

Title

"Intercultural Pragmatics of Spanish managers in relation to the Chinese, cultural values and communicative practices".

Abstract

There is a growing tendency for Spanish companies to set up in China. Differences in business culture and in strategic business communication management can negatively affect their negotiations, reducing the likelihood of successful outcomes. To analyse these differences, research has been carried out into the factors which prevent satisfactory agreements from being reached by Spanish and Chinese business professionals at the negotiating table - observing whether or not their interactions only pay attention to cultural differences, thereby limiting the relationships to stereotypes, and fail to take into account communication practices and uses. In order to evaluate their commercial relationships, specific guidelines and analytical tools have been used. Taking the particular characteristics of Chinese culture into account, qualitative research methods have been applied, selecting certain cases of individual consultants and official Spanish mediating bodies which are involved in developing direct investment activities/opportunities in China. Communication methods in both cultures have been explored to determine whether, in the context of the intercultural pragmatics of Spanish business professionals, there are certain communicative practices and uses which oblige them to make indirect inferences with respect to their Chinese counterparts. Through examining specific business negotiations between managers, relevant cultural differences have been identified, as well as the similarities which facilitate improved communication. Communication narratives have been used, that is, communication models elaborated in such a way that they encode the contents, offering specific solutions for each case: a) internal models, that is, how Spanish business professionals and entrepreneurs conduct themselves within their own territory, Spain, and; b) external models, how these same actors communicate at the negotiating table in China. During the first two years of this research, direct contact was made with liaison agencies and Spanish intermediaries, such as ICEX (the official body responsible for Spanish exports and foreign investments) and the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, reinforcing the mechanisms for the exchange of experiences in the field of study itself, paying attention to how negotiating tables actually work in China, and enabling the groups observed and interviewed to be placed in their actual context. In order to conclude and define communication models that will contribute to the development of pragmatic intercultural solutions/models, three issues have been identified that characterize the commercial relationship at present:

1. Cultural disassociation from both Chinese and Spanish business professionals.
2. Business communication strategies which promote the construction of unitary realities in order to further commercial objectives.
3. The lack of a tangible network of communicative practices and uses which allow a balance of objective content on the one hand, and a flow of agreed upon messages on the other.

Key words: Intercultural pragmatics, Cross cultural communication, Intercultural business.

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