

A Cross – Cultural Analysis of Social and Business Etiquette of the United States of America and China

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou společenské a obchodní etikety Spojených států amerických a Číny. Jednotlivé pojmy, společenská etiketa a obchodní etiketa, jsou v bakalářské práci vysvětleny, aby jejich pochopení bylo jednodušší. Spojené státy americké a Čína jsou dvě velmoci, které zaujímají nenahraditelné místo ve světové ekonomice, mezinárodních vztazích a globálním dění celkově. Spousta firem, institucí a organizací proniká na jejich trhy, zakládá zde dceřiné společnosti či projednává obchodní transakce. Je proto nutné vědět, jak se v jednotlivých kulturách chovat, co se očekává a co je naopak naprosto nepřijatelné. Američané, kteří jsou navyklí na určitý způsob chování, mohou při vyjednávání s čínskou firmou narazit. Naopak obyvatelé Číny se mohou pozastavovat nad chováním svých amerických protějšků. Analýzou etikety těchto dvou oblastí bych chtěla poukázat na rozdíly, jež se v kulturách vyskytují. Závěrem své práce se zaměřím na znalost čínské a americké obchodní a společenské etikety mezi studenty programu Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi.

Klíčová slova: stereotypy, společenská etiketa, obchodní etiketa, Spojené státy americké, Čína, stolování, neverbální komunikace, obchodní jednání, vyjednávání.

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis engages in the analysis of social and business etiquette of the United States of America and China. Individual concepts, social etiquette and business etiquette, are explained to be more understandable. United States of America and China are both superpowers which occupy irreplaceable position in the world's economy, international relationships and global events in a whole. Many enterprises, institutions and organizations penetrate their markets, establish subsidiary companies at these areas or negotiate business transactions with them. It is essential to know how one should behave in these two cultures, what is expected and what is, on the other hand, absolutely inappropriate. Americans, who are used to certain way of behaving, might run up against some problems while negotiating with Chinese company and vice versa. I would like to point out certain differences that might appear in these two cultures. In the practical part of my bachelor thesis, I would like to turn the attention towards the students of the course English for

Business Administration and their knowledge of the American and Chinese business and social etiquette.

Keywords: stereotypes, social etiquette, business etiquette, United States of America, China, table manners, non – verbal communication, business dealings, negotiation.

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INTRODUCTION

World is a horrible place to live in. There are rules and regulations everywhere. If we want to blend in and not stay beyond the edge of the society these rules and regulations should be at least slightly respected. Above all these there is a life itself.

The life which is considered to be a never ending game. The game that all man has to play every day. But each game has its own rules. To run the game properly the rules should be followed and kept.

When the life is considered to be a game the etiquette would serve as its rules. If you want to be successful in your living the knowledge of the etiquette is highly essential. Not only would it help you to interact with the others it can also influence how the others would perceive you.

Nevertheless, the rules of the game can have slightly different interpretation according to the people who play it. Same thing might happen when we consider all those different cultures, diverse regions, nations and countless states.

China and the United States of America are seen as the world's superpowers. Their influence is exponentially growing every year. Even the business sphere is not spared. In connection with this fact people should be aware of what is appropriate in these two countries and what is on the other hand absolutely inadequate. The smooth interaction will be then guaranteed.

The common saying: „When in Rome do as the Romans do”, is not used in vain. If we try to adjust our behavior and conduct to the environment we are in it can facilitate the interaction and communication with the others at least a little bit. Any business can go wrong or it can eventually end up well. The simple success depends on how well you are prepared and you are acquainted with a different social and business environment.

I. THEORY

1 ETIQUETTE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN AND WHAT DOES IT ENCOMPASS?

The world is ever-changing place. Even though contemporary manners are more adjusted to certain situations and circumstances, the basis of them remains the same.

There are three fundamental principles which can help people interact smoothly and without these principles any interaction should be conducted.

The first, and at the same time the most important, principle is called respect. No matter where you come from, what your religion is or the color of your face, when showing the respectful behavior you demonstrate the others that you recognize them as human beings. Those who are respectful do not treat shop assistant or waiter as someone substandard for instance. Respect is quality used in our everyday life. That is why we cannot hide from the application of the respect. It's our choice then, whether we choose to act with a respect or without it.

Consideration can be seen as the second fundamental principle. It encompasses the Golden Rule which says: „Behave towards the others as you want them to behave towards you.” Considerate people always care about the feelings of the others and do not put their personal needs at the first place.

The last, but certainly not the least, fundamental quality is honesty. One term which is inseparably associated with honesty is tact.

There are two types of people, those, who can say even bad things in a thoughtful way and do not hurt anybody and those, who lack this ability. On the basis of this piece of knowledge, we can address the first mentioned group as tactful. ¹

1.1 Wrong image about the etiquette

We must be very careful while distinguishing, what etiquette is and what the most certainly etiquette is not, since people have distorted ideas about etiquette nowadays.

Etiquette is definitely not a snobbishness, quite the contrary, person who represents himself/herself as superior is rather small than great.

¹ Peggy Post, *Emily Post's Etiquette, 17th Edition*. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2004), 3 – 4.

What's more, we cannot consider etiquette to be something coming from the past. It is true, that etiquette was more applicable in the history when monarch was dealing with people in the court for example. But also nowadays it is very essential to possess at least slight conception of the etiquette in our mind. I will now disappoint those of you who think that etiquette is just some kind of system of rigid rules. Etiquette is rather a guideline than list of rules to be learnt. It is guideline for people who would like to act in a way that will make the others feel comfortable.

So far, we found out, that etiquette is among us in all aspects of our lives, we can encounter with it during the lunch in a restaurant. We can bump into it while travelling in a bus. We can also come across with the etiquette during our professional life.

This piece of knowledge is a proof that etiquette cannot be considered to be something subsistent only to the rich people or well – born. Unfortunately, lots of people think so and they do not realize that to manage certain aspects of our everyday living, essential basics of the etiquette are needed and must be mastered.²

1.2 Etiquette fruits

The book called *The Etiquette of To-Day* says:

Society is a game which all men play. "Etiquette" is the name given the rules of the game. If you play it well, you win. If you play it ill, you lose. The prize is a certain sort of happiness without which no human being is ever quite satisfied. Because the demand for social happiness is thus fundamental in human nature, the game has to be played quite seriously. If played seriously, it is perforce successful, even when the outward signs of triumph are lacking. Men show, at home and abroad, the courtesy to women in general that they would wish shown to those of their family, and thereby the standard of respect for woman is so lifted that even the city street at night is a safe place for a woman to pass.

Etiquette tells us how to accomplish what we desire,--to make clear the path to the goal of high companionship with many worthy minds,--and enables us to get out of

² Peggy Post, *Emily Post's Etiquette, 17th Edition*. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2004), 5.

social intercourse the honey that is hidden there. Without it, as social beings, we should be as workmen without tools, musicians without instruments.

The tool, however, becomes invaluable when the master desires to create. Therefore, if we wish to gain from social life the enjoyment and happiness and help which it should yield, we should become familiar with the practice of the best forms of etiquette, so that we shall have skill and aptitude in their application. The rewards of etiquette are, therefore, both spiritual and material.³

³ Edith B. Ordway, *The Etiquette of To-Day* (New York: George Sully and Company, 1920), 6-7, PDF.

2 SOCIAL ETIQUETTE

The word etiquette itself is of foreign origin and we can associate it with two different meanings.

The first meaning symbolizes the label which is usually placed on the bottle. The second instance represents the etiquette in connection with the social contact. The second example is the one, we will talk about and we will examine more in detail.

The term itself has transformed from the word *estiquer*. This particular term comes from French and it means „to attach something to something else”. The interrelation is quite obvious. Taking the fact that in the old times, everything what was advised to be kept and was to be followed was normally written on the paper and attached mostly to the walls or doors. The tricky question is who was able to read back then? ⁴

Thanks to our knowledge of the history, we can say that it was mostly the nobility and the Church who possessed the art of reading. In connection with this fact, we now know why the etiquette was primarily associated only with the upper – class and the ordinary people were not taken into account as the etiquette users.

