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Intercultural training modules and programmes need to be grounded in theory, and this article presents a theoretical framework that is grounded in economy-based differences between countries, an area that has been hitherto neglected. The framework captures 10 key economy-based differences that can help orient business people to the differences beyond cultural differences in work values. This framework can be readily adopted for education and training purposes by allowing participants to work in a group to develop an understanding of the 10 characteristics of economically developing and developed societies, and discussing ways to deal with various related communication barriers emerging from them. It is hoped that other such frameworks will be explored to enrich the training tool kit of intercultural trainers and academics beyond cultural theory-based frameworks.

Intercultural Communication in a Dynamic Environment: Preparing Managers of Developing and Developed Countries Using Cultural Standards

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We are living in an age of accelerating changes where growth is so rapid that continuity between the past and the present human experiences is broken in many domains. For this reason, Drucker (1969) called our times an age of discontinuity and Toffler (1970) predicted that our lives would be filled with future shocks. There has been a substantial increase in international trade and foreign direct investment from the developed countries to the developing countries has grown multifold. This growth has led to the globalisation of markets and despite the rhetoric against it, many scholars point to the social good that it brings to the world (Bhagwati, 2004; Rodrik, 1997). In the light of globalisation and the rapid changes (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990) facing the world, the need for effective communication among people of different parts of the world has assumed staggering importance (Targowski & Metwalli, 2003). All nations, both developing and developed, are undergoing a period of transformation. Levitt (1983) was prophetic when he described the changes occurring 20 years ago and his words still describe today's world, "A powerful force drives the world towards a converging commonality, and that force is technology. It has proletarianized communication, transport, and travel. It has made isolated places and impoverished people eager for modernity's allurements. Almost everyone everywhere wants all the things they have heard about, seen, or experienced via the new technologies" (Levitt, 1983, p. 92).

We find that while the developing nations are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of information and new advanced technology, the developed nations are moving from large organisations of mass-producing-advertising-distributing to the cottage industries (Michie & Smith, 1998; Toffler, 1985), apparently in line with Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* (Schumacher, 1973). In both these types of nations, new value systems are evolving, which are simultaneously similar and dissimilar. It is this phase of transformation that makes global business difficult today. Managers in the two worlds—developing and developed—are both still looking for their respective frames of reference, which are yet to evolve fully and might never evolve fully due to the rapid transformation occurring everywhere. Differences in frames of reference have been argued as the most common and major hindrance to an effective communication (Garnett, 1992). As cross-cultural communication is quite complicated in itself because "different groups of people use different frameworks for simplifying the world" (March, 1994, p. 10), this instability of frames of reference makes it even more difficult. In other words, the absence of stable references for the managers of the two worlds aggravates the communication problem further.

Swidler (1986) argued that people have unsettled lives in periods of social transformation and that culture offers a better understanding of their strategies of action in dealing with the events around them. According to Swidler, people move from ideology to tradition to common sense, and it can be argued that “cultural standards” (Thomas, 1998) can be particularly useful in these turbulent times since they provide a snapshot reference point for understanding the ideology people use to develop their strategies. Thomas proposed culture to be “an orientation system”, which “influences the perception, thinking, judgment and behavior of all the members within this social unit and thus defines their membership of it” (Thomas, 1998, p. 72). He suggested that such an influence is carried out by certain “cultural standards”, which are implicit theories of how people think and behave in certain situations. Thus, Thomas (1998) views critical incidents as indicators of clashing “cultural standards” of the actors involved, and has presented much evidence that it is possible to derive the cultural standards of a certain culture by analysing critical incidents.

Knowing the cultural standards of two cultures allows the comparison of elements of the cultural standard of one culture with that of another. This comparison facilitates trainees’ learning much in the same way as Stewart’s (1966) Contrast American Method (Bhawuk, 1990; Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000). Learning is most effective where there is the most contrast between the elements of the cultural standards. Building on the literature of theory-based assimilators (Bhawuk, 1998, 2001a; Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Bhawuk & Triandis, 1996; Landis & Bhawuk, 2004), it is proposed here that it is possible to develop cultural standards for cultures that can be differentiated on some theoretical dimension. Since much work has been done on individualism and collectivism, the criterion of economic development that economists and other social scientists use to differentiate countries into Developing and Developed Countries is proposed to expand the scope of intercultural training literature. In a study of how firms learn to operate international joint ventures, it was found that while cultural differences do not impact the performance of international joint ventures in the developed countries, they do influence the performance of international joint ventures in developing countries (Barkema et al., 1997). There is also some evidence that a country with a higher GDP incurs a lower communication cost in a cross-cultural setting than a country with a lower GDP (Targowski & Metwalli, 2003). Hence, it may be useful to study cultural standards of developing and developed countries. Mining the rich literature on developing and developed countries,

