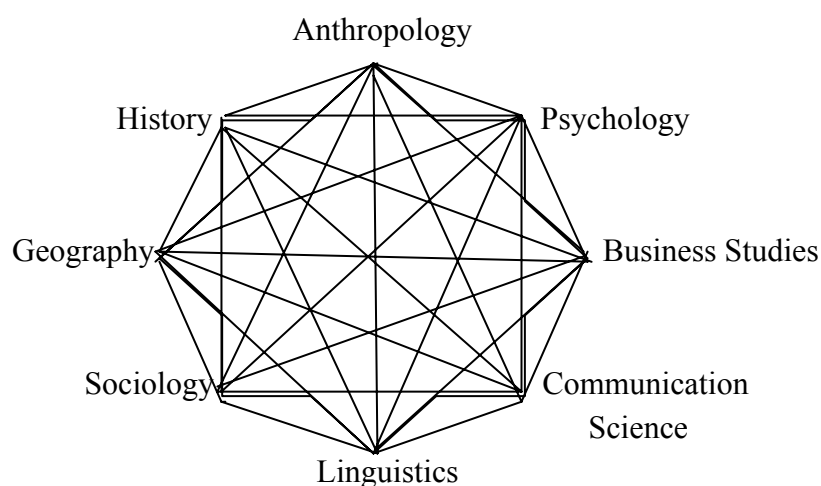
Source:R. Gibson, Intercultural Business Communication, 2002, p. 25.

An important distinction is between intercultural and cross-cultural communication. These two topics reflect the two major areas of research related to culture and communication. Although these two areas sound similar and are clearly related to one another, they are also frequently

confused. Cross-cultural communication research involves comparing and contrasting the communication patterns of people of one culture with the communication patterns observed in people from a different culture. Alternatively, intercultural communication research deals with the interaction between people of different cultures. So, for example, if the Koreans are compared with the French with the aim of finding some similarity or difference in some aspect of communication, the resulting study can accurately be labeled cross-cultural communication research. However, if the interaction between a Korean person and a French person is studied, then it is intercultural communication (Levine at al., 2007, p. 208). On the other hand, Martin and Chaney (2006) are explaining cross-cultural communication as similarities in communication between cultures and inter cultural communication as distinctions between cultures.

In communication between cultures, the assignment of meaning to symbols requires the interpretation of those messages and the adaptation to the social aspect of each individual culture. A number of problems may occur when ethno-cultural factors such as those that reflect values, beliefs, and norms and symbolic meanings are very different between the participants in the communicative act. One way to describe effective communication is that which is productive and satisfying to both the sender and receiver. It is appropriate that we follow rules and expectations of each participant in the communication. Due to cultural differences, however, the rules and expectations of the participants may differ. In the diagram below (Figure 5), an organizing model for studying communication with strangers is showing the effect of cultural, social cultural and psycho cultural influences on encoding and decoding the massages and feedbacks (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 45).

Figure 5: Organizing model for studying communication with strangers
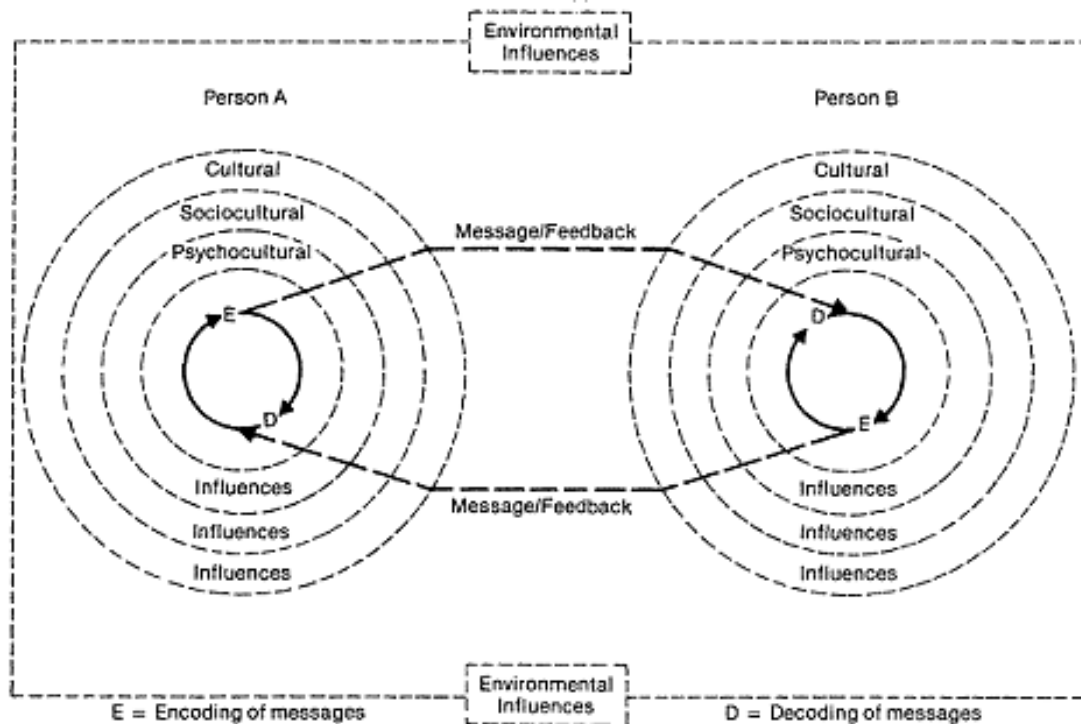
Source:*W.B.Gudykunst &V.V.Kim, Communicating with strangers; approach to intercultural communication, 2003, p. 47.*

16

3.1 Ethnocentrism, prejudice and stereotypes

When communicating across cultures, its effectiveness depends on maintaining an open mind. Unfortunately, many people lapse into ***ethnocentrism***, the belief that one's own cultural background - including ways of analyzing problem, values, beliefs, and verbal and non-verbal communication - are superior (Thill et al., 2002, p. 56). The term is derived from two Greek words: ethnos or "nation", and kentron, or "centre", which gives us a clear idea of what it means: one's nation is seen at the centre of the world or, in other words, it refers to the natural and inevitable tendency to identify "our own cultural values and ways of doing things as more real, or as the "right" and natural values and ways of doing things" (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 140). Some of the consequences of an ethnocentric approach are the establishment of a communicative distance with strangers, prejudice and generalizations. When these generalizations are firmly rooted in a group, its members tend to make judgments based on previous decisions and experiences, which is the meaning ***prejudice*** (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003, p. 142). It includes racism, sexism, homophobia and ageism as well as religious prejudice (Guirdham, 1999, p. 166). From these general judgments we make about others, we have gradually build ***stereotypes***, that is, a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person, thing, or culture but which is not true in reality. Generalizations and categories are necessary, but, when they are too rigid, they can be a barrier to the effective interpretation of a situation (Gibson, 2002, p. 10). Stereotypes are inevitable; they are a form of cultural information. For example many Japanese are collectivistic, be not all of them. Indeed, there are more differences within what we analytically construct and call cultures than between the cultures (Rouse et al., 2002, p. 270).

3.2 Verbal communication

Oral and written communication varies around the globe because it is a part of culture. Most of the communication customs and etiquette have developed over time to fit the culture in which they are used. With 97 % of outgoing international correspondence being sent in English (1% each in Spanish, French, and German)(Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 148). English is the world's most commonly used lingua franca and also the language of international business communication (Kocbek, 2006, p. 237).

Forms of verbal interaction are (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 128-129):
- *Repartee* – speaking by taking turns.
- *Ritual conversation* - it involves standard replies and comments in a given situation. Latin Americans will, for example, discuss health issues for long periods of time.
- *Verbal dueling or argument* - this is actually a friendly debate in which one person tries to gain dominance.
- *Self-disclosure* - involves revealing information about yourself to enable others to know you. The amount of information people are willing to reveal varies with the culture

The usual question-answer speech sequence is not used in all cultures and, for example, the word 'no' is not used in some Asian countries. Meeting, speaking, and being understood are necessary in building global business relationship. Although English may be the international language of

business, it is not spoken by everyone and anywhere (Metcalf, 1999, p. 22). Language is one of the most important differences between many cultures, and one of the greatest barriers. In any case, language fluency is a necessary condition in order to make intercultural communication function. Politeness or building rapport is done through the use of language. Building a relationship or establishing rapport with a business colleague is the only way to do business in many parts of the world. Rapport has five domains: the act of speaking, the discourse content, inclusion or exclusion of people present, stylistic aspects, and the nonverbal domain (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, p. 20).

Figure 6 below indicates a well-known fact that the meaning of words in an average business communication accounts to only 7%, sound (voice, tone, rhythm of speech …) 38% and 55% fall in the category of non-verbal communication. But that certainly depends on whether or not we communicate with an individual or a group of people in person. Most commonly used oral communication channel in many intercultural encounters is a telephone. In this case, the percentage in favor of verbal communication changes and non-verbal communication is not as important. When talking on the telephone, the initial impression is formatted mainly by vocal quality (70%) rather than by the words spoken (30%) (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 155). However, language is legitimately seen as having a prominent place in communication, especially when writing letters or emails, importance of words in these cases in intercultural communication are of the essence. Thus, linguistic differences are perceived as one of the main causes of intercultural communication misunderstanding, although certainly not the only one.

Figure 6: Elements of communication

Words 7%

Voice Tone 38%

Body Language 55%
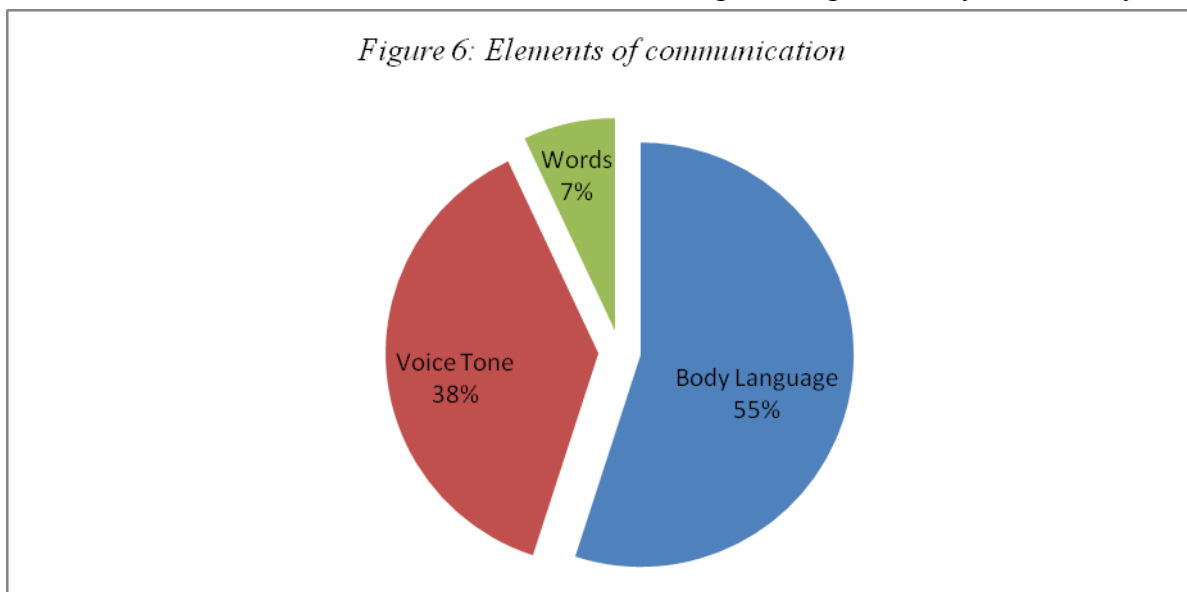
Source: S.J.Martin &H.L.Chaney, Global business etiquette; a guide to international communication customs, 2006, p. 155.

3.3 Non-verbal communication

Successful interaction in intercultural settings requires not only the understanding of verbal messages but of non-verbal messages as well. Since much of what is exchanged in communication is only implicitly meant and agreed upon, not talked about, non-verbal communication is largely used as an additional interpretative framework which allows people to

overcome the shortcomings of verbal communication. The rules, rites and usage of non-verbal communication are also culture bound. When business people from different cultures communicate, they also exchange elements of non-verbal communication. Gestures and other forms of non-verbal communication can help you send and interpret messages when interacting with people from other cultures. The simplest hand gesture changes the meaning from culture to culture, so interpreting non-verbal elements according to our own culture can be dangerous (Thill et al., 2002, p. 55). That is why many non-verbal communicators are culture specific. In addition to gestures, messages may be seen through the use of color, eye contact, facial expressions, paralanguage, posture, silence, smell, space and touch, nonverbal leakage, dress and appearance, time interpretation, dining customs and so on. Because non-verbal signals are interpreted immediately when they occur, whether they are judged in a positive or negative manner is very important. Non-verbal signals are never completely reliable. As Hall has stated in Understanding Cultural Differences, we learn non-verbal behavior in the context of growing up in a culture; it is invisible and omnipresent. We take it for granted and do not consciously think about it. As cultures interact through travel, television, and business, the non-verbal signals of a culture change because they are learned behaviors (Martin & Chaney, 2006, pp. 51-52).

3.3.1 Kinesics

Kinesics is the study of body language. Gestures, postures, facial expressions, eye contact, space, touch, odor, non-verbal leakage are all forms of body language that individuals might understand differently from one culture to another across the globe. Some are genetic, some are adopted, and some are situational (Kumar & Kalyana, 2009, pp. 44). Gestures and other forms of body language may help members of a culture to clarify confusing messages. Also the differences in body language are major source of misunderstanding during intercultural communication (Thill et al., 2002, pp. 55-56). Table below reveals which cultures are generally emotionally expressive and which are more reserved.

Table 9: General emotional expressiveness of cultures:

Very expressive cultures	*Variable expressive cultures*	*Reserved cultures*
Mediterranean, Latin Europe and Latin America	U.S, Canada, Australia, Eastern Europe, South Asia, Africa	East and Southeast Asia, Nordic and German Europe

Source:R.R.Gesteland, Cross-Cultural Business Behavior, 2002, p. 68.

Gestures: perform an important function when people communicate nonverbally. They are useful in adding emphasis to what is said. When used in inappropriate times with people of other cultures, they may cause confusion or misunderstanding. Thus, caution is advised when using gestures with persons of other cultures because what is perceived as a positive gesture in one culture may be viewed as a negative or even obscene in another one. No gestures have universal meanings across cultures; meanings are culture specific (Axtell, 1998, p. 17). People from U.S, England, Germany, and Switzerland usually use a few gestures and keep gestures fairly close to each other. On the other hand, people from France, Italy, Spain, Greece and countries from Latin America are more effusive and expressive in their gesturing. For example: using a beckoning gesture (palm facing the body with fingers upturned) is sometimes used to get server attention in

a restaurant. Mexicans find this gesture offensive as it is used to call people considered inferior, such as prostitutes, and animals (Wainwright, 1999, p. 51-52).

Oculesics: the study of eye contact or oculesics is given more emphasis in some cultures than in the others (Kumar & Kalyana, 2009, p. 44). In the dominant USA, direct eye contact is important; it shows respect, truthfulness, and self confidence. On the other hand, avoiding eye contact shows insecurity, disrespect, dishonesty, lack of self-confidence. US people are uncomfortable with prolonged eye contact, as well and may interpret this behavior as intrusive and aggressive (Wainwright, 1999, p. 134). Many Asian people are uncomfortable with direct eye contact. People from China and Japan, specifically, tend to look just below the chin during conversations. Prolonged eye contact, on the other hand, is typical for people from Middle East, France, and Latin countries. Certain Latin Americans, however, show you respect by not having direct eye contact. That is why Latin Americans for example, avoid direct eye contact when conversing with their supervisor (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 57).

Haptics: it is the study of touch (Kumar & Kalyana, 2009, p. 44-45). Touch is one of the earliest forms of non-verbal communication we learn. As we mature, our culture teaches us what types of touch are appropriate and the proper space expectations in various situations. Cultures that believe in restraining their emotions are less likely to touch than cultures that encourage affection. Table 10 demonstrats common amount of contact in different cultures.

Table 10: Contact frequency in different cultures

High Contact Cultures	*Variable Contact Cultures*	*Low Contact Culture*
Arab world, Mediterranean, Latin Europe and Latin America	Central and Eastern Europe, North America, Australia	Most of Asia, UK and Northern Europe

Source: R.R.Gesteland, 2002, Cross-Cultural Business Behavior, p. 74

Sometimes men and men or women and women kiss each other when meeting in Eastern Europe, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Middle East and Latin America. The 'peck' is very popular across the world (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 62).

Proxemics: this is a science of spatial distance in social contexts (Kumar and Kalyana, 2009, p. 45) The amount of space one considers personal differs significantly from one culture to another. The number of centimeters or meters between people when they have a conversation changes dramatically from one culture to another (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 64). The cultural attitude toward space is reflected in our need for privacy. Therefore, you will find that people of cultures that value privacy also usually want more space between themselves and others with whom they are communicating (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 65). Edward Hall, a founder of proxemics established that we all carry our own zones around with us wherever we go (Boyes, 2005, p. 74).