To sum it up a little bit, we can say that the etiquette is a summary of rules and the use of behavior in the society which does not have character of once given and never changed laws. It is the result of habits, which were created throughout generations and are still constantly created. Individual communities accepted them and use them during their everyday living.

There are different patterns of these habits in connection with individual continents and regions. We also cannot forget to mention that these habits are influenced by social, economic, cultural, religious and climatic conditions. Based on these facts, we can say that there is nothing like universal etiquette. ⁵

2.1 Cultural stereotypes

World is not a homogenous place. There are dozens, hundreds, even thousands of different cultures and environments. Bearing this in mind, we cannot expect everyone in the world

⁴ Soňa Gullová, *Mezinárodní obchodní a diplomatický protokol 2., přepracované a doplněné vydání* (Praha: Grada Publishing a. s., 2011), 15.

⁵ Soňa Gullová, *Mezinárodní obchodní a diplomatický protokol 2., přepracované a doplněné vydání* (Praha: Grada Publishing a. s., 2011), 16.

to be the same and consequently, to have the same notion of foreign cultures. Most of the times, wrong image or belief is formulated based on the experience with only few members of particular society. This presupposed idea is called stereotype.

On the other hand, certain assumptions are based on the truth and even inhabitants of stereotyped countries believe the stereotypical picture is right.

United States are seen as the country, where everything is possible. Thanks to the hard work, commitment and persistence people can achieve their dreams. United States are, as it to say, the best place in the world to live in. This is a shared knowledge that most likely a lot of people have. Americans truly believe in this information to be true. They tend to be individualists, with suspicious perception of the authority. They also cherish the “individual freedom”. Children are taught from an early age to act, and most importantly, to think for themselves.⁶

This sense of individualism and superiority can be seen in the description of the US business people too. They tend to be workaholics and make decisions based rather on hard facts than on personal feelings. What is more, their obsession with money and concern with time makes them in most people’s eyes cold, unfriendly and impersonal.⁷ There is a common saying in the United States: „Time is money.” The application to the real life might vary but the essence is still the same.

In comparison with the USA, Chinese people are seen rather as collectivists than individualists, especially thanks to the Communist Party. Furthermore, Chinese culture is perceived as ancient. Based on given information, we can say that Chinese are still somehow influenced by the ancient Confucianism which in most ways determines their lives and behavior.

Together with the Confucianism come five relationships which are realized in China. Except for one, all of them are based on superiority and subordination.

There is a ruler – to – people relationship, where the monarch possesses absolute power. People are fully loyal to him and do not dare to question him. Secondly, wife is

⁶ Dean Engel, *Passport USA: Your Pocket Guide to American Business, Customs and Etiquette* (California: World Trade Press, 1997), 18.

⁷ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 6-7.

always obedient to the husband and he dominates her. Nevertheless, the husband must provide his wife with all the physical needs she has.

As people are loyal to the ruler, children are loyal to their parents. Fathers are absolutely unquestionable. Parents must provide their children with a good education and breeding. In return, children are obliged to take care of the parents in the old age.

Because of the fact Chinese associate the age with the wisdom, they have quite enormous respect to it. That is why the older people always rank higher than the younger ones.

The last important relationship is realized among friends. This relationship is at the same time, the only one, where both participants are equal. Friends are obliged to help each other in any situation. Surprisingly, unfair acting is considered to be a crime and deserves a punishment.⁸

2.2 How do family system and dating work in the USA and China?

Every family is unique organization. But not only is the family institution itself unique in the nature. There are also different family systems thanks to the various cultures. What might be acceptable in one culture is inappropriate in another and vice versa.

Regarding the United States, dating starts mostly in the age of 13. Intercourse before wedding is relatively normal and average age for the marriage is around 25 years. There is either a nuclear, monogamous family, whose members try to maintain quite close relationship with the other relatives, or single-parent family. Nonetheless, one out of three kids is born out of wedlock. Most of the women work and consequently participate in decision-making. As for the older members of the family, they are mostly transferred to private institutions rather than to live with their close relatives.⁹

With regard to the Chinese, their approach towards the elderly is completely different. Old people are respected, consequently taken care of and family institution is ranked higher than the individuals. Boys are said to be more important for the family than girls, simply because they are considered to be the heritors of the family name. Because of this fact,

⁸ Jenny Li, *Passport China: Your Pocket Guide to Chinese Business, Customs and Etiquette*, 2nd ed. (California: World Trade Press, 2003), 14-15.

⁹ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 39.

there is a lot more men in China. There used to be a trend of killing newborn girls, because their status is much lower. Thanks to this, there is quite huge deficit of women in China nowadays.

In comparison to US, Chinese dating is relatively behind. There is nothing serious going on until boys are 22 and girls are 20 years old. In fact, it is somehow prohibited for people in China to have any sort of relationship even at high school. One reason for this might be the Chinese fully focus on their studies and thus do not have time for any relationships. The second reason for this is quite surprising. If Chinese people get married earlier, there will be no government benefits for them. If they do finally marry, married women retain maiden name but their children are named after the father.¹⁰

2.3 Sorry, this is not my cup of tea – table manners and diet

United States and China might have some things in common. Both countries are superpowers and lot of people live there, for instance. Though, one thing is completely different.

Dining practices of Americans are, as it to say, quite incompatible with those of Chinese and vice versa. Many people all around the world would consider serving the glass of iced water together with the meal at least strange. Americans do not. In fact, this custom is absolutely normal in most restaurants.

When someone comes to a visit s/he would normally be offered something to drink. There would be the possibility for each of the guests to choose whatever they want. In case s/he is not thirsty, drink is not served. In China something like that will never happen. There is a teapot placed in front of every visitor almost instantly and without absolutely any questions. Even the strictest disagreement from the guest is basically ignored.

What is even more astonishing is the way Americans eat. Their eating style is called “zigzag”. First, they cut the meat with the knife, holding the knife in the right hand and the fork in the left hand. After the cutting is finished, they put the knife aside, place it on the table and shift the fork to the right hand. Then eating can start.

¹⁰ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 39.

Asians on the other hand do not use the knife and fork at all. The only exception might be the use of the spoon which is utilized for the soup. Although eating with chopsticks is pretty hard Chinese people really appreciate the effort of the foreigners to use chopsticks. They have no problems with demonstrating the proper usage to the foreigners either.¹¹

Americans are perceived as the nation of KFC, McDonald's, Burger King and fast foods in a whole. The only culinary art might be conducted during Thanksgiving when turkey is prepared and served. Americans are said to be true meat – eaters, they are said to be able to consume the whole cow except for the eyes and hoofs.

Whereas American cuisine does not have much to offer, Chinese cuisine on the other hand is various, full of colors, tastes and smells. “*As the common saying goes, there are three luxuries in one's life: an American house, Japanese wife and Chinese diet*”.¹² It is said that there is over 40 ways of cooking, including boiling and roasting. Regarding the ingredients, they can be classified into almost 600 categories. Chinese people are said to be precise in a vast amount of things, precision can be also recognized in the final cooked product. The food is full of colors, it looks good and the taste is astonishing. The real piece of art on a plate.

Unlike the meat in the United States, it is the vegetable that is the most important ingredient for Chinese diet. The use of vegetable in China is almost six times higher than in the US. The possible reason for the difference between these two cultures might lay in the fact, that apart from the nomadic style of life which appeared in the west and encompassed fishing and hunting, Chinese people were rather farmers, cultivators, who stayed at one place. Plus, one of the religions in China is Buddhism, dealing with the fact, animals are alive and plants are not, thus can be eaten.¹³

Do not get me wrong, there is a possibility of having Big Mac in China, of course, but do not demand it. It is advisable to be open and to try and taste Chinese cuisine when it is offered.

¹¹ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 167.

¹² Shi-sheng Yang and Yu-xian Zhang, “The Research of the Differences between Chinese and Western Diet Cultures,” *Cross - Cultural Communication* 6, no. 2 (2010): 76.

