**Culture**

**Contact across cultures. Problems in international business relationships**

**are not always caused by language difficulties. Fill each of the blanks in**

**the following text. Use one word only in each space.**

Doing business with people of other nationalities involves more than learning

foreign languages. There are often cultural differences \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people of different

national backgrounds. These differences sometimes complicate business relationships

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ negotiations. It \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ important to be aware \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your

own cultural tendencies as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as those of your business partners. The areas

which we need to be aware \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ include body language, gesture, socialising,

customs, attitudes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ punctuality and dress\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ business practice. It is

useful to know, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ example, that the British \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hands less often than

other European people, that Americans \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ first names \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ often than

many other nationalities and that the Japanese \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that harmony and consensus

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ very important. We \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ find out about other cultures \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

reading and talking to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with experience. When we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_other countries,

it is important to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ good observers and listeners. We \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ avoid

**criticising**

**other cultures and realise that we all have similar problems but different ways**

**of dealing with them.**

**5. Study the following extract**

In Europe, broadly speaking, cultural variations differentiate the citizens of

Northern countries from those of Southern Europe, and experts have identified

some of the areas in which these variations come into play.

*How the citizen relates to the State*. Northern countries see liberty as substantive:

the individual may do anything as long as it is not expressly forbidden by

the state. In France or Spain, it is additive: you may do it only if the government

**UNIT 1**

**Lesson 1. Culture and cultural differences**

􀀕 **Английский язык: межкультурная коммуникацияю Практикум -17-**

says you may.

*The conception of what should be organized*. In the north, management is a

set of tasks to be achieved, and the structure is built for that purpose. In the south,

the people involved are central, and the organization is created to manage the relationships.

*The role of authority*. Northerners vest power in the office and southerners

ascribe it to the person. In the north, it may be difficult to find out who is in charge,

whereas in the south, the signs of status are immediately perceptible.

*Meetings*. In the north, meetings invariably begin on time, tend to be rather

formal and rarely overrun the allotted schedule. In the south, they are full of interruptions,

spontaneous changes and disregard for agenda and time. The two systems

do not mesh.

*Attitudes to work*. One of the greatest fallacies is that northerners are hardworkers

and southerners are lazy. Nevertheless, attitudes to work differ immensely.

People from northern, protestant traditions "live to work", while southern catholics

"work to live".

*Self expression.* One of the most obvious, and frequent causes of north-south

misunderstanding is the extent to which people express themselves. The stereotype

is well-known: southerners tend to be spontaneous, colourful, and physical; northerners

are more organized, regulated, and distant.

**6. Reflect on any experiences of culture clash you have had, and how**

**you dealt with them**

1. Where did the incident occur?

2. Who was involved?

3. What exactly happened?

4. What did you feel at the time?

5. How far do you think the incident was caused by cultural factors?

6. How has your behaviour changed since?

**Text 2. When in Tokyo...**

Businessman Freddie Marsh knows how to behave abroad. In Ethiopia, he

arrives an hour late for meetings; in Egypt he holds hands with his business colleagues.

After doing business for 24 years in more than 80 countries, Marsh has

become an expert in foreign etiquette. Once a consultant on exports for The United

Nations and foreign governments, he lectures all over the world on the dos and

don'ts of business travel.

"I teach the sort of things that businessmen should avoid in order not to give

offense in a country," says Britisher Marsh," and what they should do to give a better

impression". While his guidelines do not guarantee the *clinching of a deal*, they

certainly put the businessman one step ahead of his competitors. Here, in his

words, is Marsh's quick round-the-world guide:

**JAPAN**

Never go to Japan without an enormous *wad* of business cards. And make

sure the cards are translated into Japanese, because in Japan the business or visiting

card is studied very carefully. At a convention or meeting with a managing director,

it is no use just *flipping* your card across the table. You should take more care

and present your card before the meeting. This gives your contact more time to

study the details and to see what position you occupy in the business hierarchy.

And then when you are introduced, you must *bow*. The amount of bowing you do

is determined by your position. But whether you are a typist or a manager, the golden

rule is: if someone bows, you bow back.

When it comes to negotiating, the Japanese never say no. They will find 101

different ways to say yes, but this does not mean "Yes, we agree to your terms"; it

means "Yes, we hear what you are saying."

There is a strong feeling of *saving face* in Japan; they just do not like to upset

people by saying no. So don't put all of your cards on the table, or you might

find you haven't got the deal after all.

Advertising can also confuse the Japanese. A food company had little success

promoting its spaghetti sauce with a promise that its flavor was genuinely Italian.

This promise was meaningless to most Japanese people, who could not even

find Italy on a map of the world.

Finally, avoid doing business on the fourth of the month. In Japan the number

four is very unlucky, because the word for four also means death. **CHINA**

You may be relieved to hear that there are no *lingering* after-dinner speeches

in China. Lots of little toasts are given throughout the meal, but once the meal is

over, people leave. And be careful where you sit. The host and chief guest are always

seated at the *spot* farthest away from the door.

And once again, be careful with your advertising campaigns. The slogan

“Come Alive with the Coca-Cola Generation” must have caused a few *giggles*, because

when translated into Chinese it meant, "Coca-Cola brings your ancestors

back to life."

**THE MIDEAST**

*Body language* is vital in all Arab countries. People sit much closer together

there, because being able to feel and smell other people's breath is considered desirable.

No matter what your business contact ate the night before, if you back

away you are giving the *wrong signals* and will appear unfriendly. And never arrive

at your business meeting on time. This is very rude. And once seated, never

show the *soles* of your feet. This is regarded as unclean, and you will offend your

host.

Doing business during the festival of Ramadan, when everyone *fasts from*

*dawn to dusk*, can also cause problems: most people are not in the mood for negotiating

on an empty stomach.

I once went into an office in Egypt and saw a man's head bobbing up anddown behind a *settee*. I went up and tapped him on the shoulder and asked whether

he was okay, but this did not go down very well because he was in the middle of

saying his prayers. So remember: in the Middle East, business hours are very different.

Sometimes you will be expected to take the hand of your business associate.

If this happens, *either adhere* to the custom or politely explain that in your country

men never hold hands, so you would like to please be excused.

**AFRICA**

Entertaining in Africa can be very frustrating at first. If you invite people for

dinner at 8 p.m., they may arrive at 9 or even 9:30. The same goes for business. No

one ever arrives at a meeting on time. But how late you arrive depends on your *status*,

so check this first before you *roll up* two hours late.

In Malaysia if you are a man, your hair should be short: if you are a woman,

*avoid* wearing trousers. But there is nothing wrong with turning up for meetings in

a magnificent native robe.