People from different cultures have different "comfort zones", but depending on the situation we keep different distances between other people in space (Boyes, 2005, p. 75):
- *Intimate distance (0 cm- 45 cm)* is reserved for people who are happy to touch and to be touched.

- *Personal distance (45 cm- 125 cm)* is reserved for family members and close friends.
- *Social distance (125 cm-360 cm)* is an impersonal zone where touch is not possibile.
- *Public distance (more the 360 cm)* is a formal zone where social interaction is avoided.

Defined distances apply to people from Canada and U.S, that usually stand about 1.5 m apart during business conversation. However, this distance is uncomfortably close for people from Germany and Japan and uncomfortably far for Arabs and Latin Americans (Thill et al., 2002, p. 55). Cultures that reveal how they feel through touch and close proximity to the individuals with whom they are communicating often feel that people who are not effective in their communication are holding back information and not revealing everything, that they are tense rather than relaxed, and that they are not as trustworthy (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 64).

Olefactics: it explains about the effects of the odor (Kumar & Kalyana, 2009, p. 45). Smell is a part of non-verbal communication. People will react positively or negatively to other people based on the way they smell. A person smell remains in another person's memory long after he or she has left the room. We smell like we do because of hygiene, what we eat and the scents applied to our skin. Middle Easterners believe being able to smell a friend's breath is pleasing; this may not be acceptable in other cultures (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 61-62).

Facial Expressions: can reveal such emotions as anger, fear, happiness, sadness, disgust and surprise. The meanings of these universal facial expressions depend on the culture, the situation, and the context in which the emotions are used. Although all cultures have a way of indicating emotions through facial expressions, the same expressions do not have the same meaning in all cultures. In the Mediterranean and the Middle East cultures, we can see a man crying in the public, however, in the United States, white males would suppress such emotions, as would a Japanese man. One of the most used facial expressions is the smile. The meaning of the smile, though, varies with the culture. A smile can convey happiness or sadness (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 57-58).

Posture: our posture, whether standing, sitting, or walking, can convey such nonverbal messages as agreement/disagreement, confidence/lack of confidence, interest/disinterest, and high/low status. People who share the same point of view will often reveal this by assuming similar postures. Posture is associated with confidence or a lack of it. Posture can reveal, as well interest or disinterest in what another person is saying. Leaning towards the person shows interest; leaning back in a chair or turning away from the person when standing indicates disinterest. Status is also a consideration; people are more likely to face a person of higher status during a conversation that if the person were of a lower status. The seated posture of people of the United States is quite relaxed, US men cross their legs by placing the ankle on the knee. This posture can be seen offensive by Europeans, Asians and the Middle Easterners would also view this crossing of the legs as inappropriate. A correct posture is especially important in the Arab world. Crossing the legs would reveal the sole of the shoe and involve pointing the toe at someone. Because the foot is the lowest part of the body and considered unclean, these behaviors would be viewed as offensive (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 59-60).

Non-verbal leakage: a leakage occurs when people try to unsuccessfully control their non-verbal behavior and to conceal an attitude or information. Non-verbal leakage represents a person's actual feelings that lie beneath the social mask. Because people try harder to control facial expressions, and because facial expressions are easier to control, a lot of the non-verbal leakage occurs in the feet and legs as well as in the arms and hands. For example, people who are untruthful engage in another non-verbal behavior that may be obvious, people who lie, tend to avoid getting close to another person; they also tend to perspire, gulp, and play with a pencil or their glasses. Changes in pupil size as well as the changes in skin color are examples of physiological changes that are not within a person's conscious control (Wainwright, 1999, p. 157-158).

3.3.2 Chronemics

It deals with punctuality and time management (Kumar and Kalyana, 2009, p. 45). Perception and the concept of time vary widely from culture to culture. What is considered punctual may change from country to country. How time is used is culturally learned, including the concept of time itself, the compartmentalizing of time, and the perception of time. The word *manana,* used in Latin American countries, and the word *burka,* used in the Middle East, have a similar attitudinal meaning. The expression means that what can be done today will be done tomorrow (Axtell, 1998, p. 92). Do the people in a culture view the time as formal and task oriented, or do they look at time as an opportunity to spend time and develop an interpersonal relationship. Is the task driving the clock or the clock driving the task (Brislin & Eugene, 2003, p. 365). Although people in the United States believe the time of an appointment should be kept (task-oriented time), in another culture, it is acceptable to be hour ate because time is flexible (event time) (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 36). In some cultures superiors, make subordinates wait for their appointments to show the superior, importance and high rank. Power and dignity are shown by arriving late; this is a tactic used in the Middle Eastern countries. In such areas of the world as Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, time is not important. Being late for an appointment in these areas is normally not considered an offensive behavior (Ball & McCulloch, 2001, p. 276).

In some international situations, the name of a country will be inserted after the meeting time to indicate if one is to assume the task time or the event time. The example of this practice is "the meeting will be 9 A.M. Mexican time" for the event time or "the meeting will be at 9 A.M. U.S time" for the task oriented time. The task and event time concepts carry over to how much of the workday is given to company tasks and how much time is given to socializing. In the Unites States, the division is typically 80 percent task and 20 percent social. In Latin American countries, it is typically 50 percent task and 50 percent social. Using time properly is important to relationship development in many cultures (Brislin et al., 2003, p. 367-368).

In addition to the task/event component of time, we also have the monochronic/polychronic component of time that was already presented in cultural dimensions by Edward Hall. Anyhow, monochronic time involves the ability to do one thing at the time, and polychronic time involves

the ability to do multiple tasks simultaneously. Part of the view of time is whether we "work to live" or "live to work". Work time and personal time are separated from one another in monochronic culture, but not clearly separated in polychronic culture.

Other parts of time are the linear and non-linear aspects of language that involve thought patterns. The thought process indicates how people think and communicate. There is a beginning and an end in a predominantly communitarian culture that is object oriented. English is a linear language that looks at time as a continuum of present, past and future. Linear languages lead to the business practice of short-range planning. In nonlinear languages, everything is cyclical with repeating patterns, traditional oriented and subjective. People who speak non-linear languages like, for example, Japanese and Chinese, are people who tend to be more long-term in their business planning (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 37-39).

The last aspect of time worth mentioning is time-style dimension that involves how one plans and include an analytic time, or accounting for every minute of the day, to a holistic time, which is more spontaneous but looks at time in larger chunks. The Western orientation is more analytical in its time-planning orientations and creates small, exclusive appointments for 15- 30 min intervals. Eastern countries tend to be more holistic in time planning and look at broad, overlapping categories and have fewer but longer meetings (Cotte & Ratneshwar, 2001, p. 399).

3.3.3 Chromatics

This concept informs us about the color sense of a person. Color, or chromatics, can have both positive and negative connotations; it can also affect a person's emotions and mood. Each color represents something, good or bad, in each culture. Color choices are different in various countries depending on local sentiments (Kumar & Kalyana, 2009, p. 45). Blue, for example may have a positive connotation when used to represent the peace and tranquility associated with blue in the sky or the sea. On the other hand, blue may have a negative connotation when used to suggest sadness or depression. People say "I am blue" to express melancholia. White suggests purity and innocence; thus white has been used successfully in marketing soaps as well as bridal gowns. In countries like China, however, white is a funereal color. Colors may be associated, as well, with particular nationality or religion (Bosrock, 1997, p. 221).Yellow flowers, for example, are associated with infidelity in France and with death in Mexico. While lilies, used by people of Mexico to lift superstitious spells, are used in France for funerals (Samovar & Porter, 2004, p. 216).

3.3.4 Paralanguage

Paralanguage: a term related to non-verbal communication, refers to how something is said; it refers to the volume or rate of a person's speech that affects the meaning of the message. An increased volume of speech could mean the person is angry, whereas a lower volume indicates that a person is more sympathetic. Cultural differences in volume of speech are apparent when comparing the Middle Easterners and Germans to Japanese, for example. The Middle Easterners speak loudly because they associate volume with strength and sincerity; speaking softly would

convey the impression of weakness (Samovar & Porter, 2004, pp. 188-189). Cultural differences in rate of speech are apparent when listening to Italians and Arabs, which are much faster than speaking rates of U.S Americans. Another aspect of paralanguage is accents, as well. On the other hand, paralanguage provides useful information about a person's emotional state as well as information on a person's cultural, regional, and educational background. This information, when combined with spoken words, can provide inside information, understanding the intended meaning of a message (Martin &Chaney, 2006, p. 59).

Silence: is one non-verbal communication form that is interpreted very differently around the world. Silence allows time to think, express emotions, consider a response, or think about something other than the subject at hand. Silence, much like smell and touch, transcends verbal communication. People of the U.S are uncomfortable with silence. In other cultures particularly in Asia and Scandinavia, silence is considered an integral part of communication. The Japanese would consider someone who had no periods of silence as someone who is giving very little thought to what they are saying. Countries that are considered low-context cultures, such as the Unites States, are uncomfortable with silence. Low-context cultures consider silence as an indication that something is wrong. High-context cultures, such as Japan, are very comfortable with silence. To people in high-context cultures, silence is used to dissect what was said and to truly understand the other person's comments (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 62- 61).

3.3.5 First impression

Building a business relationship has a lot to do with the first impression we make. That first impression could be our use of language (ours or theirs), how we greet people in another country, how we make introductions, how we shake hands, how we exchange business cards, or our knowledge of how a business operates in other country (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 23).

Greeting behaviors: customary greetings vary from culture to culture, but they are very important for building relationship in all cultures. Generally, it is a good idea to stay with the formal Mr. Young and Mrs. Connor until you are invited to use their first name. If someone has a title, it is proper to use the title, such as President Turk or Dr. Nemec (Axtell, 1998, p. 30).

Office customs: the times people work, take breaks, and take lunch vary around the world. In Columbia and Brazil, office hours are 8 A.M to 6 P.M Monday to Friday with a noon to 2 P.M lunch time. Because "time is money" in the United States, breaks and lunches tend to be on the side (Bosrock, 1997, p. 221).

Making introductions: because the first impression is very difficult to change, it is wise to understand how to make introduction properly when you meet people from another country for the first time. One universal behavior is that both men and women stand when they are being introduced to each other. Because women do not shake hands of man in all cultures, women should extend their hands first to indicate it is all right to shake hands. They are important procedural differences between cultures in the use of titles and first or last names when making

an introduction (Martin & Chaney, 2006, pp. 27-28). In Latin America, titles are used when introducing people because they indicate the person's professional or educational level. Latin Americans add their mother's maiden name to their surname, such as Maria Gomez Sanchez. When addressing Maria, you should say Senorita Gomez (Devine et al., 2000, p. 82).

Handshake customs: introductions are accompanied by a handshake, an embrace, air kiss, real kiss or a bow, depending on the culture. Hugging or embracing when being introduced is considered inappropriate in business situations in the United States, but it is common in many Latin American countries, the Middle Eastern countries, some African counties, and parts of Europe. The bow, common in China and Japan, is uncommon in many other countries. The handshake is acceptable in many parts of the world; only in some Far Eastern countries they use the bow instead of the handshake as their greeting. Handshake between the genders, however, has different customs around the world. Like the duration, numbers of pumps, and vigorousness of the handshake can also be different. The US handshake is moderately firm in comparison with light, quick grasp of the French; the soft or gentle grasp of the British; the Latin American moderate and frequent grasp; and the firm grasp of the Germans. Another form of greeting used in place or with the handshake is a kiss or a hug. Although a kiss or a hug is generally not appropriate as a greeting in the United States, in some countries it is customary. Middle Eastern men will shake hand and kiss on both cheeks as they hug. Scandinavians prefer to have no body contact with strangers and do not kiss or hug. Latin Americans, the Mediterranean people, and many African embrace often accompanying the embrace with a slap on the back (Samovar & Porter, 2004, p. 216). Latin American women who are close friends often hug or kiss each other as a part of their greeting. As we can see, greetings vary around the world. Asians, Northern Europeans, and most Canadians and US people are uncomfortable with touching and hugging (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 29).

Exchanging business cards: the importance of the business card exchange should never be underestimated. An exchange of business cards is an expected part of business interdictions in most countries of the world. Although it is permissible in the United States to glance at a business card just received and placed it in a pocket, this practice is not acceptable around the world. In fact, such abruptness is seen as rude by many other around the world. In countries like Japan, the examination of the business card is carried out with deliberateness (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 30). In the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and African countries we should use only right hand to present and take a business card, as the left hand is reserved for taking care of body functions (Axtell, 1998, p. 8). In many countries, the title has to do with the reporting level and importance of the person within the company. In Latin American countries, business titles are extremely important on business cards (Hariss et al., 2004, p. 335).

3.3.6 Socializing

Socializing is how we interact with the world or the cultures around us. Although we learn these skills in our own culture from the time we are born, when we switch cultures, what has become automatic in our home culture may no longer work socially in intercultural situations. As we

assimilate into a culture, we also learn how to properly socialize within that culture (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 35).

Friendships: what is considered friendship has a great deal of variation around the world. To U.S businesspeople, a personal relationship can be separated from business; a friendship is formed quickly and dissolved quickly. Many other cultures, such as China and Latin America, relationship are viewed as lifetime commitment (Pitta et al., 1999, p. 248). We must very quickly learn where relationships develop, such at meetings of professional societies, clubs, churches, and so forth. People who are extrovert tend to form more social ties with people in the new culture than do people who are not extroverts (Jonson et al., 2002, p. 4). Unfortunately, what one has learned in his or her native culture is probably not going to work in a new culture, as these settings change from culture to culture (Fontaine, 1997, p. 640). The smile is one of the most universal signs of friendship and will help you build relationships almost anywhere in the world (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 36).

Giving gifts: practices and seasons vary around the world. In religious oriented countries, gift giving is done during religious celebrations; in nonreligious countries, specific times of the year are devoted to gift giving (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 40-42). In many parts of the world, such as Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South Korea, gifts are not opened in front of the giver. In many countries, such as Mexico, it is appropriate to open the gift when it is presented. The Middle East countries, you present the gift in front of others to show that is not a bribe. Although flowers make an appropriate gift, there are many cultural taboos related to color, variety, and numbers. In Brazil, purple flowers are associated with a death by the lower class. To Mexicans, yellow, red, or white flowers have specific significance including romance and death, so flowers in these three colors should be avoided as gifts (Bosrock, 1997, p. 213). In Latin American countries, it is advisable to present gifts at the conclusion of contract negotiations. But, avoid giving knife, as it is interpreted as waiting to end a relationship and is associated with tears in South American countries (Axtell, 1998, p. 117).

Building relationship: begins with communication. When you add different cultural orientations, communication becomes more difficult. Some truisms of communication are that communication cannot be avoided, what is communicated may or may not be understood, communication is irreversible, communication occurs in a context, and communication is dynamic. Most importantly, communication is the basis for building communication (Harris et al., 2004, p. 41). Anyhow, when communicating across cultures it is important to remember always to adapt to a host country. When you sign a contract in Latin American cultures, you do not signal an end to a sale or negotiations but a continuation of a relationship with obligations and duties in the future. Your word is more important than any document you may sign (Schuster, 1999, p. 67).

4 COUNTRY ANALYSES

When studying intercultural communication in Latin America it seemed relevant to further explore the biggest countries in Latin America, based on population and geographical size of the countries. That is why I have chosen Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.

4.1 Argentina

Introduction: The Republic of Argentina is a democracy now, but has had a long history of military power. As the second largest country in South America, Argentina is bordered by Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Chile (Mandel el at., 2001, p. 7). Argentina is, above all, a land of immigrants and ethnic diversity, although like much of the rest of Latin America, the Argentineans speak with European rather the Indian accent (Whittle, 1998, p. 170). Argentina distinguishes itself from many other countries in Latin America by its substantial middle class. The country leads the region in social spending, has a literacy rate of 96 percent, and boasts the highest GDP per capita income US$ 14,200 (2008 est.) in the region (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 20). The Argentineans believe the physical location of their country in South America is merely a geographical accident of fate. Buenos Aires is commonly known as the Paris of South America and its inhabitants are described as Spaniards who talk like Italians, dress like Frenchmen, and think they are British. As such, the Argentineans, particularly those from the capital city, believe they are the most educated, sophisticated, and cultured people around (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 23). Regionalism remains strong in Argentina due to immigration patterns. Northern Argentina is, for example, "more like Bolivia," (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 29). However, one third of population of Argentina lives in Buenos Aires (Whittle, 1998, p. 171).

Demographics: Argentina has a population of 40,913,584 (July 2009 est.) and is by far the most European country in Latin America, with 97 percent of the population of Spanish, Italian, British, and German ethnic origin (Olivas-Lujan et al., 2009, p. 229). Indians, mestizos (people of mixed Indian and Spanish ancestry), and blacks together make up the remaining 3 percent (Mandel el at., 2001, p. 7).