¹³ Shi-sheng Yang and Yu-xian Zhang, “The Research of the Differences between Chinese and Western Diet Cultures,” *Cross - Cultural Communication* 6, no. 2 (2010): 78.

2.4 Gift – giving

There are occasions in every culture, and I would say also in every country, where the gift – giving is required. Nevertheless, one must be very careful while choosing the right gift because not knowing the culture might turn the perfect gift into the rude insult.

As far as China is concerned, gift giving used to be a strong part of Chinese culture but nowadays, presents might be in some cases considered to be bribery. Thanks to the Communist Party and the official state policy. However, this policy is becoming weaker and weaker.

When presenting Chinese person with a gift do not be surprised if s/he refuses to accept it for the first time. Chinese usually reject the present for two or three times and then eventually accept it. After they eventually do so, do not even expect them to unwrap it right in front of you because they will never do so and your waiting for their action would be pointless. There is also one very important thing considering the present delivery. You should always deliver the gifts with your both hands and accept them with your both hands as well. Any other style would be regarded as inappropriate and insulting.¹⁴

On the other hand, when American receives a gift, the reaction would lead to instant unwrapping. It simply means that the gift will be unwrapped in the presence of the giver and will be showed to the others. What's more, the gift is appreciated out loud and the admiration is expressed verbally.¹⁵

Flowers are usually the best way how to cope with the gifts. In the United States, one should be aware of the fact that sending the flowers in advance is somehow appropriate, it would help the hostess and she will not have to deal with it while you arrive. Bottle of wine and chocolate can also count as suitable when visiting someone at home.¹⁶

¹⁴ “Us China Business Solutions,”
www.uschinabiz.com, <http://www.uschinabiz.com/TopTens/GiftGivinginChina.aspx> (accessed March 20, 2012).

¹⁵ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 170.

¹⁶ “Culture Crossing,”
www.culturecrossing.net, http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=23&CID=216 (accessed March 20, 2012).

As far as China is regarded, there are certain types of gifts that are considered to be unsuitable and quite inappropriate. If you for example want to offend Chinese man the best thing you could give him is a green hat, because it is the sign of his wife cheating on him. You also shouldn't present someone with the clock as it is the symbol of the approaching death.¹⁷

Not only things but also the colors do play important role in Chinese culture. For instance, white color means mourning so it is highly advisable to avoid this color in connection with the gifts.¹⁸ On the contrary, red color would be suitable for almost any gift – wrapping.

Whenever it is possible get your gifts wrapped in the red paper. Other possible colors might be also silver, gold or pink. But one must be very careful because there are slight differences considering the regions of China. Some color variations might be neutral or safe in one region but unseemly or rude in another. That is why it is highly advisable to use the store wrapping service if possible because they would definitely know the best.¹⁹

2.5 The influence of the religion

There are cultures where the religion plays very important role. It has the impact on both the social life and the business life. Some religious aspects can also affect how the business will be conducted and when it takes its place.

Considering the United States of America the 95 % of the population claims to be religious. However, they do not belong to only one denomination. The most prevailing denominations are Catholics and Protestants.²⁰ Even though Americans do not feel themselves to be compelled to attend any special religious events or participate in religious

¹⁷ “US China Business Solutions,”
www.uschinabiz.com, <http://www.uschinabiz.com/TopTens/GiftGivinginChina.aspx> (accessed March 20, 2012).

¹⁸ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 170.

¹⁹ “Us China Business Solutions,”
www.uschinabiz.com, <http://www.uschinabiz.com/TopTens/GiftGivinginChina.aspx> (accessed March 20, 2012).

²⁰ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 61.

customs, to not believe in any higher power is quite unacceptable for them. *“Americans rate atheists below Muslims, recent immigrants, gays and lesbians and other minority groups in “sharing their vision of American society.” Atheists are also the minority group most Americans are least willing to allow their children to marry.”*²¹

As far as China is concerned, we can say without further doubts that it was and still is enormously influenced by the religious philosophies. This fact had already been stated above few times.

The religions which are applied the most in China are Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Speaking of Confucianism it is important to mention that it not only does affect the family life but also some domains of the government and politics. Nevertheless, the Buddhism is considered to be the religion which is practiced the most in China nowadays.²² Still, the strong influence of Confucianism can be recognized in Chinese society, for instance in the rights of the parents upon their children.

*“Bound by their religious beliefs the Chinese are expected to behave properly in society and in the family as well. Each individual is expected to practice self restraint and there is stress on meditation to break away from being tempted by material life to the extent of becoming obsessed with it.”*²³

²¹ Penny Edgell, “Atheists Identified as America's Most Distrusted Minority, According to New U of M Study,” <http://www1.umn.edu>, http://www1.umn.edu/news/news-releases/2006/UR_RELEASE_MIG_2816.html (accessed April 30, 2012).

²² “Country Facts; the World at Your Fingertips.,” <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk>, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/articles/china/chinese-culture-religion/1780> (accessed April 30, 2012).

²³ “Country Facts; The World at Your Fingertips.,” <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk>, <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/articles/china/chinese-culture-religion/1780> (accessed April 30, 2012).

3 BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

Same like the social etiquette, business etiquette is also evolving throughout the time. Employees no longer use ordinary mail to send letters to their bosses. It would much likely be the e – mail which will solve their problems. Despite all the changes, the aim of using the business etiquette remains the same.

Thanks to the business etiquette every employee, customer or business partner can feel the welcoming and professional atmosphere which is absolutely essential for successful undertaking. Simply saying, business etiquette can be considered as doing the right things at the right time and the right place.²⁴

*“Understanding the language is only the first step. Identifying and accepting the behaviors, customs and attitudes of other cultures is also required to bring harmony and success to worldwide business.”*²⁵

3.1.1 What to bear in mind

When dealing with Chinese business partners one must be aware of one important fact. Chinese tend to think China is the center of the world and foreigners are normally associated with rather worse than better characteristics. Even though Chinese are able to appreciate positive aspects of the others they generally consider themselves to be of higher level of moral and spiritual values. In comparison with the other nations and cultures.²⁶

For understanding the American business culture one must be aware of beliefs and attitudes which somehow influence the conduct of the American people. The leading characteristic is individualism resulting in the effort of gaining ground in the society. The personal responsibility is applied and emphasized very often at American companies. Furthermore, business people from the US are considered to be hardworking and efficient.

²⁴ Dan Antony, “Definition of Business Etiquette,” <http://smallbusiness.chron.com,http://smallbusiness.chron.com/definition-business-etiquette-2903.html> (accessed March 23, 2012).

²⁵ Peggy Kenna and Sondra Lacy, *Business China: A Practical Guide to Understanding Chinese Business Culture*(Chicago: Passport Books, 1994), 5, <http://books.google.cz/books?id=B9CC-YdWj6cC&printsec=frontcover&dq=peggy+kenna&hl=cs&sa=X&ei=7LZxT-zeEliImQXkv7yuDw&ved=0CDoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=peggy%20kenna&f=false> (accessed March 27, 2012).

²⁶ Ivan Šroněk, *Kultura v mezinárodním podnikání* (Praha: Grada Publishing a. s., 2001), 124.

Other characteristics of the business people might be self – confidence and the confidence in own abilities. Striking is also the openness and straightforwardness usually leading to the naming even the most unpleasant things by their proper names.²⁷

3.2 Proper introduction

It is said that the first impression can be made only once and is not forgotten for a very long time. Bearing this in mind, the proper introduction plays an essential role in a business contact.

In the United States, one cannot be surprised when the first name is used almost instantly. On the other hand, China is a little bit more formal. As far as China is concerned we must realize that unlike surnames in western countries which occupy the second position in a name, Chinese surnames come first. For instance, Mr. Wang Man Fei would not be addressed as Mr. Man Fei but as Mr. Wang.

Introduction is usually accompanied by some sort of physical action like handshaking, hugging or bowing. Firm handshake is absolutely normal and expected in the USA. Conversely, people from China would rather perform bow, while introducing themselves.

