

The purpose of this work is to apply the "Interest-Expectation-Attitude Model" (IEA Model) to explain the development of communication - and therefore of relationship - in an international environment. From the IEA Model illustration it is possible to grasp why several people with exactly the same needs may show numerous interests, expectations and attitudes, which may be explained by differences on perception and on how the opinions are built and maintained. With interdisciplinary view and disclosed evidence, this paper explores cases of culture shock in business and corporate life, highlighting the difference between Anglo-Saxon and Brazilian culture.

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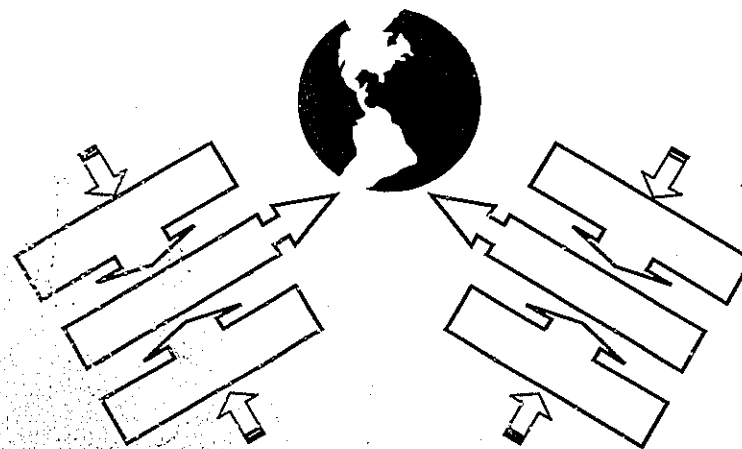
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Henriques de Brito**

## **Applying the Interest-Expectation-Attitude Model to International Relationship**



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## 1 Motivation of this work

The study of human communication process, which normally emphasis several needs of people to communicate, make use of the Transactional Model, as described in many publications about human communication, such as the textbook by ADLER and RODMAN (2000). This model states that each communicator sends and receives messages, employing verbal and non-verbal communication, using a certain channel. The content of each message may be distorted by noises in the environment as well as by the decoding process. However, the Transactional Model does not address certain issues very clearly.

First, where does each message arrive and leave? A speaker uses his mouth and parts of his body when communicating, since each message may have verbal and non-verbal features. On the other hand, the way each message arrives depends on one's capacity to listen, which is broader than only hearing or seeing, because it is also important to notice how the message is sent. A good speaker may not be a good listener, since different abilities are required. Thus, a communication model should depict how messages are conceived and captured.

Second, what is actually the influence of the decoding process in communication? The decoding process is related to how new messages are perceived and to how these messages are joined to previous opinions. Perceptions and opinions influence the interest in sending and receiving messages, apart from several human needs.

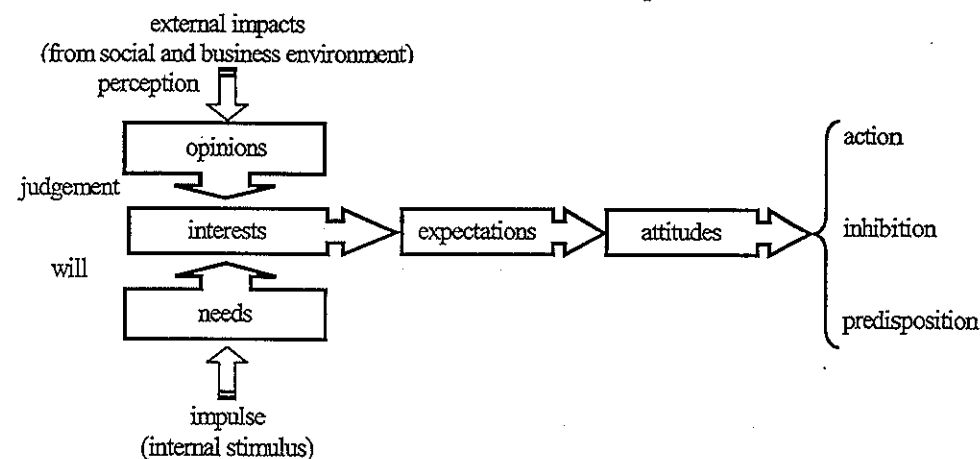
Last but not least, how and why domestic and international relationships may differ even when communicators have the same needs or use the same language? The Transactional Model does not point out in which way culture impacts relationships. Even if human needs are the same, the culture does explain why interests, expectations and attitudes may differ.

The purpose of this work is to apply the Interest-Expectation-Attitude Model (IEA Model) to examine the development of

communication - and therefore of relationships - among people and groups in an international environment. Inspired on work from Sigmund FREUD, the IEA Model was first presented by HENRIQUES DE BRITO (2003), who was originally interested in discussing behavioural finance, that means the impact of reason and emotion in finance decision making. However, the IEA Model has a broader use and may be a new alternative to the Transaction Model, as presented below.