Language and religion: Spanish is the official language, although it is heavily influenced by Italian and unlike Spanish spoken anywhere else in Latin America (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 3). Many Argentineans, particularly in Buenos Aires, speak English as well as French and Italian or other languages. Near the southern end of the Andes range, one can hear German, and at the southern coast, Welsh, by settlers who traveled to Argentina to preserve their language. As one moves into the provinces, European languages become less commonly heard (Mandel et al., 2001. p. 29). Church and state are officially separate, but about 90 percent of the population considers itself Roman Catholic. Jews and Protestants account for 2 percent each. Although Jews make up just 1 percent of the population, the country's 350,000-strong community is the largest in Latin America and the fourth largest in the world. Many Jews hold high government positions (Whittle, 1998, p. 172).

Cultural facts: In general, Argentina has strong European cultural influence; however, at the same time they adhere to the conventions and sentimentality of Latin America (Whittle, 1998, p. 169). While an increasingly interconnected world holds a visible impact on Argentina's once closed economy, family remains the pillar of society and still demands the highest loyalty. The Argentineans are protective of their children, respectful to their parents. Human Development report stated that Argentinian women reached a labor force participation rate of 43%. Argentina is one of the few countries to have had two women as Presidents in its history, but equality is still far from achieved. Althoug women attend school at a greater rate than men, on the average, women are paid 75 percent of men's pay for equivalent work. Professional women in Argentina have families and consider their family as more important than work, as do most Latin American women. Argentinean working women accept domestic labour as their duty, "It does not matter how successful an Argentinean woman is, her family will be waiting for homemade food upon returning home". As is true for most Latino cultures, Argentina prominently exhibits machismo or excessive masculinity (Olivas-Lujan et al., 2009, p. 231). All major decisions are first discussed within the family. Friendship is almost as dear as family, and the Argentineans consider disappointing a friend as bad as letting down one's own mother (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 17). Personal relations mean everything to an Argentinean (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 44). The Argentineans tend to be creatures of habits. The Argentineans believe in being open, frank and direct, but also take pride in being tactful and diplomatic (Whittle, 1998, p. 171). Time is not something to be hurried or rigidly compartmentalized in Argentina. Rather, it is to be enjoyed. Tomorrow brings another day and, as a result, things will take longer than foreigners expect. Typical stereotypes are that the Argentineans are rude, vain, and superficial. The Argentineans, particularly (esp: Porteños) people who live in Buenos Aires), have managed to garner the general disdain of most Latin American countries due to their often superior behavior. According to the Argentineans, however, their Latin neighbors are merely jealous (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 25). The Argentineans list organized crime and government corruption as their main concern, following unemployment. Beyond that, some 75 percent of the Argentineans believe high-level government officials are "very corrupted" (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 22). According to the European consultancy, a CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index) Score relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people and country analysts and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt). Argentina ranks 2.8 (Transparency International, 2009) The Hofstede analysis for Argentina is similar to its Latin American neighbors. Uncertainty avoidance ranks highest of 86 which indicates a high concern for rules, regulations, controls and issues with career security - typically, a society that does not readily accept change and is risk adverse. Individualism ranks lowest which signifies a society of a more collectivist nature and strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group.

Business etiquette and customs: The Argentineans combine a unique mixture of European efficiency and Latin American flexibility in their business style. Argentine business does not conform to the stereotypical Latin (esp: manana) tomorrow attitude (Whittle, 1998, p 173). Most businesspeople arrive at their offices between 9:30 A.M. and 10 A.M. Monday through Friday, and often stay as late as 8 P.M. While schedules are getting tighter in Buenos Aires, many take a two-hour lunch break between 1 and 3 P.M. (Mandel, 2001, p. 9). Argentines prefer to meet

face-to-face and they prefer personalized style of doing business. The Argentineans feel the need to assess your character, taste in clothes, and dependability, which proves difficult over the phone. Prior appointments are necessary. Argentinean executives may put in a very long day, often lasting until 10:00 P.M. An 8:00 P.M. business meeting is not unusual. (Mandel, 2001, p. 53). Visitors are expected to be punctual. However, do not be surprised if your Argentine counterpart is late or even cancels a first meeting. In general, the more important the person, the more likely it is that he or she will keep you waiting (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 5). While some business people apologize profusely for keeping the visitor waiting, some of them may make no excuse at all. It is always wise to confirm a meeting time a few hours before arriving as businesspeople often cancel meetings or reschedule without notice. Once in the meeting, it is very likely to experience several interruptions (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 50). The pace of business in Argentina is slower than in the United States. The Argentineans adhere to the traditional Latin American tenet that one works to live rather than lives to work, although they are intensely competitive and profit driven (Whittle, 1998, p. 174). A meeting that is going well could last much longer than intended, even if it means postponing the next engagement. To establish a personal bond, which is advised in any business relationship, it is polite to ask about your colleague's family. The Argentineans are curious about the personal background of any newcomer as well as their impressions of Argentina and why he or she has chosen to do business in the country. They are impressed with foreigners who have taken an interest in the local culture and history (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 67). Personal relationships are important and must be developed before business is done. The Argentineans often need several meetings and extensive discussion to make deals. During business meetings, it is advisable to sustain a relaxed manner, maintain eye contact and restrict the use of gestures. Hard sell approach usually does not go far. Certain amount of small talk before getting down to business is very common. Decisions are made at the top. That is way it is preferable to arrange meeting with high-level personnel. Argentina is characterized by bureaucratic red tape. It is very common even in major negotiations to have a series of intermediaries in Argentina. These are people that are necessary to move things along because social contacts, especially with government officials, are important for business (Perez-Floriano et al., 2007, p. 409).

Business socializing: Being social is an essential part of what it is to be an Argentine. A separate time slot does not need to be set aside for the Argentineans to kick back and relax. The Argentineans are night people. One will find more people on the streets at 3 A.M. than at 3 P.M. (Mandel et al, 2001, p. 85). One may almost consider dining out as a social mandate in Argentina, and lunch proves a popular venue for getting to know potential business partners. (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 82) Many maintain that the best business deals are made in front of a table full of good food and good friends (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 17). As such, one should consider lunch as an important way of establishing a network of contacts and developing personal relations. The Argentineans do not usually discuss actual business during a meal. When you are invited out, your host will be paying, so do not order imported liquors unless your host does so first. If doing business in Argentina, foreigners will rarely be invited to the Argentineans' home for a meal (Whittle, 1998, p. 178). Lunch dates begin on time, but guests should arrive 20 to 30 minutes late for business dinners or cocktails (Mandel et al., 2001 p. 51). Tender beef and

red wine are virtual national symbols. Avoid pouring wine, if possible. There are several complex taboos about wine pouring, which foreigners can unknowingly violate. Long meals and conversation are the norm. Good conversation topics: soccer, history, culture, home and children, opera. Bad conversation topics: the Peron years, religion, Falkland Islands conflict. Soccer, without a doubt, remains the number one passion of all the Argentineans.

Greeting: The Argentineans are generally quite warm and even effusive in their greetings (Whittle, 1998, p. 177). First impressions count in Argentina. Thus, one should be aware that an Argentinean begins by physically sizing up a foreigner. So you have to be well prepared when meeting someone for the very first time. The Argentineans recognize that a foreigner may not be used to being greeted with a kiss on the cheek and will offer to shake your hand. But once you've made the rounds they will welcome you into the fold with a kiss— although it may happen more quickly with women than with men or if they are good friends, will also exchange a pat on the back or a hug (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 64). Backing away would be considered impolite. The Argentineans widely use academic and professional titles. "its nobility made in Argentina," says one businessman, and it is an insult not to use them (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 66). The business card exchange unlike other countries such as Japan, the Argentineans do not place great worth on exchanging business cards. (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 66).

Body language: In keeping with their Italian inclinations, the Argentineans rely heavily on body language to communicate. Facial expressions and physical gestures go far to achieve a unique dramatic effect. The Argentineans' body language often expresses their mood or affection toward someone or something. "With gestures you don't need to say anything," notes one Argentinean (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 77). Due to the Argentineans' affectionate nature, personal space is reduced from what some Westerners and Asians are used to. In conversation it is perfectly normal if an Argentine will repeatedly touch the other person on the arm or pat on the shoulder, it is a sign of friendship (Morrison, 2006, p. 4). Eye contact is a statement of assurance and confidence. Refusing to meet someone's eye during a business meeting indicates you may not be trustworthy. That is why maintaining eye contact is very important (Morrison, 2006, p. 5). Compared to some Western and Asian countries, the sound level of conversation in bars or restaurants is much higher. Posture counts, standing straight, however, and keeping hands out of the pockets are marks of good manners (Mandel et al., 2001, pp 69-70). Whistling or hissing through one's teeth to get someone's attention is common. Pointing is also impolite. The Gaelic shoulder shrug alone means "I do not care." A hand raised to the cheek, palm open, with shoulders up, means "I do not know." Standing with the hands on the hips suggests anger or a challenge. Traditional OK sign is considered very rude and offensive gesture (Whittle, 1998, p. 178). Eating in the street or on public transportation is considered rude.

Business gifts: Exchanging gifts and favors is common business practice in Argentina and is a good way of getting the things done (Whittle, 1998, p. 177). Gifts to be avoided include personal items such as ties and shirts, leather, and knives. Giving knives; they symbolize the severing of a friendship. High taxes on imported liquor make this a highly appreciated gift; the most popular are scotch and French champagne. If the visitor is entertained in the Argentine home, he/she

should bring a gift of flowers, imported chocolates, or whiskey. Bird-of-paradise flowers are highly prized (Morrison, 2006, p. 6).

Appearance: Dress is very important for making a good impression in Argentina; your entire wardrobe will be scrutinized. The Argentineans are said to evaluate someone's attire starting with quality of their shoes (Whittle, 1998, p. 177). While Argentines are more in touch with European clothing styles than many Latin Americans, they tend toward conservative business attire (Morrison, 2006, p. 8). Businessmen tend to wear dark suits, silk socks, handkerchiefs, and are often avid tie collectors. They consider cuff links particularly elegant and commonly wear ascots. Compared to their North American counterparts, businesswomen might wear more revealing clothes and appear perfectly coiffed at all times (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 75).

Negotiations: The Argentineans see themselves as very sophisticated and worldly negotiators. Justifiably or not, they believe they have few rivals when it comes to negotiating inventiveness (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 58). Concessions will not come quickly or easily. Although pointed out before, good relationship with your Argentinean counterpart is extremely important and it will help a great deal to shorten the negotiation process. Contracts are lengthy and detailed. A contract is not final until all of its elements are signed. Until an entire contract is signed, each portion is subject to renegotiation. Argentines are becoming detail oriented and will finalize an agreement only after it has been carefully scrutinized (Whittle, 1998, p. 177). Argentina is a highly bureaucratic and litigious country, one reason the pace of negotiations is usually slower (Morrison, 2006, p. 9). An Argentinean contact is essential to wading through government bureaucracy. Argentina is a high context culture. That is why it is not surprising that handshake and a verbal agreement don't go very far in Argentina. An agreement can change significantly before a final contract is signed. Seasoned negotiators will recommend signing a written understanding at each stage of an agreement until you reach a complete contract (Mandel et al., 2001, p. 59). Personal relationships are far more important than corporate ones. Changing representatives may stop a negotiation process. Compared to other parts of South America, the Argentineans are more serious and formal. Calling someone "not serious" is one of the most damning accusations an Argentinean can make (Morrison, 2006, p. 7).

4.2 Brazil

Introduction: Brazil is the largest country in South America, occupying 47 percent of the South American territorial area (Olivas-Lujan et al., 2009, p. 231). Brazil borders the Atlantic Ocean and shares common boundaries with every country on the continent except Chile and Ecuador. It's also the fifth-largest country in the world. Brazil is a single land mass, organized into 26 states and the federal district (Herrington & Szerlip, 2001, p. 7) with a $10,200 (2008 est.) GDP - per capita. Despite massive economic problems, Brazil is often regarded as a potentially rich country with a strong industrial sector, large agricultural production, and rich natural resources. The underground economy is thriving and Brazil's byzantine tax system allegedly encourages it (Herrington & Szerlip, 2001, p. 70). Furthermore, it is impossible to talk about Brazil without mentioning social exclusion. It has the fourth worst Gini Index in the world, in a country where

expensive cars are found side-by-side with carriages (Da Silveira et al., 2007, p. 151). Many outsiders harbor a romantic view of Brazil as a land of music, soccer, sex and swaying coconut palms, and while those images apply, it's also true that the country is home to breathtaking urban squalor and violence (Herrington & Szerlip, 2001, p. 12).

Demographics: Brazil has a population of 198,739,269 (2009 est.) and over 90 percent of the people live on 10 percent of the land. Brazil's ethnic composition is 55 percent European descent (primarily Portuguese), 38 percent a mixture of cultures (African, German, Japanese, Amerindian, and so forth), 6 percent African, and only 1 percent Amerindian. Brazil is home to the world's largest population of African descendents (Olivas-Lujan al., 2009, p. 231). Nearly 50 percent of the population is under twenty years of age.

Language and religion: Because of Portuguese colonization, the Brazilians speak Portuguese, instead of the majority of Latin American countries, where Spanish is the official language (Olivas-Lujan, 2009, p. 231). Less common languages include Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, English, and a large number of minor Amerindian languages. More than 200 million people speak Portuguese, making it the eighth most widely spoken language in the world (Herrington, 2001, p. 17). The Brazilians do not consider themselves Hispanic, and they resent being spoken to in Spanish (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 64). Only a minority of Brazilian business people speak fluent English (Gesteland, 2002, p. 216). There is no official religion; however the predominant religion is Roman Catholic 73.6%, Protestant 15.4%, Spiritualist 1.3%, Bantu/voodoo 0.3%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.2%, none 7.4% (2000 census). Brazil has the largest Catholic population of any country in the world (CIA factbook).

Cultural facts: In Brazil one's status depends more on social class, education and family background than on personal achievement (Gesteland, 2002, p. 217). Family values are alive and well in Brazil, although the definition of family is often somewhat looser than it is in other countries (Herrington, 2001, p. 19). Brazil is a huge country with an inequitable distribution of wealth. Crime, drugs and prostitution are reality of everyday life, especially in big cities. Brazilians aren't serious about time or commitments and tend to have a relaxed attitude about appointments and schedules. Because Brazilians are spontaneous, fun-loving people, they can appear to be somewhat frivolous to outsiders (Herrington et al., 2001, pp.28- 29). Brazilian men are brutal sexists. Human Development report stated that Brazilian women reached a labor force participation rate of 46%. This conception of feminine qualities led society to think that women should be prepared for the private world, particularly for raising children or taking care of husbands; not for employment outside the home (Godinho et al., 2005, p. 77). Corruption is self-perpetuating , spawned in huge government-owned monopolies and bloated federal agencies, then filtered down to the general populace (Herrington et al., 2001, p. 72). According to the European consultancy, a CPI Score relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people and country analysts and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt). Brazil ranks 3.7 (Transparency International, 2009) Brazil was identified as a country with a culture that had a tendency to establish relationships of dependency, or radical criticism, in relation to the power-bases; that is, a high level of power distance that indicates that

inequalities of power and wealth have been allowed to grow with the Brazilian society, with predominant attitudes that avoid uncertainty. Uncertainty avoidance ranks highest (UAI) is 76, which indicates a high concern for rules, regulations, controls and issues with career security. However in Brazil, a person who succeeds by circumventing rules is hero (Perez-Floriano et al., 2007, p. 410). Brazil is also clear about leaning towards long-term behavior. Brazil has respect for tradition and supports a strong work ethic where long term rewards are expected as a result of today's work. Besides these Hofstede dimensions, the Brazilian cultural pattern was also identified as being more collectivist than individualist. Although Brazil has a slightly higher Individualism (IDV) rank of 38 compared to the average Latin population score of 21. Furthermore, there was a slight predominance of characteristics that are typical of femininity. In short, the critical points of the Brazilian culture are formalism, flexibility, loyalty to people and paternalism (Da Silveira et al., 2007, p. 155-156).

Business etiquette and customs: The importance of establishing good personal relationships in business can't be overemphasized. And once they've been established, maintain frequent contact on both business and social levels. Most Brazilians are outgoing and friendly, and they prefer to work with people they know and trust (Herrington et al., 2001, p. 57). Anyone should be prepared to commit long term resources (both in time and money) toward establishing strong business relationships in Brazil. This is the key to business success. Since "who you are" is more important in Brazil than "what you do/or what you can do," great importance is given to assuring that the key players in the business venture have been identified and appraised before moving too far in the relationship (O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 2004, p. 617). Brazil is characterized by bureaucratic red tape. It is very common even in major negotiations to have a series of intermediaries and "despachantes" in Brazil. These are people that are necessary to move things along because social contacts, especially with government officials, are important for business (Perez-Floriano et al., 2007, p. 409). So anyone conducting business in Brazil should first look for this kind of contacts. Influential people with government ties will get things done a lot faster. The lack of punctuality is a fact of life in Brazil. This isn't a nation of clock watchers. Foreigners should accustom to waiting for your Brazilian counterpart and expect them to disregard deadlines. By no means is tardiness a sign of disrespect on a Brazilian's part; indeed, it reflects a perception of time as a flow of events, rather than as a segmented pie of minutes and hours. They believe that what someone is doing right now may be so important that the next item simply has to wait. You, of course, will always be punctual. It's expected (Herrington et al., 2001, p. 60). The Brazilians are not the world's promptest businesspeople when it comes to returning phone calls. Nothing is wrong with calling again and again, day after day or even several times a day, if the business at hand is urgent (Herrington et al, 2001, p. 55). Although impromptu calls at business or government offices are not advisable. Appointments should be made at least two weeks in advance. Never make an impromptu visit. Meetings should be scheduled from 10 a.m. to noon, and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Business meetings normally begin with casual 'chatting' first. (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 66). Frequent interruptions during business meeting are expected. This is not regarded as rude or improper behavior (Gesteland, 2002, p. 218). People are eager to please and reticent to say "no." Instead, they give an impression that the matter is under consideration (Herrington et al., 2001, p. 19). So you should not take anything they say literally.