some of the characteristics of these countries are presented, which may be used to develop cultural standards for them.

It is important to note that the culture of developed countries is not more advanced than the culture of developing countries and neither is it proposed nor implied here that the culture of developing countries will converge on the culture of developed countries. In fact, there is some evidence that the convergence hypothesis is based on simplistic assumptions and the cultures of developing countries are unlikely to converge on the culture of developed countries (Berry, 2008; Bhawuk, 2008), which is characterised by what has been referred to as industrial culture and modernity (Inkeles & Smith, 1974) by some researchers. However, we can use the economic criterion to categorise countries into developed and developing countries, and much like we can use the defining attributes of individualism and collectivism to prepare managers from one type of society to be effective in the other (Bhawuk, 1998, 2001a), it is plausible to effectively use the characteristics of organisations and managerial practices in economically developed and developing countries to train people for intercultural interactions.

In what follows, first the characteristics of the two types of countries from a theoretical perspective are identified, and some important cultural standards are distilled from them. Then the process of communication is examined using a general model of communication, outlining and analysing the barriers to communication. Finally, some recommendations for removing these barriers are presented. It is hoped that following this approach will encourage the development of useful intercultural training materials for managers from these two economic archetypes of countries.

Cultural Standards of Developing and Developed Countries

In this section, the characteristics of developing and developed countries are compared and contrasted to derive 10 cultural standards on which these countries are significantly different. These cultural standards could be used to develop critical incidents for training people in one of these countries to be able to work in the other.

1. In developed countries, information processing would be heavily stressed, while in developing countries, the role of labour, raw material,

capital and land would still be considered more important as factors of production¹. This idea is supported in Porter's (1990) work in which he argues that nations go through four different stages of economic development: factor-driven, investment-driven, innovation-driven and wealth-driven. Developing countries are likely to be in the factor-driven or investment-driven stage of economic development, whereas developed countries are likely to be in the later two stages, driven by innovation and wealth. For example, Bangalore is internationally known for its software productivity and is referred to as the Silicon Valley of India. However, unlike the Silicon Valley in the United States, which prides in the development or export of new technologies, the driving force of the Indian software industry is still in the export of labour-intensive services (Parthasarathy, 2004).

In the first stage, competitive advantages are derived solely from the basic factors of production like cheap labour, natural resources that can be used in manufacturing by other countries and favourable growing conditions of certain agricultural products. The nation's focus is on trying to achieve an efficient use of these factors for economic growth. In the next stage, competitive advantage at the national level is accomplished by aggressively investing in education, technology and management methods to enhance production capabilities. As countries develop from a factor-driven to an investment-driven economy, its labour force changes from being semi-skilled to better educated and better paid. However, the increased efficiency and productivity within the economy more than offsets the increase in labour costs (Porter, 1990).

In the innovation-driven stage, in order to maintain competitive advantages, firms must seek out new advantages by being more innovative in offering new products as well as more flexible in their firms' strategies. In the final stage, the driving force is the wealth that has already been achieved from existing industries. In this stage, the nation and the firms seek out new competitive advantages by widening out and adding new industries that have high value added capabilities while

¹ The cultural standards for developed countries are derived from Alvin Toffler's description of The Adaptive Corporation (pp. 95–96, 101, 105–108, 117–118).

at the same time, weeding out those industries whose advantages came from country factors or investment factors and are no longer profitable (Porter, 1990). For example, Japanese television manufacturers moved from Japan to Korea and Taiwan and now they are in China. Clearly, the frameworks used by the managers from developing and developed countries are necessarily different since their economic needs and managerial strategies are quite different.