## 2 Description and features of the IEA Model

Interests and accordingly expectations, which account for attitudes, arise from a conflict between will and judgement, as shown by the IEA Model (Illustration 1). Thus, interests and attitudes do not only depend on needs. For example, whereas pleasure is an important human need, not all attitudes are pleasant, since, due to certain opinions, one may be interested in choosing these attitudes and bearing their consequences. One does judge if a given attitude is suitable, correct and effective and will really contribute to fulfil a set of expectations.



Source: HENRIQUES DE BRITO (2003); Figure 1.1-2, Section 1.1, Chapter 1, page 4.

**Illustration 1** The Interest-Expectation-Attitude Model (IEA Model)

Will results from needs, whereas judgement derives from opinions. A judgement depends on how deeply opinions are internalised, as well as how they are processed together with new information perceived from the environment. While needs are internal and personal, opinions result from the information gathered during interaction and communication with the surrounding environment. Each received information may be transformed by perception, which is a sort of filter that may change its content.

The IEA Model also highlights the difference between different types of attitudes (or behaviours): an action, an inhibition and a predisposition. The latter attitude is more enduring, while the first two impinge mainly on the present. To speak out or to remain in silence are examples of action and inhibition respectively. Lack of words (or answer) may have a meaning, hence a way of communicating. A predisposition is very important for new and repeated attitudes, especially when there are choices. When someone is bound to do something, it is probable that this attitude will occur. Therefore, when companies publicise who they are and what they do (that includes carrying out environmental and social programmes, for example), instead of announcing their products, their goal may be to build customers predisposition to consider their reputation when choosing a certain product to buy among others offered by the competition.

Negotiation to set business conditions, define goals or change the priority of existing ones focus interests without necessarily attending needs. Thus, when negotiating, one should think about interests and expectations instead of needs or opinions. Short-term interests and expectations normally prevail over long term ones, since survival depends more on what happens in the short term. It is challenging to identify which past information are essential and to comprehend the current information in order to decide what should be done.

Once we have rational and emotional judgements, our interests

and attitudes actually result too from the interaction between reasoning and emotion. While reasoning studies accurately the data and facts presently available, the emotion 'remembers' what happened in the past, giving it different importance levels. If our memory were able to retain all the information gathered, certainly there would be storage problems, which eventually would impede the insertion of new information. Moreover, it would be hard to access the relevant information and the processing would be slow. Therefore, emotion is able to capture with greater ease past events that were remarkable due to their impact, repetition or actions that broke a routine.

It is possible to verify that when using emotion rather than reasoning, decisions tend to be coherent with the events that happened in one's life. Emotion promotes what is habitual, what is known, and what involves fewer risks. In other words, kindles what is conservative. The notorious human aversion for changes (e.g. of work or residence), novelties, and different ways of reacting to these changes confirms how emotion is conservative, reacting to logical evidences and not appreciating modifications.

Even when there are facilities and advantages, there will remain great resistance for one to live somewhere else, and especially when there are large cultural and language differences. Therefore, it is emotion that makes the adaptation to a new culture difficult. For example, due to the great effort required to adapt to the new place and having to leave friends and family, an emotional judgement can be responsible for one deciding not to change home, even if the new place offers better opportunities. Still nowadays it is possible to agree with the following statement by Adam SMITH (1776): "*After all that has been said of the levity and inconstancy of human nature, it appears evidently from experience that a man is of all sorts of luggage the most difficult to be transported*".

Not only emotion emphasises more intensely past events, it is also not able to distinguish between reality and fiction, nor yet,

true and false. Emotion only reacts to stimuli. This is why it is possible to get emotive following a fiction story, even though our rational indicates that "everything is a lie and does not affect us directly". Given that reasoning analyses and judges very slowly, emotional signs may appear first.

Initially, planning is a rational activity. One tries to analyse causes and effects in different scenarios so that decisions taken are scientific and objective. However, emotion can alter many important decisions at critical steps, sometimes complementing or even modifying the plan. When there is little information or insufficient time to elaborate a "definite" and "best" plan, people let themselves be taken by their emotion. The decision taken with emotion is not necessarily "best", nevertheless emotion hinders an "analytical paralysis", which is an endless reflection without reaching a decision. DAMÁSIO (1994) described how a patient, who had a brain tumour removed, was not able to use his emotion to schedule a meeting, though rationally was able to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages from each alternative.

When reasoning prevails, several possibilities are judged as feasible. This situation can be extremely inefficient, and up to a certain point stressing. This can be seen when a group of friends meet and take long periods of time to choose where to go, simply because there are many valid options. When everyone gets impatient, the group's emotion decision is nearly always invariable: "let's go to the same place as usual".

Alone and relaxed people may behave differently than when in a group and under pressure, as already discussed by FREUD (1921). Since either individual or group emotions may alter the form of decision and execution of a plan, this cannot be conceived exclusively in a rational way. Under circumstances which little or any control is possible, emotions must play a definite role in decision-making.

Persistence to reach a goal, despite the obstacles, faulty planning, or unpredictable events, depend on how strong is the

motivation, which increases with the wish of achieving a certain goal. Noticing that FREUD (1900) saw "the dream as wish-fulfilment", it is the dream that fosters motivation, which in turn, triggers persistence to continue executing the plan whose goal is to make the dream come true, obviously up to certain limits.