Especially, if we take to the consideration that Brazil is a high context culture. Business hours are generally advertised as 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with a 90-minute lunch break, but decision makers usually begin work later in the morning and stay later in the evening (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 66). If meetings are arranged for 10 A.M. or 3 P.M., at its conclusion, everyone will go out to lunch or drinks or dinner together. If invited along, it's a good sign and it is common to spend at least two hours. Decisions should not be demanded on a proposal immediately. The time should be given the group (hours, days or weeks, depending on the situation) to consider and discuss it among themselves (Herrington et al., 2001, p. 65). To conclude, the Brazilians pay more attention to relationship building, tend to have a life-long dependency on and commitment to a social group, use time as a flexible resource, and consider a broad range of options and questions when exploring a potential business opportunity (O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 2004, p. 622).

Business socializing: The Brazilians are, for the most part, ready with a smile or a witty comment on the latest headlines. It's very easy to make friends there, although such casual friendships can often be superficial (Herrington et al., 2001, p. 19). If you are invited to a party, it will probably be given at a private club rather than at home. But it is also common for a Brazilian to invite you over to his house. It is expected to arrive at least fifteen minutes late. Brazilian dinners take place any time from 7 P.M. to 10 P.M. and it is not unheard-of for the meal to last until the early hours of the morning (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 67). Any kind of food should not be picked up with the hands. When dining with business counterparts, business topics are reserved for after the meal. Music and long, animated conversation are favorite Brazilian habits. When conversing, interruptions are viewed as enthusiasm. The Brazilians enjoy joking, informality, and friendships. Good conversation topics are soccer, family, places visited, Brazilian history as well as visitors home country. Bad conversation topics are Argentina, politics, poverty, religion, and the Rain Forest (Gesteland, 2002, p. 216-218).

Greeting: Greetings can be effusive, with extended handshakes common during the first encounter, progressing to embraces once a friendship has been established. Women often kiss each other on alternating cheeks: twice if they are married, three times if single. The third kiss is supposed to indicate "good luck" for finding a spouse (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 64). The Brazilians almost always go by their first names. While Brazilians are informal in conversation, they do like titles. (Herrington et al, 2001, p. 74- 75).

Body Language: Brazilian body language and hand gestures are so refined that they not only enhance spoken language, they sometimes even replace it. When arriving somewhere, and when departing, it is expected to shake hands with all present. The Brazilians communicate in extremely close proximity. Brazil is a high contact culture. It is normal for the Brazilians to lay their hand on the other person's arm to make a point. Refrain from backing away. The Brazilians maintain strong eye contact with the person they are conversing with (Gesteland, 2002, p. 217).Touching arms and elbows and backs is very common. It is widely recognized that Brazilian Portuguese is more of an art form than it is an efficient business communication device, especially in formal business settings. What is said and how it is delivered will vary greatly by person, and by situation (O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 2004, p. 617).

Business gifts: The Brazilians are great gift givers at Christmas, on birthdays, often for no reason at all. Giving a gift is not required at a first business meeting; instead buy at lunch or dinner. If you get to know your Brazilian contact well, on a second or third trip you might bring a person something you know he or she is interested in or that is unavailable in Brazil. A book, a specialty food item, will be appreciated (Herrington et al., 2001, p. 80). If invited to a Brazilian's home for dinner, it is appropriate to bring flowers or wine. Avoid giving anything black or purple, since these are colors of mourning. Avoid giving knives, which symbolize cutting off a relationship, or handkerchiefs, which connote grief. Violets are appropriate for giving (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 70).

Appearance: In the big cities, corporate people dress as corporate people do most everywhere - in business suits. Women have a bit more latitude; they willl wear casual dresses and go bare-legged in the summer. Despite the heat, shorts are taboo, except at the beach. Male visitors should note that proper business attire always includes long-sleeved shirts (Gesteland, 2002, p. 218). Both genders tend to follow European styling. Shoes should be kept in good repair. Brazil is an important footwear exporter; people tend to take shoes very seriously (Herrington et al., 2001, p. 81). Three-piece suits carry an "executive" connotation, whereas two-piece suits are associated with office workers. Conservative attire for women in business is very important. Nails should be manicured. Only young people wear jeans. Men should wear slacks and long-sleeved shirts for casual attire .The colors of the Brazilian flag are green and yellow; both sexes should avoid wearing this combination (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 70).

Negotiations: Brazilian business people are tough but elegant negotiators, who must be taken seriously (O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 2004, p. 617). During negotiations, it is customary to discuss all aspects of the contract simultaneously rather than sequentially. The Brazilian subtlety and perceived lack of clarity regarding business goals and issues can become quite frustrating for the American parties, many times derailing the business venture early in the negotiation process. On the other hand, the Brazilians find US aggressive business attitudes offensive (O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 2004, p. 617). If negotiating team changes, it may undermine the entire contract. Brazilians value the person they do business with more than the firm name. It is advisable have a local accountant and *notario* (similar to a lawyer) or lawyer for contract issues. The Brazilians may resent an outside legal presence. During negotiations direct confrontations should be avoided and hiding any frustrations is advisable, as well (Gesteland, 2002, p. 217). It is normal for a conversation to be highly animated, with many interruptions, many statements of "no" being interjected, and a great deal of physical contact (Morrison et al., 2006, p. 70). Foreigners should be patient when negotiating in Brazil. Brazilians view contracts as binding agreements. Women negotiators should be aware that they may encounter difficulties dealing with Brazilian male counterparts (Herrington et al., 2001, p. 69).

4.3 Mexico

Introduction: Mexico is seen as a poor "third world" country besieged by political corruption, low economic productivity and drug-related violence But, Mexico is the third largest exporter to

the United States, and its international trade products include oil exports, tourism, and the products of its many assembly plants (called *maquiladoras*). is and also member of NAFTA. Mexico's dependence on U.S. trade, capital, technology, and aid, with strings attached, is a national humiliation (Malat et al., 2001, pp. 19-21). A lot of the Latin American growth depends on Mexico (Gowan et al., 1996, p. 79). In terms of wealth and power, Mexico is one of the world's most polarized countries. Ten percent of the population owns 80 percent of the nation's wealth while over 40 percent of the population, live below the poverty line (Malat et al., 2001, p. 34). Mexican GDP- per capita is $14,200 (2008 est.) Social status is based on education, wealth, friends, and family name (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 105). Government surveys suggest that up to 40 percent of the work force may make their living through employment outside the tax system. If taken into account, this informal economy would add 25 to 40 percent to the GNP (Malat et al., 2001, p. 66). Mexico City is the world's most populous city; nearly one of every four Mexicans lives within its greater metropolitan area. The capital dominates the country's economic, political and cultural life (Malat et al., 2001, p. 11).

Demographics: Mexico has a population of 111,211,789 (July 2009 est.). The Mexican people are predominantly mestizo, a legacy of the "encounter" between the Spanish colonists and the Native Americans. Over eight of every ten Mexicans have some mixture of Spanish and indigenous blood; about ten percent of the population is indigenous, 9 percent white, and 1 percent other. Half of all Mexicans are under the age of 20. Most people live in urban areas on the broad central plateau (Malat et al., 2001, p. 11- 12).

Language and religion: Spanish is the official language of Mexico. Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world. Ninety-eight percent of all Mexicans speak Spanish. About six million have, as their mother tongue, one of over 50 indigenous languages and dialects (another 139 are believed lost); about 1.25 million speak these indigenous tongues exclusively (Malat et al., 2001, p. 14). The adult literacy rate is 92%. English is widely understood by educated people and in urban centers (Morrison, 2006, p. 313). There is no official religion, but the Catholic Church is a powerful force in Mexican society. Over 90 percent of the populace is Catholic, though 40 percent or fewer are regular churchgoers. Religious observance is strongest among the lower classes, women, the elderly, and in small towns. Protestants account for around 5 percent (Malat et al., 2001, p. 16).

Cultural facts: Mexico shows an important influence of indigenous heritage (Olivas-Lujan, 2009, p. 229). The Mexicans are warm and gracious. The family is the most important institution in Mexican society. Families are large in a prototypical home; the male family head is responsible for maintaining the family. The woman is in charge of child rearing, cooking, cleaning, hiring servants and allocating family funds (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 105). Human Development report stated that Mexican women reached a labor force participation rate of 37%, which is the lowest in Latin America (Olivas-Lujan et al., 2009, p. 230). Family members likely work together as well. According to government statistics, nearly 80 percent of the work force is employed in enterprises involving five or fewer employees. Most of these entities are family businesses. Family events, duties and problems often take precedence over business or other

outside matters (Malat et al., 2001, p. 16). Things may not get done as rapidly in Mexico as in the "developed world."Mexicans are often thought of as being more romantic and volatile than practical and hardworking. Looking at the statistics, Mexicans value hard work; they average 43 hours/week. But their tomorrow (esp *mañana*) attitude has caused people from other countries to question their dedication to work (Martin et al., 2006, p. 105). The Mexicans generally approach work as a necessary evil that provides the wherewithal to enjoy the more important things in life: family, friends and other earthly pleasures (Malat et al., 2001, p. 39). They never do anything today that can be put off until later date. Worker productivity is lower and delays can be maddening for non-Mexicans and the Mexicans alike (Malat et al., 2001, p. 25). The old Mexican saying is that "North Americans live to work, but Mexicans work to live". Becuase of everything just said Mexicans clearly belong to P-time or Polychronic culture. Nothing gets done in Mexico without bribes and payoffs. Corruption is rife in many aspects of Mexican life, from electoral fraud to diversion of funds by government officials, from payoffs for commercial concessions and contracts to mordidas ("bites") slipped to the police (Malat et al, 2001, p. 26). According to the European consultancy, Transparency International, a CPI Score relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people and country analysts and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt). Mexico ranks 3.5 (Transparency International, 2005). Drug smuggling in northern Mexico is very lucrative (Malat et al., 2001, p. 67). Machismo, the aggressive projection of maleness, remains prevalent, especially among lower socioeconomic groups (Malat et al., 2001, p. 27). Mexico is an underdeveloped land of peasants and poverty, tequila and mariachis, fiestas and siestas. This enduring stereotype is based, in part, on Hollywood movies (Malat et al, 2001, p. 24). The Mexicans generally see themselves as a people with strong moral and spiritual values, such as family unity, selflessness and generosity. While they lament being poorer materially than some other nationalities (particularly their northern neighbor), they value their spontaneity, humor, and knack for enjoying life. They take pride in having warm human relationships and in being welcoming to strangers (Malat et al., 2001, p. 18). The Mexicans reserve their most conflicting attitudes for their neighbor to the north. They view North Americans as cold, materialistic and overbearing; at the same time, they admire gringo democracy, prosperity and technological achievement. The "American way of life" makes ever deeper inroads into Mexican culture by way of mass media, consumer products and ongoing cross-cultural interaction (Malat et al., 2001, p. 19). The Mexicans take great pride in their country's heritage. Mexico's highest Hofstede Dimension is Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) (82), indicating the society's low level of tolerance for uncertainty. Mexico has a low Individualism (IDV) ranking (30), but is slightly higher than other Latin countries with an average 21. The score on this Dimension indicates the society is Collectivist. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member 'group', be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. Mexico has the second highest Masculinity (MAS) ranking in Latin America (69). This indicates the country experiences a higher degree of gender differentiation of roles. The male dominates a significant portion of the society and power structure. Another Dimension in which Mexico ranks higher than other Latin neighbors is Power Distance (PDI) with a rank of 81, compared to an average of 70. This is indicative of a high level of inequality of power and wealth within the society.

Business etiquette and customs In Mexico, relationships are very important and very highly personalized.If that is recognized and foreign business people have it as part of operating philosophy, they will get the return on their investment (Gowan et al., 1996, p. 79). In Mexico, personal relationship and mutually understood patron-client relationship substitute for the rule of law (Elahee et al., 2004, p. 402). The importance of personal relationships in business cannot be overemphasized. Who you know and who they know may count more than anything else. "Friendship and contacts," says an ex-U.S. consul who has lived and done business in Mexico for 40 years, "are the most valuable things in the mentality of the Mexicans." (Malat et al., 2001, p. 45). One must know a person before doing business with him or her, and the only way to know a person in Mexico is to know the family. Personal relationships are the key to business success (Morrison, 2006, p. 316). Being introduced by a third party is very helpful in Mexico. It is also necessary to build a relationship with them so that they know they can trust you (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 48). It is critical, especially for a high ranking meeting, to use a person who is known to the Mexican businessman or woman you are meeting. This is a "business family" connection, the person who will introduce a business man from abroad. This person is the bridge that builds the trust necessary to do business in Mexico. Mexican executives and managers devote a good part of each day to developing and maintaining business relationships, particularly when they're dealing with people they don't know. During first set of meetings with Mexican counterparts, it is expected to spend more time socializing than discussing substantive issues. It is anticipated that working out the details of an agreement will require several trips to Mexico (Malat et al., 2001, p. 47). They look at business relationship as a long term relationship (Martin et al, 2006, p. 48). Punctuality is not rigid. The best time for appointments is between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., with late afternoon a second choice (Morrison, 2006, p. 315). Local business people may be a half an hour to an hour late without causing offense. Visitors however should always be punctual (Gesteland, 2002, p. 221). A visitor may be kept waiting, however, if the host has not finished his last meeting. The Mexicans allow as much time as necessary to finish the current activity before moving on to the next activity. They rarely cut short a social conversation because of an impending obligation. The Mexicans are more likely to sacrifice a business opportunity than to lose a friend. And relationships are more important than the amount of time they take to develop. The Mexican culture is people oriented rather than task oriented (Martin et al, 2006, p. 48). It is known that when the Mexicans promise that a job will be ready by the time or date someone request, there is a good chance they say so primarily to please and not disappoint anyone (Malat et al, 2001, p. 54). Frequent interruptions during meetings are expected, phone calls as well as visitors dropping in without an appointment. These interruptions are not considered impolite. Women business visitors may not be treated with the same respect as male business visitors (Gesteland, 2002, p. 222). Nepotism is a fact of life (Malat et al, 2001, p. 36). Mexican businessmen like technocrats, bureaucrats and male family heads and have a great respect and need for authority. Communication between superiors and subordinates tends to be very strict (Malat et al, 2001, p. 37-38). The Mexicans are sensitive to the pace and tone used in conversation, it may destroy a relationship with caustic tone and behavior.

Business socializing: Many initial business contacts occur in restaurants and bars. These are relaxed events, more social than business-oriented, though spouses are not generally invited

(Malat et al., 2001, p. 56-57). Business lunches, rather than dinners are the traditional form of business entertaining and are usually prolonged affairs, beginning between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. and lasting three to four hours, with little time being devoted to actual business. Lunches are an essential part of business to establish a personal relationship. When it is a business lunch, the person in the group who is the oldest usually pays the bill. Tipping is appropriate (min 10%) for services provided. Working breakfasts are also popular, meeting at 8:00 or 8:30 at your hotel, and usually lasting two hours at the most. Punctuality, although admired, is not strictly adhered to in daily life. It is not expected for parties, dinner invitations, and so forth. Being thirty minutes late when invited to a party at a Mexican home; in Mexico City, one hour late is perfectly acceptable (Morrison & Conway, 2006, p. 313). Mexicans usually use the Continental eating style. Women should not invite a male counterpart for a business dinner unless other associates or spouses attend. Evening business meals are less common and usually connote a more personal contact. Breakfast and lunch are good opportunities to talk some business, while dinners should be reserved strictly for socializing (Gesteland, 2002, p. 222). Such events seldom begin before 9 P.M. and can sometimes last until the early hours of morning. If invited to a Mexican home, it is not expected to discuss business (Morrison, 2006, p. 318). Mexican men will graciously attempt to pay for a meal, even though you are hosting it. Both hands are kept above the table while dining. The traditional toast in Mexico is (*Salud)* (Martin et al, 2006, p. 124). Good topics for small talk: the places visited in Mexico, travel plans, Mexican culture, history, art, and soccer. Talking about family or other personal topics is also appropriate. Never to be discussed: politics, the Mexican-American War, poverty, and border violations (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 142).