2. In developed countries, the basic needs of people would be satisfied. To motivate them, economic rewards would not be sufficient and work would have to be challenging to meet their growth and self-actualisation needs. In contrast to this, in developing countries, economic incentives would still play an important role since the basic needs of the people would not be fully met. In a comparative study of Chinese and US workers, Chen (1995) also found that financial incentives were more important for the Chinese than the US workers. These differences between developed and developing countries are supported in two large cross-cultural studies. Diener and colleagues found that happiness or subjective well-being is a function of income in the developing countries, but not in the developed countries (Diener, 2000). Similarly, Inglehart (1997) found that developed countries are post materialist, in that people expect their national governments to focus on providing more opportunity for individual participation in government decisions and defending freedom of speech. On the other hand, developing countries were found to be materialist, in that people in these countries expected their national government to focus on keeping order within the country and keeping prices at minimum.
3. Having realised the upper limits to economies of scale, developed countries would have slowly moved from having large bureaucratic organisations to large “constellation” type organisations, and the constellations would consist of a number of small and independent organisations (Toffler, 1985). This is supported in both the autonomy provided to business units in large US and European organisations, and the way organisations have been spinning off divisions to keep their overall size manageable. On the other hand, developing countries would still be realising profits from economies of scale and would prefer large organisations as evidenced by the growth of the Asian multinationals since the 1980s (Wells, 1983).

4. Developed countries would be moving towards customised goods, in contrast to mass-produced goods, with the help of information processing, robotic, process technology, and computer-aided design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM) (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990; Toffler, 1985). On the other hand, developing countries would still be stressing mass-production, despite a growing awareness of customised production.
5. The organisations of developed countries would adopt an adhocratic style of management (Toffler, 1985), whereas in developing countries, organisations would still be largely bureaucratic. Organisations in developed countries would be following what is called double-loop learning, whereas organisations in the developing countries would still be following single-loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978).
6. While the government and managers of developed countries would feel the globalisation imperatives, those in developing countries would still be obsessed with nationalism and protectionism (Bhagwati, 1988; Toffler, 1985). For example, in studying the proportion of equity in joint ventures for companies from developed countries, Beamish (1985, 1992) concluded that joint ventures in developed countries were generally 50/50 but it was much less in developing countries. In another study on tariff protection in developed and developing countries, Conybeare (1983) found that the average tariff level in developing countries was 50%, whereas it was only 11% in developed countries. Also, there is evidence that manufacturing industries in developing countries, as compared to developed countries, are often more heavily regulated and protected (Tybout, 2000). The emphasis on nationalism and protectionism can clearly be seen in the movement of developing countries against joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the protests organised against the WTO agenda even in the developed countries. Interestingly, two-thirds of the WTO members are from the developing world, but even in these member countries, we find the emergence of various opposing coalition groups that protest against the WTO agenda based on protectionism.
7. The managers of developed countries would be more geocentric while the managers of developing countries would be more ethnocentric and polycentric due largely to a lack of exposure to the global culture (Adler, 1997). Geocentric managers are likely to adopt ideas based on

their merit rather than on the source of the ideas, whereas ethnocentric and polycentric managers are open to ideas from their own culture or from countries that are more advanced than their own. For example, when Saturn was created, a team of employees and managers from General Motors went to visit automobile manufacturers all over the world and generously adopted ideas from different companies. The United States government, similarly, in her effort to reform the Social Security system, consulted experts from a wide variety of sources, from Chile to Sweden (Tumulty & Roston, 2005).

8. Developed countries would have micromarkets with buyers having a bias for what they want. Its market would have more non-price competition (Toffler, 1985). On the other hand, in developing countries, buyers would have need bias and, due to the lower standard of living of the society, there would be more price competition in the market.
9. Developed countries would be more democratic and open while developing countries would be less democratic and would have various types of political systems depending on their cultural background and geographical location (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). This would cause conflict in the basic values of the managers of the two worlds, one would believe in equality of human beings, whereas the other would believe in privileges derived from family background and other such sources.
10. Developed countries would have fragmented values resulting from social destandardisation. Organisations would have to become multi-purposeful to fit into the social and physical surround. Organisations would be subjected to pressures from various sub-publics having conflicting values (Toffler, 1985). Developing countries would have more of a homogeneous value system and their organisations would be less subjected to public pressures. This is supported in the literature on cultural complexity, which shows that the developed countries tend to be more complex than the developing countries and they also tend to be more individualistic (Murdock & Provost, 1973; Triandis, 1994). The recent debate about pro-life versus pro-choice, rights of gay people, rights of children, and so forth, in developed countries shows how managers must deal with different issues in their environment, which are quite absent in the developing countries. Whether it be the pressure to create a smoke-free workplace