While detailing and executing a plan, aiming at a wish-fulfilment, it is necessary to handle emotion and gain the support of the subconscious, which expresses itself basically by images and namely uninhibited during a dream. For group members to share a dream (as a corporate vision), they must debate together ideas and goals in an enthusiastic, exhaustive and varied form, since impact, repetition and actions that break a routine, are ways for emotion to register relevant information, as mentioned. The chances of success of a plan will increase the more the corresponding dream is shared by the group members involved in its execution.

If it is already hard to incite a dream in a group where the people have the same background, it is an even greater challenge to build a dream with people from different cultures inserted in an international environment. This dream is nonetheless important to establish a group commitment where the group's interest is above all personal interests.

When it is difficult or even impossible to promote a common dream, contractual relationships are developed in such a way that the members have some interest in staying in the group. They are made aware of the consequences, if any, for breaking the contract, which may take the form of collusion, coalition or co-operation. In other words, rather than having a friendly involvement with the group, the members would simply execute their tasks as accorded. Their attitudes result of rational decision taken considering the advantages in following the contract sealed, along with the illusion that a cohered group may control the circumstances in favour of achieving better results for the group. Its unity relies also on effective supervision, which must

be able, either to honour who conforms to the group or to punish anyone who infringes the contract, without exceptions. This is precisely what often happens in developed regions, between and among the several organisations and individuals.

Nevertheless, emotional bonds are essentially what promotes group members' predisposition for cohesion, being more tenuous the predisposition based on rational analysis. Moreover, it is not always possible to rely on a contract to keep the group happily united, and also, circumstances change. The same way that a new situation makes new contracts feasible, the 'net' penalty for leaving previous contracts may be reduced.

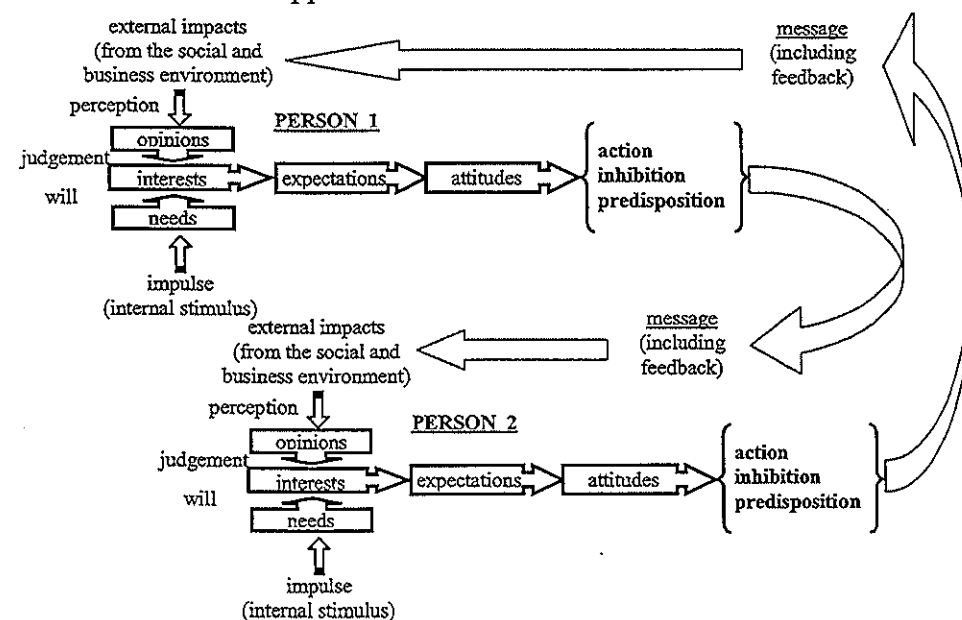
Since strong emotions are impossible to be completely disassembled from reasoning, it may just be impossible to solve conflicts through rational negotiation. A suitable solution is harder to be achieved, when the group deals, with difficulty, emotional aspects that are actually repressed and therefore concealed. The greater the repression, the greater the challenge to find a satisfactory solution for the conflict, which could split the group.

Overall, the best solution for the members in a united group may not be favourable for those who do not belong to the group. For instance, when businessmen decide together, in a cartel, to fix conditions of sale, there are convenient gains for them, however the society loses the benefits from having competition. When a labour union imposes certain working conditions and production goals, there may be corporate losses, an increase in prices or lack of certain products in the market. These groups' agreements are practicable as long as the members manage to stay together with a good communication.

Communication contributes to the achievement of goals (expectations) and, hence, to fulfil interests of people alone or as member of a group. Human verbal and non-verbal communication is in fact a specific kind of attitude or behaviour. There are some attitudes that can only be understood as communication in a broader sense. For example, customers are communicating their

satisfaction with the use of a certain product when they continue buying this product, despite an increase in its price. Therefore, an attitude may either be a complex accomplishment or a simple message. In any case, a given attitude (action, inhibition or predisposition) may be perceived by others, who, in turn, may or not react with a feedback, which shows how and if a message was understood and accepted.