Greeting: The usual greeting in Mexico is to shake hands using a moderate grasp and repeating the pumping action numerous times. People also shake hands when saying good bye. It is not unusual if a Mexican business associate greets or says good-bye with a hug (esp: abrazo) by grabbing the other persons arm or putting his arm around the shoulder and punctuating it with a couple of claps on the back; this is to be considered a compliment and a sign of acceptance trust. Shying away from such contact is insulting. This usually happens on the second or third meeting. When introduced to a woman, a man will bow slightly and will shake hands if the woman initiates it (Martin & Chaney., 2006, p. 33). Women often make cheek-to-cheek contact and sometimes kiss an established acquaintance of either sex on the cheek, even in a business setting. Non-Mexican businesspeople should accept and return such a greeting (Malat et al., 2001, p. 71). In a social event at someone's home or in a restaurant, it is appropriate to take the time to individually greet each person. Mexicans address a person by his or her last name, as first names are not used during initial encounters. Titles are important and should be included on business cards, as well. It is customary to directly speak to someone by only using his or her title only, without including the last name. Hispanics generally use two surnames. The first surname listed is from the father, and the second surname listed is from the mother. When speaking to someone use his or her father's surname (Morrison & Conway, 2006, p. 317). Business cards are exchanged at a first meeting; it should be kept in mind to include the Spanish translation on business cards indicated position with the company and persons university degrees. Deference is shown to someone whose age, social status, or position warrants it (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 33).

Body language: The Mexicans communicate expressively, both verbally and nonverbally (Gesteland, 2002, p. 223). Much interpersonal communication takes place below the surface. Mexico is without a doubt high context culture While words themselves are important, the implicit attitudes behind them are even more so (Malat et al, 2001, p. 72). The Mexicans use their hands to gesture and exhibit many different facial expressions when conversing. Conversations take place at a close physical distance. Stepping back may be regarded as unfriendly. Mexican men are warm and friendly, and make a lot of physical contact. They often touch shoulders or hold another's arm. To withdraw from this touch is considered insulting, as well (Morrison & Conway, 2006, p. 317). In Mexico the eyes are the windows of the soul. To break eye contact frequently and steady eye contact while conversing is advisable; constant eye contact is perceived as aggressive. This is a sign of respect and should not be taken as an affront. Direct eye contact is not used by the Native Mexicans who tend to use indirect eye contact. A good steady gaze suggests honesty, an averted gaze may indicate the opposite (Gesteland, 2002, p. 221). The Mexicans use thumbs up for approval, but thumbs down should be avoided because it is considered vulgar. Placing hands on the hips or in the pockets while standing and talking with someone would indicate aggressiveness and being impolite (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 70). The Mexicans catch another's attention in public with a "psst-psst" sound. This is not considered rude (Morrison & Conway, 2006, p. 317).

Business gifts: In Mexican business, gift giving plays a less critical role than in some other cultures. Although giving gifts to executives in a business context is not required, small items with a company logo (for an initial visit) are appreciated. Secretaries do expect and appreciate gifts. A businessman giving it to a female secretary should indicate the gift is from his wife. A gift given pre-maturely may be viewed as an inappropriate attempt to short-circuit the elaborate courtship customary among potential associates. On the other hand, once personal relationship is established, gifts can help reinforce it (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 48). Expensive items are fitting only for senior-level associates who have been instrumental to the success of a venture. Overdoing it may be taken as gauche or even insulting. Choosing an appropriate gift is important and could be one of the following items: a gold pen, art book, or imported items such as scotch, brandy, cognac, foreign wine, cigarettes, and cheeses are appropriate gifts, so long as they are presented as novelties and not as superior to Mexican products. Electronic gadgets, pen and pencil sets, and lighters with your company's logo on it are other options. Toys for counterpart's children are a welcome gesture (Malat et al, 2001, p. 52). Gifts are not required for a dinner guest, but will be appreciated. A bottle of hard liquor or wine, flowers, a plant, a cake, candy, pastries, coffee table art books, crafts or another unusual item from visitors country. Giving personal gifts to the associate's spouse may be misunderstood. If a visitor is given a gift and urged to open it in front of the giver, it shouldn't be tired, batter to be opened greedily (Malat et al, 2001, p. 52). When giving flowers: yellow-represent death, red-cast spells, and white-lift spells. Gifts made of silver should be avoided, silver is associated with trinkets sold to tourists in Mexico (Morrison, 2006, p. 316).

Appearance: Formality takes precedence over comfort, even in Mexico's tropical regions. Business attire is conservative; men were dark, conservative suits and ties (Malat et al, 2001. p. 78). Wardrobe should include suits that have classic lines and tailoring in gray or navy, and white or light blue shirts. A white shirt is more formal and should be worn when the formality of the meeting dictates. Polished and well maintained shoes are very important. Expensive but understated accessories make a good impression. Men may wear pants and a light shirt for casual events. Plan a casual wardrobe using the classic colors, and you will be casual, yet polished. Woman wear skirted suits or dresses; femininity is important, so women doing business in Mexico should bring high heels and hosiery. Though secretaries often wear miniskirts, female executives do not. Pants are acceptable for women in informal situations. Mexican women pay a lot of attention to their hair and makeup, regardless of the occasion (Martin et al., 2006, p. 86). Women may wear a blouse with pants or a skirt as casual outfit. To be presented as professional and polished, even in an informal setting, it is appropriate to build casual wardrobe using classic shades of gray, blue, camel, white and ivory. Jeans are not considered inappropriate unless they are tailored and well pressed. Casual and revealing clothing for women and shorts for either sex are inappropriate except at resort area (Morrison & Conway, 2006, p. 320).

Negotiations: The negotiation process can be long and vigorous, and Mexicans tend to be hard bargainers, even more when dealing with a foreign opponent than when dealing with a Mexican opponent. Mexican negotiators commonly have a more positive perception of Spanish opponents than they have of opponents for example from the USA (Elahee et al., 2004, p. 402). Some extra padding should be considered when presenting the opening offer. They may also be optimistic with deadlines and schedules, so it's wise to mentally add a few days or weeks to a target date given. It is wise to always take time to think over any proposal the counterpart makes. Quick acceptance seems to make the Mexican side think they have conceded too much (Gesteland, 2002, p. 223).The business atmosphere is friendly, gracious, and easy-going. Mexicans highly value the individual dignity of a person, regardless of social standing or material wealth. Therefore, nobody should pull rank or publicly criticize anyone (Morrison & Conway, 2006, p. 321). Volkema (1998, p. 227) notes that non-verbal forms of communication are very important to negotiations in Mexico. Mexicans often communicate in an indirect way. During negotiations they may avoid a direct answer (Gesteland, 2002, p. 220-221). Although foreign negotiators may find that Mexican negotiators often make false promises or misrepresent their positions, there may be a cultural explanation behind this type of behavior. Generally, Mexican people try to please the foreigners. Saying "yes" and "no" does not necessarily mean yes and no. At times, people say "yes" just to make the other person feel good. "Yes" does not necessarily mean a commitment. And Mexican people will hardly say "no", especially in a face-to-face conversation (Elahee et al., 2004, p. 402). All of this is very common for high context culture, such as Mexico. Direct and cold approach to a business partner should be avoided (Gesteland, 2002, p. 220).The most effective way for a foreigner to negotiate effectively is to develop a network of personal relationships within the company or group of people with whom they are going to negotiate. Established personal relationships are an absolute requirement for successful business negotiations in Mexico (Elahee et al., 2004, p. 403).

5 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

In this chapter I will demonstrate some cultural facts that are somehow similar and on the other hand different across Latin American countries, based on Hofstede cultural dimensions. I will also compare:

Values of Hofstede's dimensions for 74 countries: the index values are ranked from 0 to about a 100. Large Power distance, individualist, strong uncertainty avoidance and masculinity are common for the counties that have index values closer to a 100. On the other hand, small power distance, collectivism, weak uncertainty avoidance and femininity are common for the countries that have index values closer to 0. Countries whit scores loser to a 100 are ranked higher, and countries scored closer to a 0 and ranked lower. In the table below are shown the scores and ranks of four Hosftede dimensions for Latin American countries, scores of fifth dimension, is offered only for Brazil. From Latin American countries we can find for Long-Term Orientation dimension just the value for Brazil. Brazil scored 65 points and was ranked 7 out of 39 countries from which scores and available. (Hofstede, 1976, p. 211).

Table 11: Scores and ranks of Hofstede's Dimensions for Latin American countries

COUNTRY	PDI		IDV		UAI		MAS	
	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK
Guatemala	95	3-4	6	74	101	3	37	61-62
Panama	95	3-4	11	72	86	17-22	44	46
Suriname	85	9	47	32	92	11-13	37	61-62
Mexico	81	10-11	30	46-48	82	26-27	69	8
Venezuela	81	10-11	12	71	76	31-32	73	5
Ecuador	78	15-16	8	73	67	42	63	17-18
Brazil	69	26	38	39-40	76	31-32	49	37
Colombia	67	30-31	13	70	80	29-30	64	14-16
Salvador	66	32-33	19	62	94	8	40	55-58
Peru	64	34-36	16	66	87	16	42	51-53
Chile	63	37-38	23	55	86	17-22	28	67
Uruguay	61	39-40	36	43	100	4	38	60
Argentina	49	52-53	46	33-35	86	17-22	56	28-29
Costa Rica	35	63-65	15	67	86	17-22	21	69

- **PDI**-Power distance index values for countries
- **IDV**- Individualism index values for countries
- **UAI**- Uncertainty avoidance index values for countries
- **MAS**- Masculinity index values for countries

Source: Hofstede, Cultures and Organizations; Software of the mind, 1976

As shown in the Table 11, relatively high level of power distance indicates that power and wealth have been distributed unequally in many Latin American countries. All Latin American countries are also virtually considered to be collectivist societies as compared to individualist

cultures. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member 'group', be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules. Uncertainty avoidance ranks high in most Latin American countries which indicates a high concern for rules, regulations, controls and issues with career security - typically, a society that does not readily accept change and is risk adverse. Masculinity is not really as consistent as other indexes between Latin American countries. Mexico and Venezuela are the only ones standing out with high scores. This indicates the country experiences a higher degree of gender differentiation of roles. The male dominates a significant portion of the society and power structure. In many of the Latin American countries, the population is predominantly Catholic. The combination of Catholicism and the cultural dimensions reinforce a philosophy predicated in the belief that there is an absolute 'Truth".

Table 12: Characteristics of Argentina, Brazil and Mexico

	Argentina	Brazil	Mexico
Population	40,013,548	198,739,269	111,211,789
Official Language	Spanish	Portuguese	Spanish
Religion	90% Roman Catholic	73% Roman Catholic, 15% protestant	Over 90% Roman Catholic
GDP-per capita	US$ 14,200 (2008)	US$ 10,200 (2008)	US$ 14,200 (2008)
Knowledge of English	Many	Only minority	Only high ranked executives
PDI	49- rank 52-53	69-rank 26	81- rank 10-11
IDV	46- rank 33-35	38-rank 39-40	30-rank 46-48
UAI	86- rank 17-22	76- rank 31-32	82- rank 26-27
MAS	56- rank 28-29	49- rank 37	69- rank 8
Women labor force participation rate	43%	46%	37%
Low/High Context	High context	High context	High context
P or M time	P time	P time	P time
Space	Lower territoriality	Lower territoriality	Lower territoriality
Punctuality	Sometimes late	Unpunctuality - fact of life	Punctuality is not rigid
Business relationship	Personalized style	Extremely personalized	Very personalized
Business socializing	Essential part of business	Important	Many initial contact start in social environment
Amount of contact	High contact	High contact	High contact
Emotional expressive	Very expressive	Very expressive	Very expressive
Greeting	Warm and even effusive	Effusive	Can be effusive
Business cards	Does not place great worth	Titles are very important on business card	Titles are extremely important on business card
Body language	Very expressive	Very expressive	Expressive
Business gifts	Common business practice	Great gift givers	Plays less critical role
Appearance	Very important quality of the shoes	Corporate people dress as anywhere	Very formal and conservative
Negotiators	Very sophisticated	Tough but elegant	Hard bargainers
Corruption	2.9	3.7	3.3

In the Table 12 a comparison of characteristics that somehow influence communication (except population) of Argentina, Brazil and Mexico is shown. If we start from the upper down, we can see that some country's facts, such as the size of population, the official language, the religion

and GDP-per capita are shown. After that we can see the knowledge of English that foreign business people can expect when conducting business in these countries. Moving forward to Hofstede dimensions, although all three countries are large power distance countries Mexico is standing out, as well as Brazil. Collectivism is common to all of them, but the most collectivistic from all of them is Argentina. Relatively high uncertainty avoidance is common to all three countries. Masculinity index form Mexico really stands out a lot in comparison to Brazil and even more Argentina. Women labor force participation in Mexico is only 37%, which gives evidence of high masculinity in this country. Not far behind is Argentina with women labor force participation, of 43%, although rising in the last years. Brazil has 46% of the women participating in labor force. When examining Hall's cultural factors, we can see great consistency for all three countries that are being explored. They all are high context, P-time (polychromic) and lower territory cultures. Although it is a common sense that Latin Americans are not punctual, this is not a case of Argentina. Obviously, it depends who you are meeting. But high ranked executives will not be too late, not even in Mexico. Because of the common practice of personalized type of doing business, it does not come as a surprise, extreme importance of business socializing in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Business people in these three countries like to touch each other on more the a few occasions, that is why they belong to high contact culture. They are very expressive in their emotions, as well and that can be easily noticed trough very expressive body language. Except Mexicans, especially on the north part of the country is tiny bit more reserved, although still expressive in their body language. That is way the greeting in these counties are very warm and sometimes even effusive, with loads of hugs and kisses. The culture of handing out business cards is different in Argentina in comparison to Brazil and Mexico. Argentines do not put great importance in handing out business cards. On the other hand in Brazil and Mexico business card are important, so counter parts know with whom they are dealing with. Although handing them out just to anyone, has become a security issue in the last years. Business gifts are very important in Brazil, appreciated in Argentina and not as important in Mexico. Appearance plays really a big role in business communication in Brazil, Mexico and especially in Argentina. Negotiating styles of Argentineans, Brazilians and Mexicans are somehow alike. However, Argentineans are known for its sophisticated approach, Brazilians for being tough but elegant and Mexican for being hard bargainers. Corruption that is very common in all Latin America is the last object worth mentioning. The most corrupted country is Argentina with score 2.9. Not far behind and closer together are Mexico with a score 3.3 and Brazil with a score of 3.7.

CONCLUSION

Companies around the world are doing business in a global context more and more today. The people, who are important in the world of business from the suppliers and clients to employees, are based in remote locations in foreign countries. The need for effective and clear intercultural communication is becoming vital in securing success in today's global workplace.

While writing this thesis, one of the goals was to explore the Latin American business customs. The other goal was to answer the following questions: 1) To what extent does different cultural background have an effect on behavior of business people around the world? 2) Is intercultural business communication universal? 3) Can we generalize the cultural knowledge gained in one Latin American country to other Latin American countries? While exploring cultural dimensions in the first chapter of the thesis, I have emphasized entities that affect behavior in different cultural environments. In the second chapter, I briefly evaluated the basics of the business communications, which I have further explored in the third chapter in cross-cultural context. In order to help me answer the third question above, I have focused on business behavior in Latin America and its most influential countries (Argentina, Brazil and Mexico) in the fourth chapter. In the fifth chapter, I have explored characteristics that are similar and different in these cultures.

After analyzing all the information I gathered in this thesis, I can conclude, that a cultural background has the biggest impact on how business people will behave in a given situation. Culture is who we are and it is impossible to ignore it. That is why intercultural communication is not universal and will most probably and hopefully never be. A gesture that might be appreciated in one part of the world can easily have negative consequences on the other. Therefore, sometimes we have to be very careful when doing something very common in our culture, not to insult our business partner that comes from another culture. For example, what could be considered a bribe in Slovenia, would be often thought of as a little more than a tip, an expeditious way of getting things done in Mexico. The answer to my third question is a bit less straight forwarded. It is a common belief that all people in Latin American countries speak Spanish, all countries were Spanish colonies, everyone is lazy, they do not care about the time, etc. Without a doubt, Latin American countries have more than a few things in common, but statements above are just a bit over simplified. Even though many of Latin American countries share similar past, they are quite different from each other. Brazil is the biggest country of Latin America where they do not even speak Spanish, and there are a number of Latin American countries where they speak English, French, or even Dutch. All other Latin American countries have evolved and developed its own identity through all these years, in spite of the fact that they were invaded and therefore affected by the Spanish culture.

Nowadays, most of the civilized world lives in intercultural environments. Learning to communicate with other cultures should not be an option; it should be a necessity. This is especially evident in the case of Slovenia, where we cannot ignore the fact that we live in a small country and we are therefore forced to collaborate with the world. The fact that we are small

should not be an obstacle; Slovenian companies should and need to look outside Slovenian borders for new opportunities. They should not be afraid of the unknown, but they should embrace it.

Since trust has been shown to be influenced by the nationality of the counterpart, it is important that foreign business people try to build some form of relationship with their counterparts, especially when the counterparts come from collectivist, strong uncertainty avoidance, large power distance, and high context countries such as many Latin American countries.