Nevertheless, when business is conducted with people from China, not only bow is performed. It is likely to see people first bow and then also shake hands, so the mutual respect of both cultures is shown.²⁸

3.3 Business – card exchange

After the introduction is done, other important action takes its place. To remember your new business contact and possible future business partner you need to have some information about him/her. These essential information are usually written on business cards. They are absolute must and anybody should leave home without one.

Business people from the United States usually carry business cards in a pocket all the time but they exchange them only in case if they want to get in touch with particular person in the future. Regarding the presentation of the business cards, for the people from the United States it is just ordinary and casual action. It is not accompanied by any special

²⁷ Ivan Šroněk, *Etiketa a etika v podnikání* (Praha: Management Press, 1995), 164.

²⁸ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 162.

ritual. Even strict rules are not applied. Americans just glance at the card when it is obtained and put it in the pocket or wallet immediately. This practice might be considered quite rude in Asian countries. As for the exchange itself, business cards can be exchanged either at the beginning of the meeting or at the end of it.²⁹

As far as the Chinese style of exchanging the business cards is concerned, one should be aware of certain customs and rules that should be followed. Chinese tend not to have very good relationship with the foreigners. It is quite hard for Chinese people to trust and value the foreigners. But if you represent yourself with both – sided business card, English on one side and the Chinese on the other, you will put an icebreaker in a place. By doing this, you show the respect to Chinese culture. Business cards are usually exchanged at the meeting and if you show up without translated Asian card, you may cause an irreversible damage to your business.

Business card that is presented to the Chinese mustn't be dirty because stains are absolutely unacceptable. Business cards in China are exchanged with both hands as a sign of respect. While performing the exchange, make sure Chinese side is up, facing to the receiver so s/he can read it immediately.

It is absolutely inappropriate to put received Chinese business card to the back pocket of your trousers. To write on the Chinese business card while the person who gave it to you is still present is also considered rude and would lead to offence. You can write only to your own business card if you want to add some information.³⁰

3.4 Non – verbal communication

Non – verbal communication is an important aspect of our everyday living and eventually, it might be the cause of your business meetings go wrong or eventually end up well. When we speak about non – verbal communication, we speak about proxemics, oculusics, olfatics, kinesis, haptics, chromatics and a lot more.

²⁹ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 165.

³⁰“Chinese Business Card,” <http://www.asianbusinesscards.com>, <http://www.asianbusinesscards.com/chinese-business-card-culture-tips-china.html> (accessed March 23, 2012).

3.4.1 Proxemics

Thanks to the fact, China is considerably densely populated place the personal space among people is a lot smaller than in western countries. You cannot be surprised when your Chinese business partner will be standing too close to you and what's more s/he will be breathing straight to your face. If you step back a little bit, the automatic response of your partner might be the step forward towards you.³¹ On the other hand, Americans usually demand more space. If there is someone standing too close, they normally back away.

The arrangement of chairs and desks serves also as some kind of communication. While Americans normally arrange chairs to the right angles, one to another, and they prefer face – to –face conversation, Chinese prefer rather side – by – side placement, which might be the result of the eye – contact avoidance.³²

3.4.2 Oculesics

People who visit China, especially those, who do not come from Asia, could be surprised when there is someone watching or even gazing upon them. When Chinese people gaze upon somebody, it cannot be understood as the act of aggression. If you are for instance blond, if you wear strange clothing or your height is almost two meters, Chinese people would stare at you. They will not even try to hide it. Foreigners should bear in mind Chinese do not mean to hurt or offend them it is just a different cultural trait.

Whereas in public Chinese people tend to stare at, for them, unusual things, they tend to withdraw the gaze in the private life. This is normally the sign of shyness so do not take it as the expression of dishonesty.³³ They even try to avoid direct eye – contact during the conversation, and that's why they lower the eyes. This gesture can be understood as the act of respect. It is the sign of bad manners to maintain long eye – contact.

People who live in the United States on the other hand are said to have no problems with direct eye contact what so ever. Those who do not maintain eye – contact are seen as

³¹ Scott D. Seligman, *Čínská obchodní etiketa* (Praha: BB/art s.r.o., 2007), 87-88.

³² Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 121.

³³ Scott D. Seligman, *Čínská obchodní etiketa* (Praha: BB/art s.r.o., 2007), 89.

untrustworthy or disrespectful. This divergence of eye – contact perception can cause problems when business people from China and people from the United States hold a meeting.³⁴

3.4.3 Olfatics

This term means smell. The smell or odor is quite important part of non – verbal communication. When someone exudes pungent smell it might cause problems, either we speak about social contact or business contact, and it also might convey negative message.

Americans tend to have negative attitude towards bad odors, whether we talk about the breath odor or body odor. Huge importance is given to the personal hygiene. Taking the shower, having a bath or brushing teeth in order to get rid of body odor is ranked really high. American obsession with good personal odor can be noticeable in all the advertisements that promote perfumes, colognes or mouthwashes. Thus, we can say most US people would like to present themselves smelling good and desirable.

As once already stated above, Chinese diet does not encompass a lot of meat, quite the contrary, they are rather vegetable eaters. Regarding this fact, they are said not to maintain really good attitude towards cultures which consume huge amount of meat, like Americans do. This is simply because these cultures, meat eating cultures, together with the people living there emit offensive odor. So, even though Americans put real importance on their body hygiene, they still can be perceived as smelly to the Chinese people.³⁵

3.4.4 Kinesics and haptics

Kinesics is considered to be the communication through the body movements and the term haptics means communication by the way of the bodily contact.

Dealings with Chinese business people, especially those of the opposite sex, require no touching what so ever, except for the possible handshake of course. Some sort of physical contact can be misinterpreted and thus can cause serious trouble. Surprisingly, physical contact among the people of the same sex is on the other hand absolutely normal in China

³⁴ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 122.

³⁵ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 123 - 124.

and acceptable. This kind of physical contact is not taboo and Chinese do not associate it with sexual implicit meaning. But every coin is two – sided.

Many Chinese business people were offended by their American counterparts because US business people hugged them tight after a long time they didn't see each other. Other thing which is absolutely unfamiliar to Chinese is back clapping or fake fist beating to the arm. Especially in the situation when people do not know each other well enough. In cases like these, Chinese do not know how to react.

Older Chinese might even be offended if they see someone touching the members of the opposite sex. Exaggerated physical contact with people of higher status or people who are much older is also unsuitable.³⁶

Despite the fact Americans are considered to be touch – oriented country, they regard the handshake as suitable and the only physical contact for business. Even though they tend to be familiar in almost every aspect of life, hugging and a declaration of affection to supervisors and colleagues might be misinterpreted as harassment and thus it is advisable to refrain from touching in business situations.

Same like in China, social hierarchy plays important role when considering if touching is appropriate or not. Generally, people of the lower position might be touched by those of the higher position, for instance the secretary can be touched by the president of the company. But secretaries on the other hand are forbidden to touch the president.

It is commonly believed and applied that older people and those of the higher status are allowed to touch younger people and those of the lower status, but not vice versa.³⁷

3.4.4.1 Facial expressions

It is said that the face is a place where all our feelings can be seen the best. Despite the fact China is perceived as a country where people barely show emotions, there might appear cases in which one can be unpleasantly surprised of how Chinese are able to react in an emotive way.

³⁶ Scott D. Seligman, *Čínská obchodní etiketa* (Praha: BB/art s.r.o., 2007), 88, 90.

³⁷ Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin, *Intercultural Business Communication*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 124.

Chinese tend to laugh out loud at people who suffered an accident. Most visitors from abroad, who accidentally slipped on the wet floor, were angry when found out they are sitting on the floor with Chinese people standing around them in a circle and laughing. No one even helped them to stand up.

It is important to realize that it is not you they are laughing at. It is just the way how Chinese deal with unpleasant situations. The situations they don't know how to react to. Even the fact that Chinese do not offer you help or assist you with standing up might simply mean that they are afraid to accept the risk in situation which could be potentially risky for them.³⁸

³⁸ Scott D. Seligman, *Čínská obchodní etiketa* (Praha: BB/art s.r.o., 2007), 90.