to protect the rights of non-smokers, the reasonable accommodation that organisations have to make for physically disabled people or the Family Leave Act passed in the United States in 1995, all point to the shifting focus of society at large from economic profit making to social well-being, a shift which is yet to be seen in the developing countries.

Critical incidents tapping the above 10 cultural standards could be the starting point of the development of an intercultural training programme to facilitate communication between managers of developed and developing countries. It would be useful to look into how communication would take place between the managers of the two types of countries. To appreciate the communication difficulties faced by managers from these countries, it is good to start with a general model of communication.

Modelling Communication Process in a Dynamic Environment

When people from different cultures interact, some confusion, misunderstanding, or conflict results, however well meaning (Brislin, 1999) they may be, especially when both are unaware of each other's cultural norms. The "Contact Debris" refers to the negative consequences of intercultural contact, for example, failure of international development projects, expatriates returning home prematurely, and so forth, which if not managed would lead to withdrawal and loss of future contact opportunities. Thomas and colleagues (Thomas, 1998) have provided a way to salvage the contact debris by constructing critical incidents out of them that would demonstrate the cultural standards of the two cultures, and thus facilitate communication between two people.

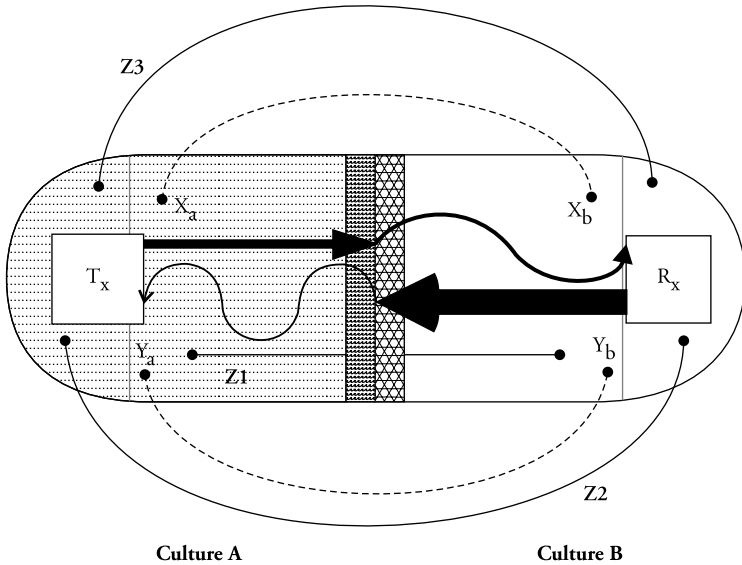
One way to visualise the model is to think of two organisms that live in different media, like seawater and freshwater. Most fish (for example, tuna, bluefish, cod, red drum, seawater jellyfish, and so on) cannot live in freshwater and vice versa (for example, carp, catfish, trout, goldfish, fresh water jellyfish cannot live in sea water). However, there are some fish (for example, the Atlantic salmon) that can adapt to both sea and fresh water (Wurts, 1998), as well as amphibians that can live in both water and on ground. Similarly, with the exception of some people who have a high level of intercultural competencies (Dinges & Baldwin, 1996) and can adjust to

any type of cultural environment quite easily, most people will have difficulty in adjusting to a new cultural environment. Given the choice, most people would prefer to stay in the comfort and familiarity of their own culture, as we are all ethnocentric (Triandis, 1990). However, in the era of globalisation, interacting with a new culture is not a choice but rather an imperative. This is where cultural standards can play an important role.