In the end, I would like to add, that over the path of writing this thesis and even more over the time I have spend living abroad I have learned a great deal. In the last 6 years I had a privilege to study, work and live in four different countries and learning cultural differences was not always easy. Although I have been embarrassed a number of times, I have learned that only by respecting and knowing the local culture, customs, habits and most of all the language, and trying to adapt to these facts will make a foreigner welcome in any country. It might be difficult to hold on to it or to put it on paper, but from my personal experience, I believe that this kind of knowledge cannot be gained just from reading books. However, being there and having your eyes open will do it. By understanding the unknown, we start to understand ourselves.

POVZETEK V SLOVENŠČINI

UVOD

Veda medkulturnega komuniciranja nikakor ni nov pojem. Ljudje iz različnih kultur so se srečevali že skozi celotno našo zgodovino: ob vojnah, verskih potovanjih in ob izmenjavi dobrot. Čeprav je zgodovina medkulturnega kontakta dolga, ni nikoli dosegla razsežnosti današnjega sveta. Danes imajo še najbolj izolirane skupine ljudi priložnost komunicirati z ljudmi z vsega sveta. Medkulturno komuniciranje je postalo realnost vsakodnevnega življenja za skoraj vsakega. Razlogov, da se je svet razvil v globalno vas, je več. Ob razvoju tehnologij nam je omogočeno konstantno prehajanje informacij čez meje. Komuniciranje je hitrejše in bolj dostopno kot kadarkoli prej. Tudi razvoj transporta omogoča čedalje več osebnih srečanj z ljudmi iz različnih kulturnih okolij. Ta razvoj je gotovo močno vplival na svetovno ekonomijo. Poslovni svet postaja čedalje bolj mednaroden in medsebojno povezan, zato mednarodna ekonomija postaja bolj in bolj neodvisna.

Zaradi omenjenih dejstev je namen moje diplomske naloge raziskati področje medkulturnega komuniciranja, še prav posebej v državah Latinske Amerike. Cilj mojega diplomskega dela pa je odgovoriti na naslednja vprašanja: 1) Do kakšne mere ima drugačno kulturno ozadje vpliv na obnašanje poslovnežev po svetu? 2) Ali je medkulturno komuniciranje univerzalno? 3) Ali lahko posplošimo kulturno znanje, ki je pridobljeno v eni latinskoameriški državi, na druge latinskoameriške države?

Na zastavljena vprašanja bom poskušal odgovoriti skozi vsebino diplomske naloge, ki je sestavljena iz 5 poglavij. Po uvodu sledi teoretični del, v katerem bom pojasnil teoretična ozadja za razumevanje kultur. V tem poglavju se bom osredotočil na antropologe, ki so znani zaradi raziskav na področju medkulturnih študij, kot so Geert Hofstede, Kluchohn and Strodbeck, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner in Edward Hall. Nekaj kritik na njihovo delo je tudi ponujenih v tem poglavju. V drugem poglavju bom definiral poslovno komuniciranje z pomočjo obrazložitve komunikacijskega modela, opisa elementov poslovnega komuniciranja in omembe stilov poslovnega komuniciranja. V tretjem poglavju bom predstavil medkulturno poslovno komuniciranje, še posebej verbalno in neverbalno komuniciranje med različnimi kulturami. V četrtem poglavju bom predstavil praktični del diplomske naloge. Analiziral bom tri najpomembnejše države v Latinski Ameriki: Argentino, Brazilijo in Mehiko. V petem poglavju bom razložil nekaj skupnih karakteristik latinskoameriških držav na podlagi Hofstedove raziskave kulturnih dimenzij. V nadaljevanju bom primerjal države, ki sem jih analiziral v četrtem poglavju, da bi videl, kje so si podobne in kje različne. Na koncu bom v zaključku predstavil povzetek dognanj in ugotovitev diplomske naloge.

1. TEORETIČNA OSNOVA ZA RAZUMEVANJE KULTURE

1.1 Hofstedove dimenzije

Hofstedove dimenzije so bile v glavnem izpeljane iz obširne organizacijsko-antropološke raziskave, opravljene ob koncu 70. in v začetku 80. let prejšnjega stoletja. Izpeljal je najbolj obširno študijo na področju medkulturnega komuniciranja z uporabo anketnih informacij 80.000 zaposlenih v podjetju IBM v 74 državah po vsem svetu. S pomočjo te raziskave je razjasnil 5 dimenzij kulture.

- Izognitev negotovosti *(UAI)*
- Moč razdalje *(PDI)*
- Individualizem - kolektivizem *(IDV)*
- Moškost/ženskost *(MAS)*
- Kratkoročna in dolgoročna orientacija *(LTO)*

1.2 Kluckhohnove in Strodtbeckove dimenzije

Obstaja metoda, ki hitro pomaga razumeti kulturne razlike. Metoda vrednostne orientacije (VOM-Value Orientation Method) je orodje, ki pomaga razbrati najpomembnejše razlike in vrednote med kulturami. Predlagala sta, da bi se dalo razlikovati kulture, kako se odzovejo na pet najbolj običajnih vprašanj, s katerimi se ubada vsaka kultura.

- Človeška narava: Ali so ljudje dobri ali zlobni?
- Odnos človek - narava: Kakšen je odnos človeka do narave?
- Občutek časa: Kaj je trenutna skrb človekovega življenja?
- Aktivnost: Ali ljudje poskušajo aktivno slediti svojim željam ali jih sprejemajo kot usodo?
- Socialni odnosi: Kakšen je odnos posameznika z drugimi?

1.3 Trompenaarovi in Hampden-Turnerjevi kulturni faktorji

Trompenaar in Hampden-Turner sta kot prejšnji raziskovalci naredila sistematski pregled kultur in se naslonila na Kluckhohnov in Strodtbeckov koncept. Tako sta povzela 7 dimenzij kulture.

- Univerzalizem proti partikularizmu
- Individualizem proti komunitarizmu
- Specifično proti razpršeno
- Čustveno proti nevtralno
- Uspeh proti obdolžitvi
- Posledica proti istočasnosti
- Interni proti zunanji

1.4 Hallovi kulturni faktorji

Edward T. Hall je antropolog, ki je svoja zgodnja odkritja naredil na ključnih kulturnih faktorjih. Še posebej je znan po svojih visoko in nizko kontekstnih kulturnih faktorjih in različnih konceptih časa.

- Visoko - nizko kontekstne kulture.
- Polikroničen - monokroničen čas
- Bolj - manj teritorialne kulture

Graf 1: Nizko in visoko kontekstne kulture
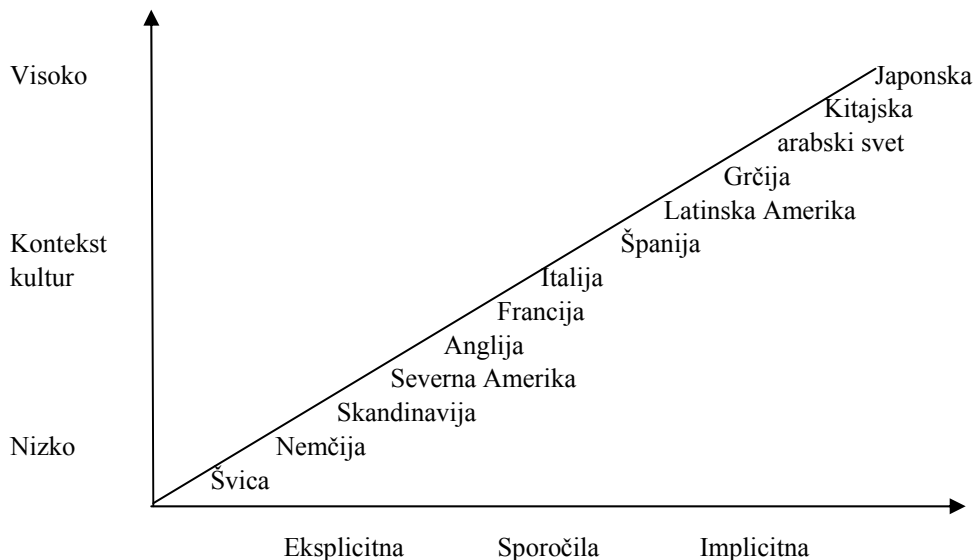
Vir: J.V Thill et al., Excellence in Business communication, 2002, str. 53.

V visoko kontekstnih kulturah je veliko elementov, ki pomagajo ljudem razumeti pravila. Ljudje se manj zanašajo na verbalno komunikacijo in bolj na kontekst neverbalnih dejanj. V nizko kontekstnih kulturah je zelo malo samoumevnih. Ljudje se bolj zanašajo na verbalno komuniciranje in manj na neverbalne okoliščine, ki določajo pomen. Kontekstualne razlike so očitne predvsem takrat, ko je razvidno, kako se kulture lotijo situacij, kot je pogajanje, odločanje in reševanje problemov. Monokroničen čas pomeni početi eno stvar hkrati. In monokronične kulture so večinoma tudi nizko kontekstne kulture. Zato so večinoma polikronične kulture tudi visoko kontekstne. Človeški odnosi se cenijo skozi čas in materialne stvari. So nekoliko manj zaskrbljeni opraviti delo v roku; vse se opravi, toda vse ob svojem času. Nekateri ljudje so bolj teritorialni kot drugi in z večjo zaskrbljenostjo za lastnino. Kulture, ki so visoko teritorialne, so tudi nizko kontekstne. Kulture, ki so nizko teritorialne, si manj lastijo prostor in meje so manj pomembne. Kulture, ki so nizko teritorialne, so tudi visoko kontekstne.

1.5 Kritike dimenzionalnega pristopa h kulturi

V postopkih preučevanja kulture kot v primerih Kluckhohn in Strodtbeck, Hofstede in Trompenaars in Hampden-Turner, ki ponujajo liste skupnih karakteristik na svetovni pogled, so

bile vrednote in lastnosti obnašanja kritizirane, da so preveč enostavne, statične in da jim manjkajo osnove za razločevanje, ali sta dve kulturi drugačni. Trompenaarsnovo in Hampden-Turnerjevo delo je bilo tudi kritizirano, saj naj bi na podlagi spremenljivk poskušala prikazati nadaljevanje prejšnjim raziskavam, ampak samo malo dela je dejansko posvečenega temu. Hosftedovo delo, čeprav zelo občudovano, je bilo primarno kritizirano zaradi dveh razlogov. Predvsem zato, ker naj bi bile izpuščene pomembne vrednote in da ni dovolj dinamično, saj je konec koncev naredil raziskavo le na enem profilu zaposlenih. Druge kritike so bile: kultura neke države je preveč kompleksna in razburkana, da bi jo lahko vpisali samo s temi dimenzijami kulture. Kadar preučujemo široke koncepte kulture, kot so individualizem in kolektivizem, ki so sprejeti kot kulturne razlike, je nejasno, zakaj se te razlike sploh pojavijo. Gotovo imajo te kritike nekakšno težo, ampak so kljub svoji omejenosti dimenzionalni pristopi generirali visoko vsoto empiričnih raziskav in priskrbeli za širok dvig zavedanja in razumevanja kulturnih razlik in njenih aplikacij za medkulturno komuniciranje.

2. DEFINIRANJE POSLOVNEGA KOMUNICIRANJA

Komuniciranje prihaja iz latinske besede *comunicare*, ki pomeni izjaviti, deliti ali narediti skupno. Seveda je mnogo definicij komuniciranja in veliko avtorjev ima svojo definicijo.

2.1 Komunikacijski model

Komuniciranje je definirano kot izmenjava pomena. Vsebuje pošiljanje in prejemanje informacij med pošiljateljem in prejemnikom. To se ne dogaja samo skozi uporabo besed, ampak tudi nebesednih znakov. Komunikacijski model je vizualno predstavljen spodaj.

Slika 1: Komunikacijski model
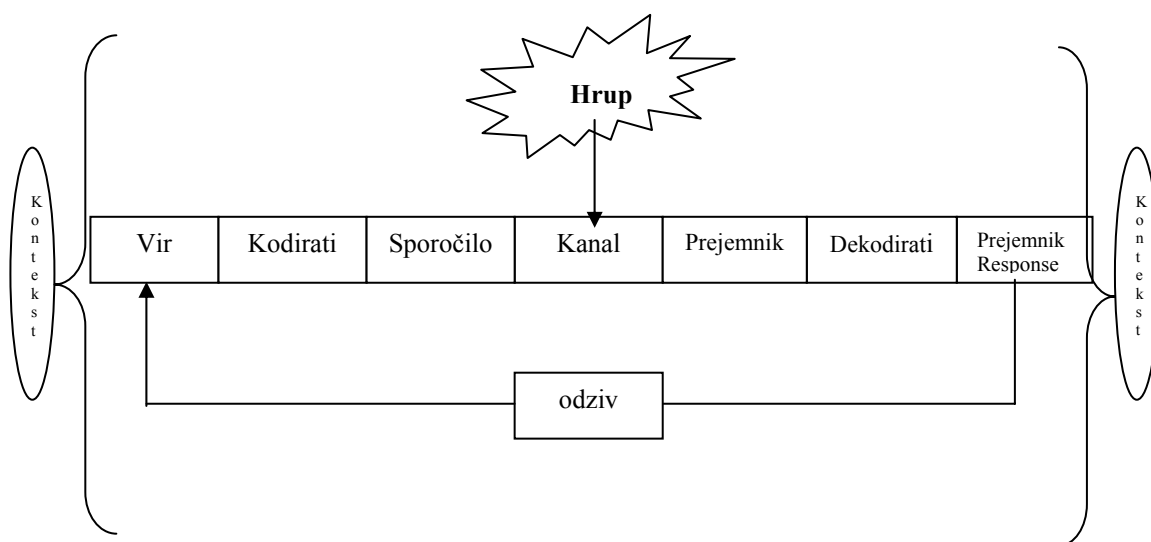
Vir:F. Jantd, Intercultural Communication; an Introduction, 1995, str. 28.
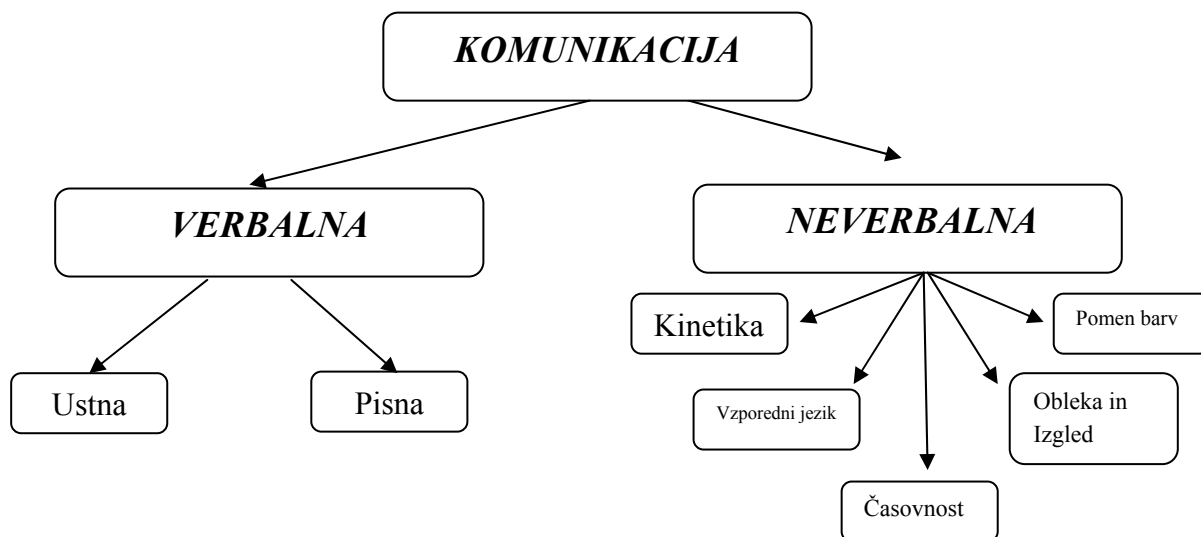
2.2 Poslovno komuniciranje

Obstaja veliko nekaj načinov komuniciranja. Najbolj pogosto uporabljena oblika je tako imenovana družbena komunikacija, ki nima v naprej določenih ciljev in vključuje lahko

pogovore. Po drugi strani pa poznamo poslovno komuniciranje, ki ima v naprej določene cilje, kot je na primer pogovor o cenah, pogojih plačila itd. Poslovno komuniciranje vključuje tudi pogovore v organizacijah, med organizacijami in med ljudmi z namenom opravljanja poslovne funkcije

2.3 Slog poslovnega komuniciranja

Koda, ki je uporabljena za nastanek sporočila, je sestavljena tako iz verbalne kot neverbalne komponente. Kot nakazuje slika spodaj, komunikacija ne vključuje samo besed, ampak tudi neverbalne faktorje, kot so: govorica telesa, očesni kontakt, dotik, telesna razdalja, vzporedni jezik, izgled, odnos do časa itd. Verbalna komunikacija pa ima pisno in ustno komponento. Besedne in ustne komunikacije se je možno priučiti, drugače pa je nebesedna komunikacija v večini primerov nenamerna in se je ne zavedamo.