4 BUSINESS MEETING

Chinese meetings are said to follow certain rules no matter what occasion or place. Understanding of the basic principles might help you decode the information and signals which were provided.

To arrange meeting in China is not the matter of one phone call. If the state authorities are involved, it may be in fact quite lengthy procedure.

It is said that without contacts, you won't succeed in arranging the meeting in China, at all. Regarding this fact, first step for everyone who wants to conduct business with Chinese would be gaining some contacts.

To be introduced to Chinese business people by third party is advisable for Chinese not to trust people they do not know. On the other hand, when meeting is proposed by the Chinese party you won't have to worry about anything because they arrange it all.

Information which are essential for the meeting should be provided in advance due to the fact Chinese don't like surprises and are able to prepare for the meeting consequently. They have time to agree on the attitude and come to the meeting with the confidence that they can lean on the collective wisdom of „appropriate departments”.

Punctuality is a must. Timekeeping is considered to be a virtue and to let your colleagues waiting is rude. If you are late, apology is necessary. But on the other hand arrive in advance to a meeting is not appropriate either.³⁹

It is said for business meetings in the United States that when you arrive on time, you are early and if you arrive late, you are in fact on time. But one must be really careful because there are only few businesses where coming late is acceptable.

In a real world, people usually come on time or even early to find parking place for instance or to calm down a little bit. Bearing this in mind it could be said that to arrive in advance to the meeting is in fact on time.⁴⁰

³⁹ Scott D. Seligman, *Čínská obchodní etiketa* (Praha: BB/art s.r.o., 2007), 96 - 97.

⁴⁰ Phyllis Davis, “Meeting Etiquette in American Business,” <http://www.videojug.com>, WMV file, <http://www.videojug.com/interview/meeting-etiquette-in-american-business-2> (accessed March 26, 2012).

5 NEGOTIATION – KEY TO SUCCESS

The approach towards the negotiation varies across the cultures. It would not be surprising that the negotiation in the United States differs from the negotiation which is performed in China.

So what can one expect from the Chinese and American negotiators?

United States

- Informality

To ease the pressure a little bit, Americans tend to address their counterparts by the first names. The only exception might occur when there is much older person in the group. The sense of individualism reflects also in the addressing. Americans use the pronoun “you” instead of the phrase “your company”.⁴¹

- Friendliness

*“Americans view the negotiations as a process of reaching the agreement under “adversarial” conditions. Since friendliness helps to achieve the negotiating result, Americans are comfortable conducting business negotiations in that sort of atmosphere.”*⁴² If the friendliness is lacking, it might be sign that Americans are not willing to do the business.

It is quite common for Americans to use the phrase “win – win” but it might be rather interpreted as “I win and you think you have won.”⁴³

⁴¹ Robert Day, *Working the American Way: How to Communicate Successfully with Americans at Work* (United Kingdom: How To Books Ltd., 2004), 152, http://books.google.cz/books?id=imvqxKVS-YAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed March 27, 2012).

⁴² Robert Day, *Working the American Way: How to Communicate Successfully with Americans at Work* (United Kingdom: How To Books Ltd., 2004), 153, http://books.google.cz/books?id=imvqxKVS-YAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed March 27, 2012).

⁴³ Robert Day, *Working the American Way: How to Communicate Successfully with Americans at Work* (United Kingdom: How To Books Ltd., 2004), 153, http://books.google.cz/books?id=imvqxKVS-YAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed March 27, 2012).

- Directness

It is nothing unusual for Americans to use direct “no” as the sign of disagreement. Thus, if one wants to do business with them s/he must do the same because it is expected. Therefore it might be problematic for American business people to decode indirect way of saying “no”.⁴⁴

China

- The first word that one might hear during a negotiation is “yes”. It means that “yes” does not come last, as it might be in other western cultures. Consequently, being used to this word coming at the end of the meeting, many foreign investors assume the deal is accepted when hearing it. What might look like the end is in fact only the beginning of lengthy negotiating process.⁴⁵

- Chinese are said to be really tough negotiators. The most important factor of negotiation is to keep the “face”. When speaking of the “face” we speak about the concept which is quite difficult to transfer into western culture. Still, it can be somehow compared to the respect, honor or equality. While negotiating with Chinese make sure they are given the “face”. But it does not mean you should lose your “face”. You should always bear in mind that you ought to provide the “face” without losing your own.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Robert Day, *Working the American Way: How to Communicate Successfully with Americans at Work* (United Kingdom: How To Books Ltd., 2004), 154, http://books.google.cz/books?id=imvqxKVS-YAC&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed March 27, 2012).

⁴⁵ Laurence J. Brahm, *When Yes Means No! (or Yes or Maybe): How to Negotiate a Deal in China* (Massachusetts: Tuttle Publishing, 2003), 15, http://www.google.cz/books?id=tDJN0TAPUfc&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed March 27, 2012).

⁴⁶ Laurence J. Brahm, *When Yes Means No! (or Yes or Maybe): How to Negotiate a Deal in China* (Massachusetts: Tuttle Publishing, 2003), 18, http://www.google.cz/books?id=tDJN0TAPUfc&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed March 27, 2012).

II. ANALYSIS

6 SAMPLE AND DATA

In the practical part of my bachelor thesis I would like to turn the attention towards the students attending the study course called English for Business Administration. What I would like to do is to analyze how developed is their knowledge of the etiquette itself and how developed is their knowledge of the social and business etiquette in the United States of America and China.

Since they are studying this type of course, they are somehow predetermined to work in the multicultural companies and enterprises, whether it will be at the managerial positions or at the administrative positions. That is why they should be able to act and to know how to behave in a cross – cultural environment. Students should also be accustomed to the diverse aspects of the foreign business.

The sample of the study includes forty responses collected from the questionnaire I have distributed among the students who are currently studying at Tomas Bata University. There were twenty male respondents and twenty female respondents.

The questionnaire contains twenty – one questions, including also the questions asking about the age and the gender. Full form of the questionnaire is visible in appendix.

6.1 Analysis

The analysis has been done to show how students master the aspects of cross – cultural etiquette. All data obtained from the questionnaire have been evaluated and then compared with the theory which was provided above in the theoretical part of my bachelor thesis.

6.2 Evaluation

6.2.1 Question 1: Etiquette is:?

The first question was posed in order to find out how students perceive the etiquette itself.

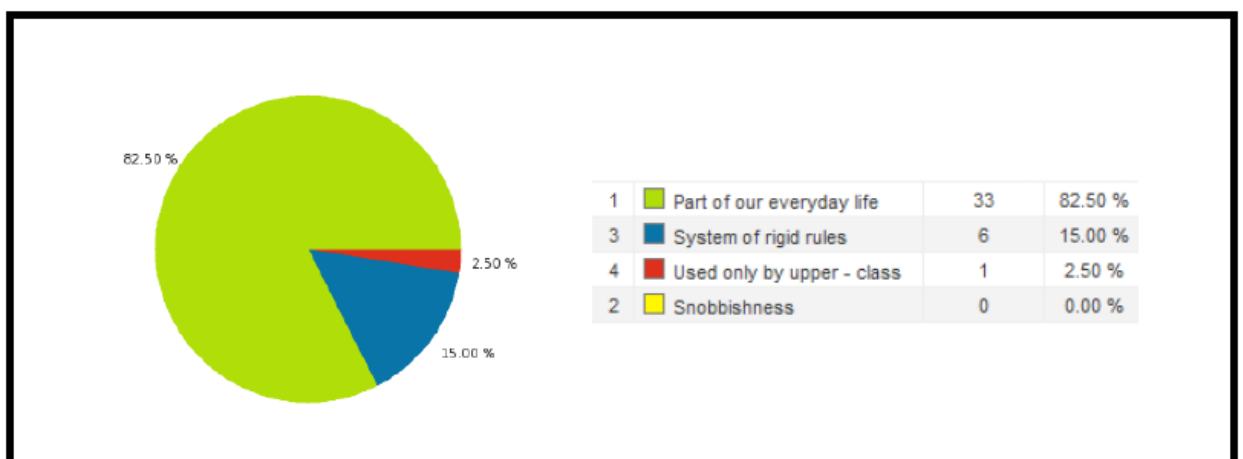


Figure 1 – What is the etiquette?