Examining Illustration 2, the interest in sending a new message may be to explain or detail a previous one. Thus, communication is irreversible, particularly because opinions and circumstances change so that it is not feasible to repeat exactly the previous situation when an old message was sent. Moreover, it is not possible to erase old opinions, which may affect future interest in new appointments.



Source (with a small change): HENRIQUES DE BRITO (2003), Figure 3.1-6, Section 3.1, Chapter 3, page 111.

**Illustration 2** Communication process explained by the IEA Model



Certainly, two people maintain their communication as long as they remain interested and are successful in exchanging information. The shared opinion that their "*communication is useful*" is the driving force to keep a lively talk. Moreover, the frequency of meetings depends on how synchronised were the communicators' 'wavelengths' during previous meetings. Fluent relationship relies certainly on continuously sound communication, which in turn, depends on useful, favourable or constructive feedback, and also on the expectation of helpful, encouraging or positive exchange.

### 3 The role of culture in building interests, expectations and attitudes

Success occurs when natural attitudes lead to positive feedback. Such constructive feedback may be extra money, more friends, better job, applause, and so on. In short, success boosts happiness. Nevertheless, sustainable success and happiness is an ongoing process and it will last as long as the feedback stimulates spontaneous attitudes, which makes a successful person feel comfortable and pleased to be herself.

The more one is well adapted in a certain society, the greater one's self-confidence and success, because they receive feedback approving their attitudes. As SOMERSET MAUGHAM pointed out in "The Summing Up": "*The common idea that success spoils people by making them vain, egotistic, and self-complacent is erroneous; on the contrary, it makes them, for the most part, humble, tolerant, and kind. Failure makes people cruel and bitter*". Failure actually signals that some attitudes are not accepted, without necessarily giving a clue of what should or could have been done. This lack of information is misleading, what may bring a feeling of unfairness, leading to cruelty and bitterness.

Success and failure also depend on culture, since cultural

background explains the differences on perception and accordingly on opinions. The greater these differences are, the more dissimilar will be the way interests and expectations are outlined, evidencing cultural differences. Actually, culture depends on the way each member stores and retrieves personal opinions. Thus, culture results from the accumulated and developed knowledge and values within a group, which may comprise friends, employees in a company, or citizens in a country. On the other hand, the group one joins helps to form one's identity. Communication is essential to disseminate culture among group members with time.

When the poet Fernando PESSOA stated that "*My homeland is my language*", he synthesised the link of language to culture. Language is a tool available to build, maintain and express opinions and hence accomplish goals through communication. Since the techniques we use to reflect and to communicate with others are the same (DeFLEUR and BALL-ROKEACH (1989)), the use of a language reflects the way-of-thinking and as a result exposes the way-of-living. On the other hand, the way-of-living may actually be a feedback, which affects or reinforces a certain way-of-thinking and talking. As Frank OUTLAW suggested: "*Watch your thoughts; they become your words; Watch your words; they become your actions; Watch your actions; they become your habits; Watch your habits; they become your character; Watch your character for it will become your destiny*".

In a broad outline, Germans are frequently considered to be people who think and act in a very structured way and like to perform a plan as it was settled. Indeed, their language has strict rules, which are followed spontaneously. On the other hand, Brazilians, who tend to mix sounds and handle situations with flexibility, speak Portuguese, which is multifaceted language with a flexible construction. As a matter of fact, communication tends to be carried out in an associative way in Brazil, whereas



ideas in Germany and other Anglo-Saxon countries tend to be structured for disclosure in a sequential way.

It is quite often to hear from Germans a discourse enumerating related points of a given idea (such as: "First..., Second..., ..., Finally..."). Sometimes a German speaker announces to the interlocutor the number of topics he will say or write. In this case, it is not pleasant if the speaker does not present the number of topics he said he would. If more topics are presented, why did the speaker announce a false number of topics? If less topics are presented, did the speaker forget or hide something? These questions undermine the confidence the interlocutor has on the speaker. On the other hand, Brazilians do not tend to complain when the speaker does not go through the announced number of topics neither when the speaker suddenly remembers something, since it is naturally accepted expressions like: "I would like to add...", or "I just remembered that...".

Brazilians tend to be less committed in presenting ideas in a structured way, especially when talking. The interlocutor is also not prepared to let the speaker send a long and detailed message, since it is quite common that the speaker has to say: "Let me speak until I finish!". Although teachers may convey information, using a didactic structure, this attitude may be seen as very unpleasant during a chat, especially when explicitly enumerating all the points using the fingers. Actually, when someone is annoyed, the sequential way of speaking, stating clearly each point of anger, can be perceived as a way of attacking. Those unable to contest an idea calmly and logically despise generally the sequential way of communicating.

The sequential way of communicating demands that the interlocutor pays attention to what the speaker says until he finishes. Thus, interruptions are not compatible with the sequential way of communicating. However, a way of impeding interruptions is to list all the arguments first to expose afterwards the main statement or conclusion. Lawyers and public servants

may use this way when justifying a law or a rule, written or verbally. For example, "Considering (Argument A), (Argument B) and (Argument C), thus (Statement is true)". However, one may somehow feel that the speaker is not capable of going "straight to the point".