Slika 2: Oblike poslovnega komuniciranja

3. MEDKULTURNO POSLOVNO KOMUNICIRANJE

Medkulturno komuniciranje je proces pošiljanja in sprejemanja sporočil med ljudmi različnih kulturnih ozadij, kar vodi k temu, da interpretirajo verbalne in neverbalne znake drugače. Kadar komuniciramo s pripadniki drugih kultur, kodiramo sporočila na podlagi domnev naše kulture. Naši sogovorniki pa bodo dekodiral sporočila na podlagi domnev njihove kulture, kar lahko pripelje do mnogih nesporazumov. Večja je razlika med kulturama, večja je možnost za nesporazum. Efektivno medkulturno komuniciranje je odvisno od spoznavanja načinov, kako se ljudje razlikujemo. Medkulturno komuniciranje je interdisciplinarno, saj vsebuje discipline, kot so: antropologija, zgodovina, psihologija, geografija, sociologija, lingvistika, znanost komuniciranja in poslovne študije.

3.1 Etnocentrizem, prejudici in stereotipi

Kadar se srečamo z medkulturnim komuniciranjem, je njegova uspešnost odvisna predvsem od ohranjanja odprtega mišljenja. Na žalost veliko ljudi pade pod vpliv etnocentrizma, kar pomeni,

da je prepričanje posameznika o svojem kulturnem ozadju, vrednotah, prepričanjih, verbalnih in neverbalnih kretnjah superiorno proti kateri koli drugi kulturi. Rasizem, seksizem, homofobija in tako dalje so vse tako imenovani prejudici. Prejudici so, kadar so posplošitve globoko zakoreninjene v skupinah ljudi, njihovi pripadniki pa ponavadi sodijo po preteklih izkušnjah. Generalne sodbe, ki jih sprejemamo o drugih, se imenujejo stereotipi. To je fiksna ideja ali slika, ki jo ima veliko ljudi o določenem tipu ljudi, stvareh, kulturi, ki pa niso nujno resnične.

3.2 Verbalna komunikacija

Pisna in ustna komunikacija je različna povsod po svetu, ker je del kulture. 97% mednarodnih korespondenc se pošlje v angleškem jeziku. Zato je angleščina najbolj uporabljen jezik (lingua franca) na vsem svetu. Znano dejstvo pa je, da v povprečnem poslovnem pogovoru pomen besed šteje le 7%, zvok (glas, ton, ritem govora …) predstavlja 38% in preostalih 55% spada pod kategorijo neverbalnega komuniciranja.

3.3 Neverbalna komunikacija

Uspešna medkulturna komunikacija ne zahteva od posameznika le razumevanja verbalnih sporočil, ampak tudi neverbalnih. Pravila neverbalnega komuniciranje so tudi kulturno pogojena. Kadar poslovneži iz različnih kultur komunicirajo, si tudi izmenjujejo elemente neverbalne komunikacije. Kretnje in druge neverbalne oblike komuniciranja močno pomagajo poslati in razumeti sporočila, kadar smo v interakciji z ljudmi iz drugačnih kultur. Prav zato je veliko neverbalnih kretenj kulturno pogojenih. Sporočila so lahko poslana skozi naslednje elemente neverbalnega komuniciranja:

- *Govorica telesa* – pod govorico telesa spadajo: telesne kretnje, očesni kontakt, dotik, prostor, vonj, obrazne poteze, drža, neverbalno uhajanje
- *Točnost in časovni management*
- *Pomen barv*
- *Vzporedni jezik* - pod vzporedni jezik spada tudi pomen tišine v komunikaciji
- *Prvi vtisi* - pod prve vtise, ki so zelo pomembni, spada pozdravljanje, pisarniški običaji, predstavitev, rokovanje in izmenjava vizitk
- *Socializiranje* – pod socializiranje spada prijateljstvo, darovanje in graditev odnosa

4. ANALIZA DRŽAV

Za raziskavo medkulturnega poslovnega komuniciranje v Latinski Ameriki se mi je zdelo najbolje raziskati največje in najbolj vplivne države Latinske Amerike. Zato sem si izbral Argentino, Brazilijo in Mehiko.

4.1 Argentina

Argentina je ena večjih držav Latinske Amerike, ki ima populacijo nekoliko več kot 40 milijonov in z BDP 14.200 ameriških dolarjev. Uradni jezik je španščina in približno 90%

prebivalstva je pripadnikov rimokatoliške cerkve, čeprav imajo maloštevilno, ampak vplivno judovsko skupnost. Argentina ima močen evropski vpliv, saj tukaj živi veliko evropskih potomcev. Družina je še vedno steber družbe in zahteva visoko lojalnost. Prijateljstvo je skoraj enako pomembno kot družina, zato osebni odnosi pomenijo vse v Argentini. Ljudje, ki bodo poslovali v Argentini, ne smejo nikoli pozabiti, da bo potrebno vložiti veliko truda in časa za vzpostavitev dobrih odnosov z argentinskim partnerjem. Argentinci pravijo, čas ni za hitenje, ampak za uživanje. Argentina ima velik problem s korupcijo, saj je ena najbolj skorumpiranih držav v latinski Ameriki. Argentinci združujejo mešanico evropske učinkovitosti in latinskoameriške fleksibilnosti v svojem poslovnem stilu. Argentinci cenijo oseben pristop k poslovanju in se radi srečujejo v živo zato, da lahko dobro ocenijo svojega partnerja. Obiskovalci morajo priti na sestanke točno, čeprav se bo tudi zgodilo, da bo vaš sogovornik pozen ali pa bo celo odpovedal prvi sestanek v zadnjem hipu. Proces poslovanja je počasnejši kot na primer v ZDA, saj Argentinci kot tradicionalni Latinski Američani delajo, da bi živeli, in ne živijo, da bi delali, čeprav so izredno tekmovalni in nagnjeni k profitu. Socializiranje s poslovnimi partnerji je bistveno v Argentini, kosilo ali večerja sta skoraj obvezna in zelo dobrodošla za spoznavanje potencialnih poslovnih partnerjev. Najboljši poslovni sporazumi so v Argentini sklenjeni za polno mizo dobrot in ne za pogajalsko mizo. Argentinski pozdravi so topli in prisrčni. Pri komuniciranju se močno zanašajo na govorico telesa. Osebni prostor je skrčen, na kar so navajeni mnogi zahodnjaki in azijati. V pogovoru je popolnoma normalno dotikanje, saj to je znak prijateljstva; tudi kontakt z očmi je zelo pomemben. Izmenjava poslovnih daril je običajna praksa v Argentini. Obleka je zelo pomembna za dajanje dobrega vtisa. Vaša garderoba bo temeljito pregledana, še posebej čevlji. Argentinci vidijo sebe kot zelo sofisticirane pogajalce in sprava ne bo prišla hitro in zlahka, čeprav bodo dobri osebni odnosi gotovo pripomogli pri krajšem pogajalskem procesu. Pogodbe so dolge in izčrpne ter niso končne, dokler niso vsi elementi podpisani. Argentina je visoko kontekstna kultura, zato stisk rok in verbalni dogovor ne pomenita veliko. Osebni odnosi so bistveno bolj pomembni kot korporacijski.

4.2 Brazilija

Brazilija je največja latinskoameriška država, tako geografsko kot po številu prebivalcev. Brazilija se pogosto omenja kot potencialno bogata država z močnim industrijskim sektorjem, visoko produkcijo v agroživilstvu in z veliko narodnega bogastva. Uradni jezik je portugalščina in imajo največje rimokatoliško prebivalstvo na svetu. Status posameznega Brazilca je veliko bolj odvisen od socialnega statusa, izobrazbe in družinskega ozadja kot pa osebnih uspehov. Brazilija je država z neenakomerno razporeditvijo bogastva in veliko kriminala. Velik problem imajo tudi s korupcijo. Brazilci so visoko kontekstna kultura, saj imajo precej sproščen odnos do časa in rokov. Pomembnosti vzpostavitve dobrega osebnega odnosa v poslu ne moremo preveč poudariti. Zato bo vsak, ki bo želel uspešno poslovati v Braziliji, moral nameniti veliko časa in virov vzpostavljanju močnih poslovnih vezi. Poznati pomembne ljudi je lahko odločujoč dejavnik poslovanja v Braziliji. Brazilci so večino časa pripravljeni na smeh in duhovitost. Glasba in dolgi animirani pogovori so najljubša brazilska navada, ki se ji moramo nekako prilagoditi. Brazilski pozdravi so zelo prisrčni z dolgimi rokovanji in kaj kmalu po vzpostavitvi odnosa sledijo tudi objemi. Skoraj vedno uporabljajo imena in so precej neformalni v pogovoru.

Zelo ekspresivna uporaba govorice telesa pri pogovoru ne le pomaga, ampak ga včasih celo nadomesti. Brazilci komunicirajo zelo blizu in se pogosto dotikajo sogovornika, saj so konec koncev visoko kontaktna kultura. Ni ravno vljudno, če bi se umaknili. Pomembno je tudi ohranjati očesni kontakt. Brazilci se zelo radi obdarujejo za vse možne priložnosti in to moramo upoštevati, kadar poslujemo v tej državi. Korporativni ljudje se oblačijo podobno kot drugod po svetu, le izgled obutve je izredno pomemben. Brazilski pogajalci so težki in elegantni v pogajanjih. Direktna konfrontacija je nezaželena, bolje je skriti frustracije v danem trenutku. Zato morajo biti tujci v pogajanjih z Brazilci potrpežljivi.

4.3 Mehika

Prebivalstvo Mehike šteje nekoliko več kot 110 milijonov in BDP je 14.200 dolarjev. Uradni jezik je španščina in imajo približno 90% katoliškega prebivalstva. Mehika je zelo močan trgovski partner ZDA in član NAFTA. V pogledu moči in bogastva je ena najbolj polariziranih držav na svetu, saj ima 10% populacije v lasti 80% vsega bogastva in 40% procentov prebivalstva živi pod pragom revščine. Mehika kaže močne vplive svoje indijanske preteklosti. Družina je najpomembnejša institucija v družbi, zato je tudi zelo veliko družinski podjetij. Mehičani so polikronična kultura, saj v nasprotju s severnimi sosedi delajo, da živijo in ne obratno. Malo se naredi v Mehiki brez podkupnin, zato je korupcija pereč problem mehiške družbe. V poslu, podobno kot v drugih latinskoameriških državah, so dobri osebni odnosi zelo pomembni in način poslovanja je zelo personaliziran. Na poslovne odnose gledajo kot na dolgoročne zveze. Prijatelji in kontakti so ključ na mehiškem trgu. Mehiška kultura ni ciljno naravnana, ampak osebnostno. Večina prvih stikov v Mehiki se zgodi v restavracijah in barih. Poslovna kosila so zelo popularna. Poslovno druženje je pomemben del poslovanja v tej državi. Običajen pozdrav v Mehiki je stisk rok. Kaj kmalu vas bo Mehičan objel, to pomeni, da vas je osebnostno sprejel. Ženske in moški se enkrat poljubijo na lice. Mehičani komunicirajo ekspresivno tako verbalno kot neverbalno. Mehika je visoko kontekstna kultura; čeprav so besede pomembne, so implicitni pomeni za besedami še bolj. Pogovor poteka zelo blizu, umik bi pomenil, da ni prijateljstva. Mehičani so topli in prijateljski in uporabljajo veliko fizičnega kontakta. Občasen očesni kontakt je priporočljiv v Mehiki, strmenje pa je doživeto kot agresivno. Obdarovanje v Mehiki ne igra tako pomembne vloge kot morda v Braziliji, čeprav so darila predvsem za tajnice včasih dobrodošla. Oblačenje je zelo formalno in konzervativno. Lepo urejeni čevlji so pomembni podobno kot drugod v Latinski Ameriki. Pogajanja v Mehiki so lahko dolga in zelo živahna, saj Mehičani močno barantajo, še posebno takrat, kadar se pogajajo s tujci. Imajo pa boljše mnenje o pogajalcih, ki govorijo špansko kot na primer o Američanih iz Združenih držav Amerike. Zato je zelo dobrodošlo znanje španskega jezika. Mehičani bodo pogosto rekli DA, čeprav tega ne mislijo, vse samo zato, da bi zadovoljili tujega partnerja. Redki Mehičani bodo v pogovoru v živo rekli NE. Zato je očitno, da je Mehika visoko kontekstna kultura. Verjetno pa je najboljša pogajalska taktika za tujca, da razvije mrežo dobrih osebnih odnosov v podjetju, s katerim bi želel poslovati.

5. PODOBNOSTI IN RAZLIKE LATINSKOAMERIŠKIH DRŽAV

V tem poglavju so predstavljene podobnosti in razlike med podrobneje analiziranimi državami v prejšnjem poglavju. Osredotočil sem se predvsem na povezavo med teorijo Hofsteda in Halla v prvem poglavju in konkretnimi državami ter upošteval kasneje omenjene dejavnike, ki tako ali drugače vplivajo na poslovno komuniciranje v Argentini, Braziliji in Mehiki. V tabeli spodaj so izpostavljene večje podobnosti kot tudi razlike med temi tremi državami.

Tabela 1: Karakteristike Argentine, Brazilije in Mehike

	Argentina	Brazilija	Mehika
Populacija	40.013.548	198.739.269	111.211.789
Uradni jezik	španski	portugalski	španski
Religija	90% rimokatoliki	73% rimokatoliki, 15% protestanti	Več kot 90% rimokatoliki
BDP-per capita	ZDA $ 14.200 (2008)	ZDA $ 10.200 (2008)	ZDA $ 14.200 (2008)
Znanje angleščine	veliko	samo manjšina	samo izobraženi in visoko postavljeni poslovneži
PDI	49- mesto 52-53	69-mesto 26	81- mesto 10-11
IDV	46- mesto 33-35	38-mesto 39-40	30-mesto 46-48
UAI	86- mesto 17-22	76- mesto 31-32	82- mesto 26-27
MAS	56- mesto 28-29	49- mesto 37	69- mesto 8
Sodelovanje žensk pri delu	43%	46%	37%
Nizko/Visok Kontekst	Visok kontekst	Visok kontekst	Visok kontekst
P ali M čas	P čas	P čas	P čas
Prostor	Nizka teritorialnost	Nizka teritorialnost	Nizka teritorialnost
Točnost	Včasih pozni	Netočnost je dejstvo življenja	Točnost ni stroga
Poslovni odnos	Osebni slog	Ekstremno osebni slog	Zelo osebni slog
Poslovno socializiranje	Nujen del posla	Pomembno	Veliko prvotnih stikov se zgodi v družbenem okolju
Količina kontakta	Veliko kontakta	Veliko kontakta	Veliko kontakta
Emocionalni izraz	Zelo emocionalni	Zelo emocionalni	Zelo emocionalni
Pozdrav	Topel in prisrčen	Prisrčen	Lahko je prisrčen
Vizitke	Niso zelo pomembne	Nazivi na vizitkah so zelo pomembni	Nazivi na vizitkah so ekstremno pomembni
Govorica telesa	Zelo izrazita	Zelo izrazita	Zelo izrazita
Poslovna darila	Običajna poslovna praksa	Dobri dajalci daril	Ne igra pomembne vloge
Izgled	Zelo pomembna kvaliteta čevljev	Korporacijski ljudje se oblačijo kot drugod po svetu	Zelo formalno in konzervativno
Pogajanja	Zelo sofisticirani	Čvrsti toda elegantni	Težki pogajalci
Koruptivnost	2,9	3,7	3,3

SKLEP

Podjetja danes poslujejo čedalje bolj in bolj v globalnem kontekstu. Ljudje, ki kaj pomenijo v poslovnem svetu, so locirani v celo najbolj odročnih krajih po vsem svetu. Potreba po učinkovitem medkulturnem komuniciranju je postala življenjskega pomena za uspeh v globalnem poslovanju.

Eden izmed ciljev pisanja te diplomske naloge je bil dobro raziskati poslovne običaje v Latinski Ameriki in odgovoriti na naslednja vprašanja: 1) Do kakšne mere ima drugačno kulturno ozadje posameznika vpliv na obnašanje poslovnežev po svetu? 2) Ali je medkulturno poslovno komuniciranje univerzalno? 3) Ali lahko generaliziramo kulturno znanje, ki je pridobljeno o eni latinskoameriški državi, na druge latinskoameriške države? Po raziskovanju kulturnih dimenzij v prvem poglavju sem poudaril pomembnosti, ki vplivajo na obnašanje v različnih kulturnih okoljih. V drugem poglavju sem na kratko ocenil osnove poslovnega komuniciranja, ki sem jih nadalje raziskal v tretjem poglavju v medkulturnem konkekstu. Da bi lahko odgovoril na tretje vprašanje, sem se osredotočil na poslovne običaje v Latinski Ameriki in na najbolj vplivne države Argentino, Brazilijo in Mehiko. V petem poglavju sem raziskal karakteristike, ki so podobne in različne v teh kulturah.