As we could find out in the theoretical part, etiquette is definitely not a system of rigid rules to be followed it is rather a guideline that should help us in our everyday living. When we speak about the etiquette we also speak about the respect that should be given. We speak about the consideration which is very essential and we deal with the honesty.

Yet 15 % of the respondents still think the etiquette is just a system of rigid rules. We could also notice, that one person thinks the etiquette is performed only by the representatives of the upper – class.

Based on the knowledge from the theoretical part, we found out that the etiquette is a part of our everyday life and we cannot hide from it. We could encounter with the etiquette during our lunch in the restaurant or while we travel in a bus. Thus, the 82, 5 % of the people who chose this answer were absolutely right and they might realize that the etiquette is important for each and one of us.

People have quite distorted ideas about what etiquette is and what is not in these days but we can see that none of the respondents think that those who act according to the etiquette are snobs. Which is, according to my opinion, quite pleasant finding.

6.2.2 Question 2: Is the etiquette a matter of the past and people do not need it nowadays?

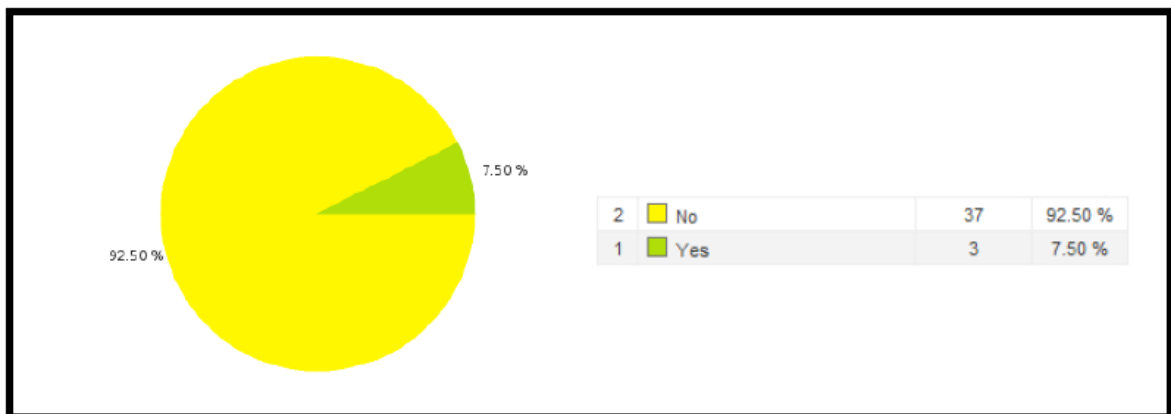


Figure 2 – Etiquette belongs to the past.

We have already proved that the etiquette cannot be perceived as the matter of the old times in the previous question. What is more, there is a common saying that proclaims an idea the society is a game which people play and the etiquette consequently serves as the rules. If you then follow these rules you play the game well.

Assuming the etiquette to be the matter of the old times is thus wrong. Still, there are 7 people; it means 5 % of the respondents, who think so. Fortunately, the rest of the respondents, more precisely 92, 5 % of them, is well aware of the fact the etiquette is not just some kind of forgotten piece of knowledge coming from the past.

6.2.3 Question 3: Is the etiquette universal?

We could have learnt in the theoretical part of my bachelor thesis, there is nothing like the universal etiquette. As far as the etiquette is concerned, it is said that it differs across the regions, states, cultures and also across the time.

That is why the answer for this question is with no doubt definitely “no”. For thirty - seven respondents, it means 92, 5 % of them, the answer was clear “no”. But there were also three respondents who think the etiquette is in fact universal. So they are probably not aware of the cross – cultural differences that are present.

The problem might occur when these three respondents get to know certain aspects of the business etiquette in the United States of America for example and then go to China expecting the business will be conducted the same way.

6.2.4 Question 4: How are the Americans perceived?

We can say without further hesitation that Americans tend to definitely be individualists. Whether we speak about the social aspects of their lives or we speak about the business they perform and conduct, the individualism is reflected in both of these areas.

Because of the fact the Americans are taught from an early childhood that they can achieve almost everything with a little help of the hard work and persistence, there is no mountain high enough to be climbed up, so to say.

Individualism is mirrored also in the way the Americans deal with the older people. In connection with the theoretical part, they rather transfer the elders into the Nursery house, than to live with them together under one roof.

The hard work goes hand in hand with the money, same as it goes hand in hand with a time. The common saying: „Time is money,” is not just a phrase for the Americans and it is not used in vain.

The fourth question had three possible answers. Respondents could choose from the option a) they are individualistic workaholics. There was an option b) Americans are

collaborative workers; and the last possible option was c) they are seen as not to be obsessed with time and money.

In connection with the information written in the theoretical part, we can cross out the option c) pretty much immediately. Still, there were four people; it means 10 % of the respondents, who think the Americans do not care about time and money what so ever. The answer b) was also chosen by 10 % of the respondents, but according to the given information it cannot be regarded as the most suitable option. The rest 80 % of the respondents chose the option a) which is the most suitable possible answer for the given question. These 80 % of the respondents might be well aware of the individualism so widely applied by the Americans.

6.2.5 Question 5: How are the Chinese perceived?

Contrary to the Americans, Chinese are said to be much more collaborative people. They tend to cherish collective thinking and apply this fact into almost all aspects of their lives. Not only collectivism is a strong aspect of Chinese culture but also Confucianism plays an important role.

Unlike the Americans who tend to push aside the elder people, Chinese remain with a close relationship with the old people and they mostly live together in one household.

2	Collaborative people being influenced by ancient Confucianism	28	70.00 %
3	Direct and open people	7	17.50 %
1	Individualists	5	12.50 %

Figure 3 – How are the Chinese perceived?

There were three possible answers to the posed question. In connection with the learnt information given in the theoretical part we can easily guess that the first option is the most appropriate answer. So do think the 70 % of the respondents. However, there is quite high percentage of people who still think that Chinese are perceived as individualists, which is, according to the given information, highly unlikely. And the second option which 17, 5 % of the respondents chose to be the correct one is unlikely even more, because of the fact, Chinese are naturally shy people not willing to express personal feelings.

6.2.6 Question 6: In Chinese culture the biggest respect is given to the:?

Having learnt the Chinese cherish the age there is no doubt that the biggest respect will be given to the old people. The reason is quite simple. The age is associated with the wisdom in Chinese culture. Old people are provided with the social precedence partly in a social sphere of their life and partly in the business contact.

The 80 % of the respondents think the biggest respect is given to the old people. Thus, we could say they would not make faux – pas while dealing with Chinese. Surprisingly, the other 20 % of respondents think, the biggest respect is given to the wealthy men.

6.2.7 Question 7: If you do not know how to use chopsticks properly, you should not even try to eat with it. Chinese people would be offended by your inability of its proper usage.

The seventh question was posed in order to find out how would people react and more precisely how would they act when invited for instance to the business lunch with Chinese business partner.

Regarding the table manners in China the use of cutlery is not ordinary way of eating the food. The only exception might be the use of the spoon while eating the soup. In every other instance chopsticks are used.

Any foreigner who comes to the Asian region might be afraid of not being able to use the chopsticks properly. That is why foreigners might withdraw from the usage of it worrying they would offend Chinese business partner.

There were 72, 5 % of the respondents who think that there is absolutely nothing wrong with someone's inability to use chopsticks and they would not be afraid to try it. This is really good finding. In fact, Chinese are understanding people and they do not mind if someone cannot use chopsticks. What is more, they are said to be delighted if they have the possibility to demonstrate the proper use of chopsticks.

Three following questions are dealing with the gift – giving in China. The questions were included into the questionnaire because of the fact the gift – giving plays very important role in business contact. Gifts are considered to be an expression of mutual trust and respect.

Nevertheless, gift – giving in China might be really tricky for foreigners. What I wanted to find out was if the respondents would succeed in this field as well.