Those with Anglo-Saxon culture normally prefer to show their statement first and list all arguments afterwards. For example, "(Statement is true), backed by (Argument A), (Argument B) and (Argument C)". In this case, the interlocutor is normally patient to listen to the arguments. He may already check if there is an acceptable or correct relationship between each argument and the statement. In order to apply this way of defending a statement, the speaker is sure that he will not run the risk of hearing anything like: "You do not need to say anything further, since I do not agree with your statement".

Another difference between Brazilians and Anglo-Saxons may appear when asking questions. While Brazilians normally like to explain the reasons or background for a question, people with an Anglo-Saxon culture usually prefer to hear a well formulated question directly, without any further explanation. Some Brazilians may even interpret this approach as rude, since it remembers an inquiry, a hearing or an exam. Whereas they may consider questions to be almost mere extra sentences during a conversation, Germans usually distinguish clearly a question from a statement, in such a way that they may be surprised with a greeting phrased as emphatic questions, such as "How do you do? Is everything fine?", where no answer is expected.

If questions in Brazil might not be short or specific, there is also a preference for long answers, sometimes giving more information than asked. The initial part of the answer might not be related to what was asked, giving the feeling that the question was not correctly understood or that the answer will not be given. For Anglo-Saxons, replies should be brief with the information that was asked. Anglo-Saxons are rarely told to answer in this

way, while in Brazil is very usual to stress: "Please be as brief as possible in your answer".

While the sequential way of communicating is rational, the associative way relies on emotions. As suggested in Table 1, the differences between them may explain conflicting perceptions during a relationship, which may disturb the communication. In any case, nobody uses only a certain way of communicating. Additionally, this choice depends also on circumstances, activity and educational level. Whereas the sequential way may be more effective for presenting a product or carrying out scheduled tasks, the associative way may be more suitable for problem solving with unforeseen troubles or creative research with brainstorming.

**Table 1** Different perceptions during a conversation

How someone liking sequential communication may perceive who speaks in an associative way	How someone liking associative communication may perceive who speaks in a sequential way
<i>How this conversation is lively, friendly.</i>	<i>How this conversation is slow, monotonous.</i>
<i>He interrupts my speech and is almost impolite.</i>	<i>He never has anything to add to what I am saying.</i>
<i>His thoughts never come to an end.</i>	<i>He basically stares at me.</i>
<i>How he is confusing! I can't see his conclusion.</i>	<i>How he is dull! He isn't creative.</i>
<i>He is open-minded, loud and extravagant.</i>	<i>He is reserved, quiet and shy.</i>

Cultural conflicts may actually result from communication difficulties. Some foreigners may be perceived as having an odd personality, when in fact it is their way of communicating which is awkward for the local inhabitants. For example, a foreigner who is insecure of his knowledge of the language may tend to

describe objects instead of saying its name, what may seem even weirder if apparently he speaks with certain fluency. A constant demand for feedback may only confirm the local inhabitants' impression that the foreigner is very strange.

Besides, a recent foreigner is frequently unable to attend the coherency between verbal and non-verbal communication. His set of attitudes may not be fully understood by local inhabitants. For example, while an extroverted Brazilian may express, just once, loudly and gesticulating, that a sight-seeing tour during a sunny day in a beautiful place was "absolutely wonderful", such outlook could perfectly be equivalent to small nods followed by a "not bad" from a shy, though friendly, Swiss, who will however mention, several times in the future, still reticently, his satisfaction with the tour. Moreover, whereas Brazilians touch each other often, Swiss limit their physical contact, which does not mean that they are emotionless. Besides, a non-verbal gesture may be offensive in some places, yet friendly elsewhere.

Those who are not acquainted with a certain culture may really not be able to understand at once what the interlocutor intends to communicate nor a longer explanation may be enough either. Not surprisingly, the better a foreigner speaks a language and absorbs the culture, the higher the chance of increasing the number of friends and people who will appreciate the foreigner as someone nice and 'normal'.

It may be an overwhelming challenge to overcome a rejection due to cultural differences. Unfortunate as rejection with conspicuous hate, is indifference, when no communication actually confirms or explains a rejection. The stronger the rejection, the more intense is the interest to reject, which may be backed by deep emotional opinions and biased perceptions. To change a prejudice which supports a rejection requires explanation and persuasion, together with patience, since sometimes it is not wise to insist.

Prejudice and several other personal opinions may simply be

an internalisation of rules and norms established in a society. Each member has been told (or taught) to think or have some opinions, as well as judgements, during a process known as education. A long staying mainly with a specific group, including life abroad, is another way of naturally introducing specific opinions, as carried out by international companies which are interested in moulding the opinion of some employees and hence moulding their judgement. This process is important to organise a group and maintain it stable, because a united group requires members with similar points of view. However, this social expectation may be felt as an aggression, as already suggested by FREUD (1930), because it neglects particularities of each person.