Po analiziranju vse podatkov, ki sem jih zbral v tej diplomski nalogi, lahko zaključim, da imajo kulturna ozadja največji vpliv, kako se bo posameznik obnašal v danem trenutku. Kultura je tisto, kar smo, in jo je zato nemogoče ignorirati. Prav zato medkulturno komuniciranje ni univerzalno in upamo lahko, da nikoli ne bo. Gesta, ki bo morda sprejeta z odobravanjem na nekem delu sveta, lahko morda užali nekoga drugega na drugem delu sveta. Odgovor na moje tretje vprašanje ni tako očiten. Splošno je znano, da vse latinskoameriške države govorijo špansko, so bile kolonije Španije in da jim ni mar za delo in čas itd. Brez dvoma imajo latinskoameriške države več kot le nekaj skupnih stvari, ampak izjave zgoraj so morda vseeno malo preveč poenostavljene. Čeprav si veliko latinskoameriških držav deli skupno preteklost, so lahko med sabo precej različne. V Braziliji, največji latinskoameriški državi, sploh ne govorijo špansko, obstajajo pa še druge države, kjer govorijo angleško, francosko in celo nizozemsko. Tudi razlike ne različnimi variantami španščine so kar precejšne. Vse druge latinskoameriške države so razvile svojo lastno identiteto v vseh teh letih, kljub dejstvu, da so bile kolonije Španije in da je španska kultura gotovo pustila svoj močan pečat, ki je viden še danes.

Danes večina civiliziranega sveta živi v medkulturnem okolju in učenje komuniciranja z drugimi kulturami ne bi smela biti opcija, ampak potreba. To je še posebno očitno na primeru Slovenije, saj ne moremo ignorirati, da smo majhna država in smo obvezani sodelovati z ostalim svetom. To, da smo majhni, ne bi smela biti prepreka. Slovenska podjetja bi se morala ozirati po novih priložnostih izven meja Slovenije. Ne bi se smeli bati neznanega, ampak bi morali te priložnosti objeti. Glede na to, kar je bilo predstavljeno v tem diplomskem delu o vplivu narodnosti domačina, je pomembno, da tuji poslovneži poskušajo zgraditi dober odnos s svojim partnerjem. Še posebno takrat, če vaš partner prihaja iz kolektivistične in visoko kontekstne kulture, kot lahko vidimo v veliko latinskoameriških državah.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Cultural attitudes and behaviors

By observing the attitudes and behaviors of people of a culture, it is possible to gain insight into their values and thus lay of foundation of building effective global business relationships. An understanding of cultural attitudes toward the family, religion, education, and work can be instrumental in fostering intercultural relationships. In addition, attitudes toward equality, status, and social class, as well as cultural variations in public behavior, will b examined to gain a better understanding of other cultures so that cultural interactions will be mutually rewarding (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 89).

Attitudes toward the family: the meaning and importance of the family depends on an individual own experience as well as on cultural influences. In many countries people gain a sense of security from their strong family ties. In fact in most countries of Latin America, North Africa, Middle East and Asia the family unit is so strong that it is viewed as more important than work. On the other hand people from United States, Canada, and northern Europe, who keep business and family matters separate, and when forced to make a choice between the two, consider work more important that the family (Victor, 1992, p. 78). In Mexico, when even godparents are considered part of the family, their definition of the family would be the extended family, which includes grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Different family systems have evolved to meet the needs of a society.

- *Monogamy* - one husband one wife- (Europe, parts of Africa and Asia and North and South America)
- *Serial monogamy*- multiple monogamous marriages (United States)
- *Polygamy* - one man with several wives (followers of Islam and Middle Eastern countries)
- *Polyandry* - one woman with many husbands (number of Polynesian nations)

Patriarchal families, in which the father is in control, are typical in Spanish cultures, also Christians. Beside that in many Latin American countries, view the elderly as the most important member of the family and are due great respect (Samovar & Porter, 2003, p. 119).

Attitudes toward religion: become apparent when examining the importance of religion in the daily lives of people in various cultures. Religion is sometimes a factor when conducting business in other cultures. Although religion has little impact in business in Australia, Europe and North and South America, it would affect business in countries such as Saudi Arabia, The

United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Iraq, where Islam is the official religion. One of the reasons for this is also the fact, that Muslims stop work five times per day for prayers, so people doing business in Islamic countries should be prepared to allow extra time for this daily ritual. Anyhow, because religion may be a consideration when dealing with people of different faiths, learning about the customs and believes associated with the various religions is advisable (Jandt, 2004, p. 237).

Work attitudes and behaviors: a term that referees to how people of a culture view work, are culturally diverse. Some cultures live to work and others work to live. The United States, because it is a work oriented cultures, in which people value and reward hard work, is considered a live to work culture (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 96-98). The following Table 10 shows the ten countries with the largest numbers of working hours per week in year 2006.

Table 10: Shows countries with the largest numbers of working hours/week in year 2006.

COUNTRY	WORKING HOURS/WEEK
China	47.9
India	47.3
South Korea	46.2
Singapore	46
New Zealand	44.9
Mexico	43.3
United States	42.6
Japan	42.2
United Kingdom	39.6
Germany	38.7

Source:International Labor Organization , Yearbook of Labor Statistics 2007

Attitudes towards equality, status, and social class: people in many countries are very conscious of status. People in some countries feel that certain people have higher status and are therefore entitled to more respect than those of lower status. India, for example, has a rigid caste system, that is determined at birth. The four main casts are religious people, administrators, skilled craftsmen / farmers, and unskilled laborers. People of each cast have their own rights, duties, and status. Interaction between the people of different casts is limited (Samovar & Porter, 2003, p. 72). On the other hand, factors, which in most countries distinguish between the variations within the middle class, are usually money, education and occupation. Status is also associated with education in several Latin American countries. For an example, in Mexico, a lawyer is addressed as 'licenciado', a very important title. In some countries, age is indicative of seniority and is therefore deserving of respect. Asians and middle Easterners have great respect for age, because it is believed that true wisdom comes with age. Although rang is important, age takes precedence over rang (Axtell, 1998, p. 11). Recognizing differences in status and social class can be important in intercultural encounters. Failure to show proper respect for age, status, wealth or social position may result in unintentionally offending someone with whom you would like to establish a business relationship (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 100).

Cultural variations in public behavior: is influenced by culture. Public behavior often reflects the value of people in a certain the culture. For example, US Americans will avoid situations where they will be forced into physical contact with others. On contrary, people in Mexico as well as most South American Countries are quite comfortable with crowded situations; including pushing towards the crowd where touching strangers is inevitable. (Turkington, 1999, p. 255) The practice of lining up our queuing, and waiting your turn, is customary in Japan and Sweden. In Israel, Mexico, Balkan countries and South American Countries, however, there are no queues for anything. Shoving and pushing to get ahead in line is expectable behavior. Voice volume is another public behavior that should be appropriate to the situations, the occasion and the culture. In France and New Zealand, it is important to keep the voice level down in public. It is completely opposite for example in Brazil, where people speak extremely loudly. Eating or drinking while walking on the street, is viewed as inappropriate in France, India, Japan, Mexico and a lot of South American Countries. Visitors to other countries should be aware of behavior expected in public places. Showing respect for cultural variations in public behavior is much more likely to be result in being welcomed in various countries and in being treated with the respect shown for the country's customs (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 102).

Appendix 2: Conversational customs and manners

When conversing with persons of other cultures, it is important to know their customs to assure that the intended meaning is conveyed and avoid unintentionally offending them. For example, in most cultures it is appropriate to engage in light conversation or chitchat before getting down to business. Ignoring this custom would be viewed as rude and insensitive. When selecting the topic of small talk, it is important to recognize that some topics are taboo in both social and business situations and in some cultures the use of humor during conversations is inappropriate. The non-verbal aspects of conversations - eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, space and touch must also be taken into consideration (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 127).

Small talk or chitchat: getting to know someone usually involves a certain amount of light conversation or small talk. Appropriate topics for chitchat are often related to the culture. In Latin America countries such as Argentina and Brazil, appropriate topics for conversation include sports, the art, local sights, and international travels. In Chile, asking questions about recommended tourists sights and discussions Chilean art, history, and literature are appropriate. Likewise, in Venezuela, good topics for conversation include Venezuelan history, art, sports, and food (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 129-130).

Conversational taboos: are topics are considered inappropriate when conversing with people in one's culture and with people in another culture. In Latin American countries, topics to be avoided, include politics and religion. In additional to these topics, avoid asking about salary and other personal matters in Brazil. (Brazilians may, however ask you personal questions,

even your marital status and religion). Also, avoid initiating conversations that would imply criticism of the country, such as economic problems, social class differences, and the government. In Bolivia and Colombia, do not initiate conversations about drug policies or terrorism. In Chile, avoid discussions of wars and comments about social classes. A good rule to observe is to follow the lead of your Latin American host; do not make any derogatory remarks about any aspect of the country, its government, its people and their customs, or their sports teams (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 131-132).

Appendix 3: Dress and appearance

Dress and appearance are aspects of nonverbal communication that convey impressions related to assurance, competence, credibility, and a concern and respect for other people. These first impressions, although not necessarily fair, are usually made within the first few seconds of meeting a person and are often lasting impressions. Projecting a positive image by dressing appropriately is instrumental in developing trust and building rapport with others. Negative initial impressions can harm effective communication and can impede the relationship-building process. People make assumptions about others quickly based on their first impressions (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 73-74). According to Seitz "social or business settings, clothing acts as a communicator of ourselves, our company, and our position; it is not hard to see why appearance constitutes 55 percent of the first impression we make on others (Seitz, 2000, p. 36). Thompson and Kleiner sum up the importance of dress to projecting a positive image: Successful people generally look successful. They wear clothes that look attractive on them, are well groomed, and hold themselves whit confidence. They intended message is that they feel good about themselves and that others will feel good about them as well (Thompson et al., 1992, p. 82).

Dress and Credibility: the link between attire and credibility is well documented. Initial credibility may be acquired by dressing in a manner that inspires trust and conveys competence. Suits, for both men and women, accompanied by simple, understate accessories; continue to convey messages of competence, authority, and trust, regardless of the culture. Initial credibility is linked to wearing conservative business attire with a classic, traditional look. (i.e., dark business suits for men and skits suits or dresses for women) and choosing conservative accessories of high quality. The effect of an expansive suit can be negated quickly by dirty nails, so hands and nails should be clean and well maintained. Shoes, especially in Latin America should be shined and repair because shoes are one of the first things noticed about person's appearance. Finally, everyone can enhance their appearance by being in good physical condition. Becoming physically fit will increase endurance, improve one's personality and posture, and make a person appear more confident (Mitchell, 1998, pp. 58-59).

Business professional attire: the suit is perceived as the most appropriate professional business attire for both men and woman. The most professional suit for man is in medium or

charcoal gray or navy blue with white, pastel, or pinstripe long- sleeved cotton shirt. The most appropriate suit for women is in black, navy blue, or a medium shade of blue with a white blouse (Bixler, 2005, p. 46). Color is an important attribute of professional dress. Certain colors are associated with wealth, such as deep and dark colors. Other colors such as neutral, basic colors are considered safe for business attire. Generally speaking, darker colors convey authority, whereas lither shades project an approachable image. Meaning associated with various colors varies from dignity conveyed by blue, to white associated with cleanliness, and power conveyed by dark colors (Morem, 2005, p. 63). Gray is a popular color, it conveys success and trustworthiness. Black can be used very effectively, especially by woman. Certain colors have special meaning in other countries, so the color or ones attire should be selected carefully to avoid unintentionally offending people in the host country. For example; Wearing white in China should be avoided as white is worn for funerals and is therefore associated with sadness. In fact, in about 80 percent of the world's cultures, white has a funeral connotation, in Brazil, avoid wearing green and yellow. These are the colors of the Brazilian flag, and people of Brazil no not ware them (Jandt, 2004, p. 140). When doing business in other countries, it is generally considered safe to dress more conservatively and more formally than you would when conducting business in the United States. Generally speaking, appropriate attire in Latin America is more conservative on the west coast of Latin America than in the countries along the east coast. Shoes and accessories should be of a good quality. Latin Americans are fashion conscious and appreciate excellent quality in clothing, shoes, and accessories (Repenski, 1998, p. 197).

***Non formal attire*:** when invited for a social event, it is important to wear what is considered proper for the occasion. Dressing modestly is good advice when dressing for international social events. Sometimes the invitation will include a notation of the type of dress expected such as:

- *White tie* - it is most formal and is rarely required. The black tailcoat is worn with
a starched white shirtfront, white vest, and black patent shoes, sometimes with a black silk top hat. Women would wear a long ball gown with appropriate jewelry and long white gloves.
- *Black tie* - usually means a black dinner jacket with a black tie and a plain shirt or one
with a pleated front. Appropriate attire for women would range from a full-length gown to a suit made from a dressy fabric, such as satin or velvet.
- *Informal* - usually means a dark business suit for men, worn with a white shirt and
subdued tie; women would wear a short cocktail dress or suit in a dressy fabric (Baldrige, 2003, p. 169).
- *Casual* - What is considered casual wear varies widely according to the country you
are visiting. If a casual attire is indicated for a social event in Latin American country, thought, it is important to remember that their definition of casual attire is not the same as standard U.S definition. Woman's casual attire for example, often means long skirts with silk blouses; it does not include T-shirt, shorts, or tennis shoes. When visiting the Mexican resorts areas of Acapulco, Cancun, and Puerto Vallarta, dress is more casual than in Mexico City (Bosrock, 1997, p. 106).

Appendix 4: Dinning and tipping customs

People of all cultures send messages by what they eat and by the way they eat. Breeding, upbringing and educations will reveal in how people behave while dining. Because many business and social encounters involve dinning, it is important to be aware of cultural variations in eating styles and meal time customs as well as food customs and consumption taboos. In addition, doing business entertaining, seating and toasting etiquette must be considered (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 107).

Styles of eating and place settings: people of the US use what is commonly referred to as the American ***zigzag eating***. This means switching of the fork from the left to the right hand and back again after cutting the piece of food. In Europe and Latin American countries, as well as many other parts of the world, the ***Continental or European style*** of dinning is used. When using this style, the fork remains in the left hand during cutting and eating the food. When eating American style, the finished position is the placement of the knife on the outside with the blade towards the center of the plate and the fork with the tines up next to the knife at about 11 o'clock and 3 o'clock position on the plate. Those using the continental style will indicate that they are finished by placing the utensils in a similar position except that the fork tines are down. Other countries where knives, spoons and forks are not commonly used include China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam; they usually use chopsticks instead. As well we have to be careful for example in India, where an important aspect of the custom of eating with one hand is that the right hand only is used; the left hand is viewed as unclean.

The arrangement of the plates, glasses, and eating with utensils will vary with the culture. However, the rule that is followed regardless of the culture is that silver ware is arranged so that the utensil to be used first is placed outside farthest from the plate. Dinners then only have to remember to select utensils from the outside and work their way towards the center. Glasses for water and other beverages are positioned on the upper right of the plate, and the bred is placed to the upper left to the dinner plate above the forks (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 107-109).

Meal customs: in Argentina, Brazil and Chile and most other Latin America Countries, breakfast is eaten between 7 A.M. and 9 A.M. Lunch is around noon and 3 P.M. and dinner between 8 P.M. and 10 P.M. And afternoon refreshment break around 5 P.M to 6 P.M. consisting of coffee or tea is common. Lunch is the largest meal of the day and typically lasts two hours. Latin Americans usually have more curses that is common in US, in addition to coffee or tea, various alcoholic beverages are served (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 109-112).

Table manners: in the Latin America Countries, customs related to cleaning ones plate vary. In Bolivia, Peru, Panama and Guatemala, you are expected to eat everything on your plate. Leaving food is considered wasteful. In Costa Rica and Colombia, on the other hand, you are expected to leave food to indicate you have had enough to eat. In most countries of Latin

America, food is eaten with utensils, rather than the hands. This includes sandwiches and fruit (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 112-113).

Drinking and toasting customs: when conducting business internationally, consuming alcohol is an expected part of building relationship in many countries. In some countries, declining a drink may be viewed as impolite and an indication that you do not want to participate in this important rituals. However, overindulging in Latin America is viewed negatively (Schweitzer & Kerr, 2000, p. 52). Toasting makes a meal more festive. The guidelines for toasting, as well as the words commonly used when making a toast, will vary with the culture. In Latin America, the word *salude* is used (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 115).

Business entertaining: the decision to entertain a foreign guest in a restaurant or in one's home depends on the customs of the country and the length of the relationship. People of Latin America do not entertain at home until a personal relationship has been developed. That is why business entertaining in restaurants is common in Latin America. When being entertained in a restaurant, the person who does the inviting does the paying (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 116-119).

Tipping: is now expected in many countries (Baldrige, 2003, p. 150). In most Latin American countries, tipping (*la propina*) is becoming customary in restaurants. A 10% tip is considered appropriate and is sometimes included in the bill. Tipping taxi drivers and hotel porters is optional except when they help you with your luggage. In Columbia, taxi drivers usually receive 10% tip. In Mexico, tipping expectations are a bit higher. In some large cities frequent by tourists, such as Puerto Vallarta, Cancun, Acapulco even true 15% tip is added to the bill, and additional 10 to 15 % is expected (Martin & Chaney, 2006, p. 119-121).