Continuing with the metaphor, imagine that the jellyfish that lives in seawater and the jellyfish that lives in freshwater were to realise that floating together in both media was the only way to increase their chance of survival. Thus, they are likely to float together by holding on to each other with some of their tentacles, and these tentacles would serve as a means of communication, signalling to each other the need to adjust according to the changes in the environment. The cultural standards could be visualised as links, much like these tentacles, between two people, which allow them to communicate effectively. Once some contact is established between two people, they begin to recognise emic elements (for example, bowing versus shaking hands) of some general etic constructs (for example, greeting people), which further help them communicate effectively by recognising and building on mutual similarities. These links of understanding become additional contact links that further facilitate effective communication. Thus, multiple linkages can be developed through the understanding of cultural standards, which facilitates further interaction between two people. This model (see Figure 1) offers a special role for cultural standards to build the bridge between people from two cultures, and complements the basic elements of the communication process, which are discussed next.

The transmitter (Tx) and receiver (Rx) are immersed in their respective cultures represented by circles. Since two circles are only able to meet at one point, a rectangular face is added to the circles to represent multiple points of contact between Tx and Rx. When two people come into contact, unprepared, they generate much "Contact Debris", which provides a rich source for developing cultural standards. The curves, Z1, Z2, Z3, and so on, which join two points in cultures A and B, show the links of understanding developed through the mastery of cultural standards and result from making isomorphic attributions (Triandis, 1975). Curves joining Xa to Xb, Ya to Yb, and so on, represent links of understanding developed over time through the mastery of emic representations of etic concepts. The multiple links represent the communication links that allow the development of an effective and dynamic

Figure 1
A Dynamic Interactive Model of the Intercultural Communication Process




Legend:


T_x : Transmitter

R_x : Receiver

$Z1, Z2, Z3$, etc.: Links developed by the use of cultural standards

X_a & X_b (Y_a & Y_b): Emic representation of a universal X (or Y) in Cultures A and B respectively

 Contact debris in Culture A

 Contact debris in Culture B

relationship between two people from different cultures. The signal going from T_x to R_x (and from R_x to T_x) is shown to go through a transformation, implying that a non-isomorphic attribution is being made.

The elements of the communication process (transmitter, receiver, channel, noise, and so on) shown in the model are adapted from Shannon and Weaver (1949, pp. 5–6) and Berlo (1960, Ch 2 & 3). Managers function as transmitters and receivers, sending and receiving organisational signals (message) through an organisational medium (formal and/or informal channels). The communication process is a closed cycle, in that managers

provide feedback to each other to ensure that communication has been effective (effective communication means the received signal is equal in all respects to the transmitted signal leading to isomorphic attributions). Noise creeping in at every stage of the communication process causes an aberration in receiving the signal or the feedback, which can be avoided by incorporating filters, correctors or adjusters. In effect, noise constitutes barriers to communication and filters constitute methods of minimising these barriers.² In the following section, first, various barriers to communication are discussed and then how their effects can be reduced to some degree, if not removed completely, are suggested.

Transmitter Related Barriers

A manager's function as a signal transmitter or source of communication is affected by the following four factors: communication skills, knowledge level, socio-cultural bias and attitudes (Berlo, 1960). Communication skills include such skills as writing, speaking and gesturing, and mastering them is a prequalification for successful communication. Knowledge level implies specific knowledge about a subject matter and also the communication process itself. One cannot communicate effectively if there is a lack of subject knowledge. Also, if one is a specialist, communication may become difficult as the receiver may not decipher the jargons. Barriers related to communication skills and knowledge level are not discussed in this paper; the assumption being a good manager possesses them. Barriers related to socio-cultural biases and attitudes are important in cross-cultural communication and are discussed next.

Socio-cultural Biases

A manager's socio-cultural bias, his mental programming, is one of the most important factors on which rests the success of cross-cultural communication.

² This basic process model continues to be presented in current textbooks and despite much research, has remained as the foundation of communication. The objective here is to examine this model in the context of intercultural communication to evaluate and emphasize its relevance to communication between the managers of developed and developing countries. The use of the classic citations should not be misconstrued as a disregard for the development in communication research.

“Every person’s mental programming is partly unique, partly shared with others. We can distinguish broadly three levels of uniqueness in mental programs...the universal level...the collective level...the individual level... Mental programs can be inherited ... or learned after birth” (Hofstede, 1980, p. 2). It is the collective programming, which is of importance to us since “learning collective mental programs goes on during our entire lives, but as most of it deals with fundamental facts of life, we tend to learn it when we are very young...” (Hofstede, 1980, p. 3).