Additionally, domestic and international media certainly have an important role in shaping opinions and persuading others to present a given attitude (e.g. do something or at least bear some points in mind, as given by the IEA-Model). However, too much information confuses instead of introducing enduring and valuable opinions (GITLIN (2001)). Actually, in some cases, when it is not possible to convince people to accept a given attitude, the strategy may be to confuse them in such a way that their perception is overcharged. Consequently, due to anxiety or exhaustion, they are incapable of concentrating themselves in order to build an interest that suits them. Confused people do not know what they are really interested in; neither are able to negotiate with comfort and self-confidence. Thus, their remaining interest may be just to follow an existing interest. LEFÈVRE (1923) described this case.

When governments are interested in ruling people at distant places, they are very aware on controlling and changing their culture. As discussed by MACHIAVELLI (1532), "*when dominions are acquired in a province differing in language, laws and customs, the difficulties to overcome are great, and it requires good fortune as well as great industry to retain them*".

Analogously, corporations must state a core ideology which "*influences behaviour toward consistency with that ideology*" and also "*take steps to make the ideology pervasive throughout the organisation and transcend any individual leader*", according to COLLINS and PORRAS (1994). Consequently, cultural traces left by business and political empires are evidences of the success of the domination since its beginning.

#### 4 Stages of cultural shock

Two questions asked by a foreigner may throw light on the existence of cultural differences. First question: "*Are things really like this here?*" Second question: "*What is acceptable or suitable, and what is forbidden or disliked here?*" While the former question shows certain insecurity towards perception, the latter demonstrates an effort to grasp the 'rules of the game' in a certain place. Such rules may be obvious to local inhabitants, who got used to them since they were children, but may be completely new, awkward or witty for newcomers. There are even some rules which are difficult to explain or to justify their existence, such as rules on how to address strangers, and when to employ an informal speech.

Considering the upper part of the IEA Model, foreigners normally undergo three stages when introduced into a new social and cultural environment: Perception, Acceptance and Use. These stages are extremely complex, especially when it comes to jokes and puns. It is not always easy to perceive them. Even less it is easy to accept their occurrence, especially for those who were laughed at, even when they were already socially accepted. Finally, it is the proof of total adaptation to the new cultural environment when one is able to joke just as naturally as a native from that place. In this section, these three stages will be examined.

#### 4.1 Perception of a new culture

Perceiving properly the features of a new culture requires listening abilities, so as to build the correct opinion. Some physical and emotional constraints hinder a sound comprehension, as not hearing well or having a bias. Non-verbal communication may either help or mislead the perception. There are also some tricky situations, which may lead to a false or an incomplete comprehension, especially when there is arrogance, haste or self-confidence.

There are many listening comprehension cases which may lead to misunderstanding and can be material for jokes, especially when the involved languages have the same origin, and also when non-verbal communication is not able to clarify the message for foreigners. Once a very bright French doctor told me that he thought that the word 'dog' in Portuguese was "*chorro*", since he did not hear correctly the first syllable 'ca', which is pronounced very quickly, when saying the Portuguese word 'cachorro'. Furthermore, "*chorro*" is closer to 'chien', French word for 'dog'. He only discovered that his perception had failed when he once asked for the "*chorro*" and nobody understood what he meant.

If reading and listening comprehension may be difficult, it may be even subtler to perceive the accurate use of personal pronouns. It can be very difficult to explain when it is important to be formal or when an informal treatment is acceptable. The rule may change within the same country. Swiss Germans use "*Du*" (informal) and "*Sie*" (formal) in a slightly different way compared to Swiss French, using "*Tu*" (informal) and "*Vous*" (formal). It may be easier to say "*Du*" to a Swiss German than "*Tu*" to a Swiss French. This 'feeling' cannot be precisely explained. However, Swiss French adults may call each other by the first name using a "*Vous*", what is not employed by Swiss Germans, who either use the first name followed by "*Du*" or the family name with a title before (Herr, Frau, Herr Professor, Herr

Doktor) followed by "*Sie*". Even though it may be good to be seen as someone polite, who frequently uses a formal treatment, formality may not be suitable for exchanging information and for developing communication and closer relationships.

Feedback is very important to understand correctly the rules of a new culture. Unfortunately, sometimes feedback informs only that an attitude was awkward, without pointing out what would be 'acceptable' or 'suitable'. This happens when a foreigner notices a weird look or hears a faint giggle in response to something that was said or done. For example, a kiss cheek-to-cheek during a professional meeting is not accepted in some countries. Indeed, more important than to grasp mistakes is to have the opportunity to learn the correct attitude in order not to repeat a mistake or make a new one in the future.

An important stage associated to perceiving a new culture is being aware of the importance of this attitude and of the required motivation to learn the culture. For instance, before starting to learn a language, one should have a very good idea of the expectations underlining this goal. Although there are plenty of 'good' reasons for acquiring a new language, the basis for motivation is usually very personal. Generally, professional activity accounts for the decision of learning a new language, English for example. However, those who have English as mother tongue may not be sufficiently motivated to learn other languages, even when they live abroad, since many people do speak English or it is easy to find someone to translate. The perception that there could be a restriction motivates people who have English as their mother tongue to learn additional languages. It is nonetheless difficult to grasp whether a language is or will be sufficiently important in one's life and if it will be worthwhile the effort to learn it.