6.2.8 Question 8: When Chinese is presented with a gift:

3	■ s/he expresses verbal gratitude	22	55.00 %
2	■ s/he refuses to accept it for the first time	17	42.50 %
1	■ s/he immediately unwraps it	1	2.50 %

Figure 4 – Gift-giving in China

Although 55 % of the respondents think the receiver would express verbal gratitude, the correct answer is in fact the second possible option. Chinese people do not usually express emotions. One must tell them at least two or three times that it is all right to accept the present. Only after that they would take over the gift with possible “thank you”.

6.2.9 Question 9: What should you give to the Chinese man if you want to offend him?

6.2.10 Question 10: What is the most suitable color for gift wrapping in China?

There were three possible answers for the question number nine. The first possibility was a) blue tie; then there was also possibility b) green hat; and the last option was c) white shoes.

Based on the information given in the theoretical part, we could have found out that the worst possible present a Chinese man can ever get is a green hat. This piece of clothing symbolizes an adultery performed by his wife.

3	■ White shoes	25	62.50 %
2	■ Green hat	9	22.50 %
1	■ Blue tie	6	15.00 %

Figure 5 – The worst gift for Chinese man.

Nevertheless, the most common answer which 62, 5 % of the respondents have chosen was the first one. It means that according to their opinion if you want to offend a Chinese man, you should give him white shoes.

Personally speaking, I am not surprised to hear that, simply because of the fact that white color is normally associated with approaching death in China. This fact might have led the respondents to their conclusion.

Not only should people choose the gift carefully, the attention must be paid to also to the wrapping in which is the gift delivered.

Assuming that the respondents consider the white color inappropriate they would not choose this type of coloring. Still, there were 32, 5 % of the respondents who would pack the present into the white wrapping paper. In fact, it is the second most common answer.

Another 50 % of the respondents think that the most appropriate color would be red color, which is according to the information given in the theoretical part the correct answer. It is simply because of the fact that the red color is associated with good luck in China.

To sum it up a little bit, if any of the respondents will ever undergo any kind of gift – giving ceremony in China, there is a slight possibility that s/he might have problems with it. In the better case they would embarrass themselves, in the worse case they might insult somebody and the possible business deal might be lost.

Proper introduction plays a very important role in every business contact. The first impression can be done only once and people remember it forever, so to say.

Next two questions are dealing with the names; the proper addressing of the Chinese person and the informality among the Americans.

6.2.11 Question 11: People from the USA tend to be quite informal while introducing each other. Is it possible that the first names are used almost instantly?

6.2.12 Question 12: What does the Chinese name consist of?

Respondents were asked if there is a possibility Americans would use the first name during the first introduction. The 90 % of them answered this question with strict “yes” and the rest of them answered the question with “no”.

In connection with the information provided in the theoretical part of my bachelor thesis we can say that the 90 % of the respondents are well aware of the informality the Americans tend to apply during their business interaction. Thus, they would not be surprised if their American business partner would address them with the first name.

The question twelve was a lot more difficult for the respondents.

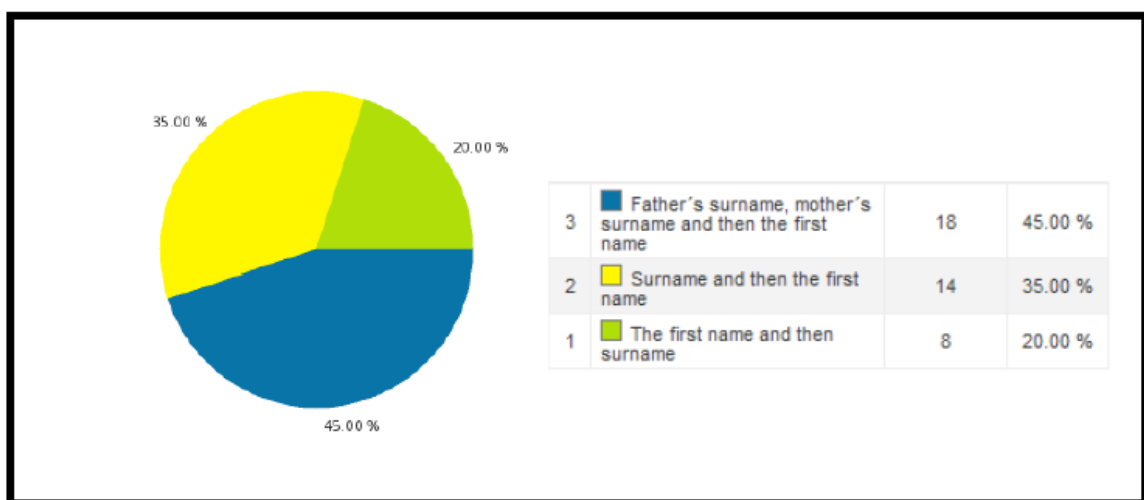


Figure 6 – The Chinese name.

As we can see in the picture there were three possible options for the respondents to choose from and where the second, or even the first answer, can stand for the correct answers. However, the first answer is not fully correct it was provided just to confuse the respondents.

However, 20 % of the respondents are not aware of the fact that it is the surname which comes the first in the Chinese name. This 20 % of the respondents might embarrass themselves while addressing certain Chinese businessman or businesswoman.

It is advisable for all those who plan to conduct business with Chinese to have at least slight knowledge of the Chinese names.

Furthermore I would like to turn the attention towards the physical contact. In order to do so there are two questions which deal with this topic. Whether we speak about China or the United States of America, both questions are focused on handshaking.

6.2.13 Question 13: Is handshaking possible physical contact in China?

The appropriate greeting performed by Chinese is definitely a bow. But the handshake is also possible physical contact, especially in a business contact.

When Chinese deal with their business partners from a west, whether we speak about the Americans or any other business people from the western hemisphere, there is a chance the Chinese consent to perform a handshake with them. Not only is the handshake then carried out though. The handshake comes the first followed almost instantly by the bow. By doing so both sides show the respect to each culture participated in the business negotiation.

Regarding the answers the respondents have provided me with, it is obvious they are not aware of the possible handshake which might be performed in certain situations. More than a half of them, more precisely 24 of the people which makes 60 % of the respondents, still think the handshake is not possible physical contact in China.

6.2.14 Question 14: Even though Americans are considered to be touch – oriented culture, there is only one appropriate physical contact while doing the business.

Americans tend to be informal to ease the tension a little bit. This informality reflects in almost every aspect of their life. Business contact is not the exception. The only problem is the informality cannot go beyond the limits.

The fourteenth question was accompanied with three possible answers. The answer which was chosen most of the times was in fact the correct one. The 80 % of the respondents answered the question saying that the only appropriate physical contact in business is handshaking.

It means that 32 respondents out of 40 respondents are quite well informed and would not have bigger problems with adequate business etiquette.

6.2.15 Question 15: Unlike in the United States of America, the personal space in China is...?

To be able to deal with business partners from China the simple knowledge of proper introduction, table manners or how the social etiquette works is not enough. One must be also aware of the personal space which differs across the cultures.

As far as the Chinese personal space is concerned the distance between people is much smaller. One reason for this might lie in the fact that China is extremely densely populated region and people are consequently adjusted to stand closer to each other.

Based on the information I have provided in the theoretical part, this aspect causes real problems for their American business partners who are used to have a lot wider personal space.

Nevertheless, the whole 40 % of the respondents think that the personal space in China is much smaller. We can assume that it would not be surprising situation for them when some Chinese business person will be standing right in front of them breathing to their faces. However, the whole 55 % of the respondents think that the personal space is a lot wider.