The managers of developed and the developing countries would have different mental programmes as the cultural differences between their countries are quite pronounced. Their mental programmes are also likely to be shaped by their organisational cultures, as aptly put by March and Simon (1958, p. 186), “the world tends to be perceived by the organization members in terms of the particular concepts that are reflected in the organization’s vocabulary”. As is normal with all of us, they would be referring to their “Self-reference Criterion” (Lee, 1966) to communicate and to analyse communication. Self-reference Criterion (SRC) means the unconscious reference to one’s own cultural values or collective programming when speaking about other cultures.

Attitude-Related Biases

A manager’s attitude towards oneself, the subject matter (of communication) and the receiver also affects him as the transmitter (Berlo, 1960). Attitudes can create a lot of noise in the form of attribution. According to Triandis (1971), members of different cultures develop idiosyncratic ways of looking at their social environment and develop unique subjective cultures, which are difficult for people from other cultures to understand. Because of this difference in subjective cultures, Triandis (1975) argued that it is difficult to reinforce people from other cultures and incorrect or non-isomorphic attributions are often made in cross-cultural communication.

Signal-Related Barriers

The signal is the actual physical product of the transmitter. There are three important things about a signal—the treatment, the coding and the content.

Psychology and Developing Societies 21, 2 (2009): 161–181

The treatment of the signal (or message) involves the decisions that the transmitter makes in selecting and arranging both the codes and the content. In the context of this paper, the signal is the message related to various management functions of planning, organising and controlling. The way a manager treats a signal depends on both how communication signals are managed in his or her culture (that is, how he or she has learnt to manage communication in his or her culture) as well as his or her personality and other individual characteristics.

The managers of these two countries would be confronted with conflicting values in planning, organising and controlling the organisational objectives. For example, managers in developing countries would do more short-term planning in the absence of good information systems. The managers of developed countries would have to live with it if they want to work successfully in developing countries. Similarly, administrative (adhocratic versus bureaucratic) and motivating (difference in level of needs) styles would need to be adapted to organise effectively. The difference in work culture and the roles of the governments would affect effective controlling. The managers would face the most severe setback in this area—treatment of the signal—and success or failure of the business would depend on whether or not communication is socially shared (Clark & Brennan, 1991).

Channels-Related Barriers

The transmitted signal is carried through the channel to the receiver and communication is more efficient if we use more channels for communication (March & Simon, 1958). Managers can use a formal or informal, a direct or indirect (using a go-between) channel, or a combination of different channels to send their messages. The five factors that affect the channel are time, space, material possessions, friendship patterns and business agreements (Hall, 1959, 1960). In developed countries, managers would be more flexible with their values regarding these factors because of their geocentric orientation. Managers in developing countries, however, would be more rigidly tied to their values of time, space, and so on. Noise can creep in from any of these five areas.

Receiver-Related Barriers

In the dynamic process of communication, a manager keeps changing his roles as transmitter and receiver. Even in just one complete cycle, the manager who transmits a signal becomes the receiver of the feedback signal. All that has been discussed about the transmitter is equally valid for the receiver. The only difference being, as a receiver, a manager uses listening and reading instead of speaking and writing. The barriers related to the receiver and the transmitter are the same and so too are the filters used to remove them.

Removing Transmitter-/Receiver-Related Barriers

Two types of barriers were discussed above—socio-cultural biases resulting from the self-reference criterion problem and problems related to attitudes. The self-reference criterion (SRC) problem can be overcome by using the Cultural Analysis System (Lee, 1966). The four steps of the Cultural Analysis System are: (a) define the business problem or goal in terms of the traits, habits or norms of the developed country, (b) define the business problem or goal in terms of the traits, habits or norms of the developing country and make no value judgement, (c) isolate the SRC influence in the problem and examine it carefully to see how it complicates the problem, and (d) redefine the problem without the SRC influence and solve for the optimum business goal situation. Since the analysis is to serve adaptation in several areas of international business activities, its use must necessarily be flexible. This method can be applied to product, institution and individual adaptation.