## 4.2 Acceptance of a new culture

Acceptance has to do with the judgement a foreigner has about his understanding of the new culture. Those people who already criticise the uniqueness of a compatriot may have more problems accepting a new culture as it is. They may find its rules complicated, or they may lack respect towards this different culture, judging some aspects funny, stupid or useless.

Opinions from foreigners can oscillate in such a way that attitudes of hostility can be followed by the demonstration of esteem. A mood change can disorientate a person's decision, causing uneasiness. However, the apparent incoherence in the opinions shows that in life there cannot be an unique judgement of what is 'right or wrong', 'true or false', or 'good and bad'. There are only different forms of relationships which can generate the most varied consequences according to the environment. Therefore, the difficulty in defining what would be the 'correct' attitude appears in the unstable judgement.

Whereas the use of formal or informal treatment in French or German reflects acquaintance level, as described previously, the use of formal and informal treatment using Portuguese in Brazil reflects power, status or age of the speaker. Those who have more power, status or age may address to others in an informal way (calling them by "*você*" [you]), but the people with less power, status or age will respond with a formal treatment (calling them "*Senhor*" [Mr.] or "*Senhora*" [Mrs.]). Additionally, certain prominent people like to be entitled "*Doutor*" without having a doctor's degree. Even if this widely spread rule may seem "*unfair*" for Europeans who speak French or German, the society in Brazil tends to find it very natural. Thus, the way formal and informal treatment are used in Brazil should be understood and accepted for those willing to live happily in Brazil.

Despite the fact that Portuguese is spoken in Brazil and in Portugal, the way of addressing friends and strangers in both countries is not the same. The way-of-life in different countries

may differ even if they share several cultural aspects and a common cultural background. Thus, it is not possible to compare a culture in a country to a hypothetical similar case.

Besides language's peculiarities, foreigners may need to accept and even appreciate the meals. In each culture, food usually presents different spices and tastes, along, incidentally, with strange combinations. Foreigners may also have to get used to the musical style; as well as the type of clothes with differences in cut, colours and occasion for using them.

## 4.3 Use of a new culture

Use of a new culture calls for an interest in adapting to new customs. Judgement suggests that the effort is worthwhile, which means that the reward may be substantial and compensate the effort to adapt. The capacity to accept and apply different cultures reveals expressly when someone is able to speak fluently several languages, which is not straightforward, since the learning process is long, hard, and above all it is necessary to have the capacity to reproduce sounds with ease. It is a great challenge to have the means to use naturally the pronunciation, the words and the way-of-thinking from the new culture, when communicating. The progress in learning a language depends very much on the progress of being able to speak out more correctly, employ more highly cultured sentences, and report more complex ideas to others, who in turn may appreciate the improvement. Such successful feedback stimulates the interest in learning more as well as using the language, observing the Illustration 2.

Singing and speaking languages may have several points in common. Those who speak different languages may be conscious that their mouth, throat and nose, builds a kind of a complex musical instrument. French use the lips, especially when distinguishing words like "*où*" [where] and "*ou*" [or], as

well as "dessus" [above] and "dessous" [below]. It is an art to be able to speak out such words without confusing the interlocutor.

Pronunciation is so relevant that some people, willing to integrate themselves completely in a new region or country, try to drop down their original accent in order to conceal their origin. This is done by certain Portuguese citizens who live in Brazil and some Brazilians who live in Portugal, for example. Their goal is to be as similar as possible to local inhabitants.

The ability to pronounce fluently foreign words and deal comfortably with different cultures may be available mainly for those who were brought up in a multilingual and multicultural environment. People who were exposed to a single culture may experience great difficulties in absorbing new ones, especially as they get older. As pointed out by François de LA ROCHEFOUCAULD (1678): "*The accent of the country where one was born stays in the spirit and in the heart, as in the language*". Thus, the ability to use different cultures is strongly related to how intense the first culture was impinged in the spirit and in the heart.

Certain languages have a word for a given attitude or scenario, however being difficult to be translated, but tempting to be used. For example, whereas Portuguese has the word "*saudade*" to describe the emotion of 'missing someone' who is absent, there is only a multipurpose expression in English for this same feeling. Some words do abridge communication, but may also be a barrier for some people, such as laypersons, who could actually understand a given technical idea if expressed with colloquial words.

It can be particularly hard not to use certain words from a certain language, even if this language is not one's original language. It may well happen that it may sound snobbish for someone who, without international mentality, hears someone mixing up different languages. Nevertheless, it is challenging not to mix pronunciation, words and grammar of a new language

with those of languages previously learned. The more a foreigner adopts a new culture without being able to distinguish it from his original culture, the more this foreigner generates a big cultural mixture. This can be clearly seen in the language, in such a way that it can become hard to speak one's original language as perfect as it once was. Immigrants in several countries may use pronunciations and words differently from their place of birth. Such phenomenon also occurs in European cities, whereabouts is a 'language border'. In Friburg, Switzerland, the Swiss-German dialect from that region (*Bolze*) uses French words.