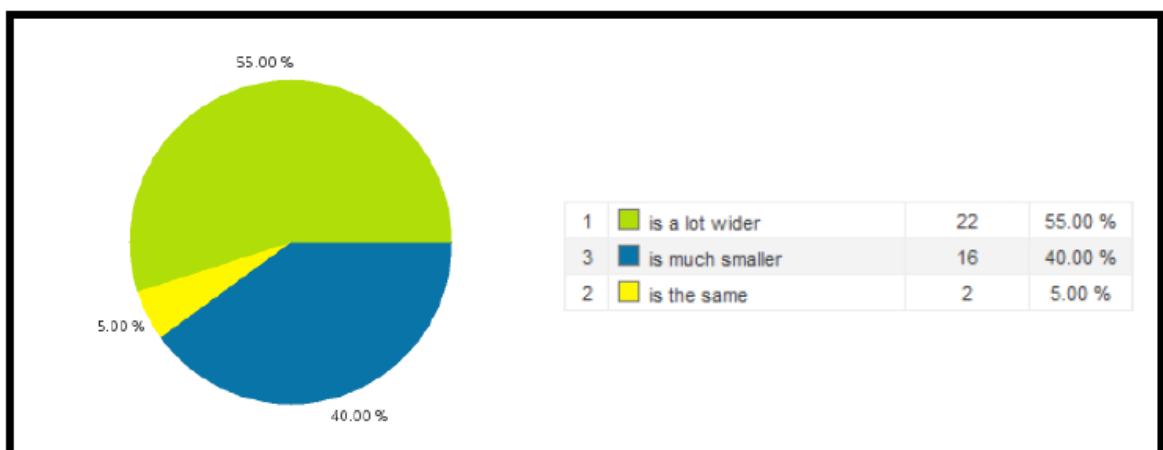


Figure 7 – Personal space in China

6.2.16 Question 16: Direct eye – contact is normally performed in the United States. However, when people do not maintain direct eye – contact, how can they be seen?

Regarding the information given in the theoretical part, direct eye – contact is performed rather in the United States than in China. However, there are people who are not really comfortable with direct eye – contact.

The 67, 5 % of the respondents think that Americans would consider those who do not maintain direct eye – contact to be dishonest. The other 17, 5 % of the respondents answered this question with a proposition that people would be perceived as showing the respect to others. And the last 15 % of the respondents is convinced of the fact that people not maintaining direct – eye contact would be seen as shy.

In connection with the given information we can say that the first 67, 5 % of the respondents were correct.

6.2.17 Question 17: What is the most appropriate time for business meeting in China to arrive to?

For more than a half of the respondents, it means 75 % of them, it would be absolutely normal to arrive at the business meeting in China in advance. The next 20 % of respondents would arrive on time and surprisingly 5 % of the respondents would arrive at the business meeting late.

The 5 % of the respondents would cause themselves irreversible damage because of the fact it is unacceptable in China to arrive late at the meeting. The reason is simple because the punctuality in China is ranked really high.

6.2.18 Question 18: What type of people the negotiators in the United States of America tend to be?

The eighteenth question was an open question. Respondents should have provided the answer which is according to them the most suitable characteristic of the American negotiator. Their task was to provide the picture of the American negotiators and how they see them.

The 70 % of the respondents answered the question with the claim that Americans tend to be friendly, informal and direct while negotiating some kind of business. The 17, 5 % of the respondents wrote that Americans tend to be tough negotiators. They are informal and also unfriendly. The rest of the respondents, it means 12, 5 %, think that the most suitable labeling would include characteristics like formal, bureaucratic and indirect.

Except for the last 12, 5 % of the respondents, all of the answers are more or less correct. Based on the information given in the theoretical part, we can say that American negotiators tend to be informal during negotiations. They also tend to be friendly to ease the tension a little bit.

7 RESPONDENTS

The respondents who were willing to help me with the practical part of my bachelor thesis and filled out the questionnaire can be divided into three different groups.

There were those who are absolutely not interested in the etiquette and did not ever participate in any kind of the etiquette courses. More precisely it was 20 % of the respondents. Furthermore, there were those who are interested in the etiquette on one hand but on the other hand, they did not have the opportunity to participate in some etiquette courses. It was 40 % of the respondents.

The remaining respondents, 40 % of them, are interested in the etiquette and went through some types of etiquette courses. The etiquette courses which the respondents participated in are as follows:

- Etiquette course for managers – course of etiquette and the table manners
 - Course of the etiquette in the Bata's Villa; course organized by the Tomas Bata Foundation

- Eating with people from Russia
 - Bata Foundation Etiquette Course

- Knigge Rules – German course of the etiquette
 - Organized by Bata Foundation

- Managerial etiquette
 - Studied from the books written by Ladislav Špaček

- “Good Manners” – table manners etiquette for managers
 - Tomas Bata Foundation

CONCLUSION

Etiquette is not a matter of the past. It is present in almost every aspect of our living. If you want to succeed, whether we talk about the social aspect of the life or the professional sphere, you should be accustomed to it. Etiquette serves as a tool for a smooth interaction among people.

China is an enormous country with an ancient culture and strong traditions. They value the age, because it symbolizes the wisdom. They find the strength in a group. That is why almost everything is done collaboratively. Furthermore, Chinese bureaucracy is really hard to get used to. Certain aspects of Chinese etiquette might seem strange to the people who come here to conduct a business. Nevertheless, if you want the deal to be eventually negotiated in your favor you have to play the game right.

As far as the Americans are concerned, they are the right opposite of the Chinese. They prefer to do things individually. They do not value the age in a range the Chinese do and while negotiating a deal they tend to be rather familiar than tough. It can be said that Americans and Chinese have almost nothing in common.

Despite this fact, if you are not acquainted with the etiquette you would fail at either of these two cultures. Even though there are some differences the basis of the etiquette remains the same and without knowing the etiquette any interaction should be conducted.

There was a questionnaire examination in the practical part of my bachelor thesis. The examination was conducted among the students who study the course called English for Business Administration.

Some of the respondents have undergone certain etiquette courses and some did not. Despite the fact almost none of the respondents studied the etiquette more thoroughly they still seem to be able to interact with the different cultures without bigger problems. In spite of a few discrepancies they would be able to interact with the people from China and the United States without being offensive, inappropriate or without the possibility of causing an irreversible faux – pas.

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APPENDICES

P I Questionnaire

A Cross – cultural Analysis of Social and Business Etiquette in the United States of America and China

Dear students,
I would like to ask you for a little help.

By filling out this 5-10 minute questionnaire, you will help me obtain the very best results for the practical part of my bachelor thesis.

Etiquette is?

- Part of our everyday life
- Snobbishness
- System of rigid rules
- Used only by upper - class

Is the etiquette a matter of the past and people do not need it nowadays?

- Yes
- No

Is the etiquette universal?

- Yes
- No

How are the Americans perceived?

- Individualistic workaholics
- Collaborative workers
- Not obsessed with time and money

How are the Chinese perceived?

- Individualists
- Collaborative people being influenced by ancient Confucianism
- Direct and open people

In Chinese culture the biggest respect is given to the?

- Married women
- Wealthy men
- Old people

If you do not know how to use chopsticks properly, you should not even try to eat with it. Chinese people would be offended by your inability of its proper usage.

- Yes
- No

When Chinese is presented with a gift:

- s/he immediately unwraps it
- s/he refuses to accept it for the first time
- s/he expresses verbal gratitude

What should you give to the Chinese man if you want to offend him?

- Blue tie
- Green hat
- White shoes

What is the most suitable color for gift wrapping in China?

- White
- Red
- Black

People from the USA tend to be quite informal while introducing each other. Is it possible that the first names are used almost instantly?

- Yes
- No

What does the Chinese name consist of?

- The first name and then surname
- Surname and then the first name
- Father's surname, mother's surname and then the first name

Is handshaking possible physical contact in China?

- Yes
- No

Even though Americans are considered to be touch – oriented culture, there is only one appropriate physical contact while doing the business.

- Handshaking
- Hugging and handshaking
- Hugging and kissing

Unlike in the United States of America, the personal space in China is...?

- Is a lot wider
- Is the same
- Is much smaller

Direct eye – contact is normally performed in the United States. However, when people do not maintain direct eye – contact, how can they be seen?

What is the most appropriate time for business meeting in China to arrive to?

- In advance
- More or less on time
- Late

What type of people the negotiators in the United States of America tend to be?

APPENDIX P I: QUESTIONNAIRE