The barriers related to attitudes can be overcome by providing pre-departure training to managers before they go from developed to developing countries or vice versa. The training program would enable them to make isomorphic attributions about the behaviors of people in the host culture (Triandis, 1975). Isomorphic attribution means decoding a signal transmitted by a person such that the decoded meaning is equal in all respects to the transmitted meaning. Sojourners can reinforce hosts if they can make isomorphic attributions. There is much research support that the ability of people to

make isomorphic attributions can be improved by using culture assimilators (Bhawuk, 2001a) and a culture assimilator using the previously mentioned 10 cultural standards can be developed to train managers of these countries.

Another important aspect of handling barriers related to attitudes is respecting the receiver. Respect or disrespect can be sensed intuitively. The manager from the developed society must never think of the managers from the developing society as backward, primitive, less developed or unskilled. Equality should be maintained and local courtesy should always prevail. As far as courtesy is concerned, a manager has to be polycentric, as it does not help to be geocentric (Bhawuk, 2001b).

Removing Signal-Related Barriers

As discussed previously, the managers from these countries would be confronted with conflicting values in planning, organising and controlling their organisational objectives. The two management styles would be so far apart that the only way to bridge the gap would be to define the objectives of the organisation such that the managers of the two countries strongly identify with it. The goals would also need to be achieved only through joint effort. In other words, the goal of the organisation or the project would need to be a superordinate goal (Sherif, 1958).

The author had an interesting experience working on a project with managers from a developed country when he lived in a developing country. The project was for three years and covered many units of the organisation. His unit faced probably as many problems in the treatment of signals as the other units did, but this unit was successful in achieving the set targets because both the teams shared a superordinate goal. The unit sustained growth beyond the project period since members of the local team continued to implement the objectives agreed upon by both parties at the outset of the project.

How superordinate goals should be set and who should set them are also important considerations. Many practical solutions can be found in the area of development projects. For example, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) sets superordinate goals by conducting a workshop to set the project objectives jointly with the host nationals. In this workshop, managers of both the sides, donor agency and hosts, participate. Together they determine the necessary preconditions to meet the objectives, list tasks that need to be

completed to meet the objectives and also establish who would be responsible for a particular project task. This method has been found to be quite effective in planning and implementing development projects.³

Removing Channel-Related Barriers

The channel-related barriers can be removed by developing more than one channel of communication. Both formal and informal channels should be used. Oral communication should be used as much as possible. Mintzberg (1976) found that successful managers favour the oral communication over the written forms and he argued that they do so because “they desire relational, simultaneous methods of acquiring information, rather than the ordered and sequential ones” (p. 54). In other words, the channel-related barriers could be handled effectively by using the right brain. Perhaps the most effective way of handling channel-related barriers would be to provide cross-cultural orientation programmes to the managers of developed countries who are going to interact with managers of developing countries (or vice versa) using the 10 cultural standards identified previously.

Conclusion

The manager’s effectiveness at using the cultural analysis system to overcome their self-reference criterion, their ability to make isomorphic attribution, their ability to develop superordinate goals and their dexterity at using their right brain thinking would determine their success in global business. To effectively communicate across cultures, it is not sufficient to approach issues in a linear, sequential and analytical fashion; intercultural communication requires a simultaneous, relational, holistic and intuitive approach. Managers need to use both their rational left and *gestalt* right brain to communicate effectively across different cultures; training programmes using theory-based cultural standards could help them acquire those skills.

³ See Bhawuk (2001b) for a discussion of how negotiation between managers of developing and developed countries transpires.

In view of the globalisation of world market, the cultural gap between developed and developing countries is as great as their need to work together. The growth of global business largely depends upon how successfully managers of developed countries communicate with their counterparts in developing countries. Most often, conflict arising from miscommunication is due to not only cultural differences but also ignorance of such differences (Ping Fu et al., 2004), and this is where cultural standards can play an important role. Cultural standards provide a theoretical foundation for observing cultural differences and help reduce misinterpretation, stereotypes and prejudices. The cultural standards described in this article capture some of the critical differences between developed and developing countries, and could be used to develop training programmes to train the managers to go from one type of country to the other. It is hoped that such a framework can add complementary value to intercultural training programmes employing other theory-based training packages and culture-specific training programmes. This article offers a new approach to developing theory-based culture assimilators extending the extant literature.

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