Several foreigners stop to learn a language due to difficulties in pronouncing certain words, expanding their vocabulary or adopting certain grammatical rules. They may neither be able to use the new way-of-thinking related to the language. For example, some foreigners may have difficulties to come along with declensions and word order in German, because they are not used to the very structured way of communicating, as discussed previously.

An additional barrier for the improvement of a new language occurs when local inhabitants reply or continue a conversation in another language that they know is easier for the foreigner who is trying to learn their language. People who speak good English may have faced this obstacle to improve their knowledge of the local language. Some inhabitants speak English to be nice to the foreigner. Others use the opportunity to practice their English. Moreover, some inhabitants may not like to speak their language or dialect to someone they see as a foreigner. For example, some proud Swiss Germans do not like to address foreigners with their particular way of speaking, which actually gives them an identity, as well as distinguishing them from the Germans and Austrians. This highly-comprehensive reason should be seen as a very neat example of how the language defines a culture and behaviour of a population.



## 5 Private and corporate life in an international environment

International citizens are people who inevitably experienced cultural shocks along their lives, since they were exposed to several different cultures by travelling world-wide frequently, by having lived abroad for long periods of time, or by having parents and relatives from different nationalities. These transmit their culture in such a way that their children may turn out to be able to perceive, accept and use well other cultures.

Those with such cultural background and acceptance, clearly develop special opinions about several issues, since they get used to different ways-of-living and ways-of-thinking, which may even contradict each other. They may really be convinced that different customs should not be judged, neither customs could be ranked. Consequently, international citizens may have peculiar opinions, which would lead to odd interests, expectations and attitudes.

If an ordinary person, who rarely travels and basically lives all his life in the same place with its single culture, may not find a pleasant group, what would it be then for someone who was exposed to different cultures for many years? They may find it difficult to be spontaneously respectful towards ordinary situations, though very important for common people, such as worshipping their local football team, defending it 'heart and soul'. Additionally, having further and more complex opinions about daily issues may actually be a barrier for a fluent relationship with average people, who prefer 'small talks'.

It is a challenge to be able to feel comfortable among a group with its long established way-of-living. They may face obstacles to live agreeably in their original society, what actually may surprise, if one forgets that communication and social adaptation does not depend solely on a person's effort or ability.

People, animals and plants are not easily moved around or introduced into ecosystems. For example: many plants may wilt

or die if they are frequently put in different places. After years living with people, the whale Keiko, which starred Simon Wincer's film "Free Willy", had great difficulties to return to its natural habitat. However, international managers and diplomats are expected to move more easily around the world with their family. The challenge for them is great when there is an intense competition or jealousy in their organisation, partly explained by external difficulties. Certain organisational policies may well protect them, but mobbing, which is politics carried out by the informal organisation, may be overwhelming. All these adaptation difficulties together with auspicious circumstances may nonetheless strengthen leadership abilities.

Notorious leaders had international exposure. Despite some adaptation problems, several international citizens may either accurately point out appropriate social transformation or accomplish great beneficial changes, because they know what must and could be modified. Furthermore, when they are capable of empathy, people with an international exposure may ease talks between different regional groups, which are looking exclusively at local interests, as well as preserving their cultural values. Thus, international citizens' attitudes should complement those from regional people in order to ease negotiations around the world.

International corporate managers must be able to handle the opinion of their shareholders and stakeholders in order to develop their business without giving in corporate core values. Even if some corporate policies settled to please shareholders may not always be suitable or bearable for a given society, *"The only truly reliable source of stability is a strong inner core and the willingness to change and adapt everything except that core. People cannot reliably predict where they are going and how their lives will unfold, especially in today's unpredictable world. Those who built the visionary companies wisely understood that it is better to understand who you are than where you are going – for where you are going will almost certainly change. It is a*



*lesson as relevant to our individual lives as to aspiring visionary companies*", as explained by COLLINS and PORRAS (1994).

## 6 Cases

The first case reviews some ideas reported by Ina von Binzer (1887), highlighting typical foreigners' feelings and differences between German and Brazilian culture. The second case reports why and how I learned Swiss German at the light of the IEA Model.

### 6.1 Life in Brazil reported by Ina von Binzer

Between May 27th, 1881, and January 9th, 1883, Ina von Binzer, 22, wrote to a friend in Germany several letters describing her impressions and cases about life in Brazil, where she was employed to give private lessons to rich children. This gathering of letters was published in a book which shows the differences in culture between Brazilians and Germans. Even though more than 120 years have passed since these letters were written, Ina von Binzer's observations remain very much up to date, proving the thesis that the culture of a country does not change radically or quickly.

It is inevitable to arrive somewhere new with numerous preconceptions, but not always some of them proceed. In her first letter, Ina von Binzer registered her deception that Spanish was not spoken in Brazil and regretted the absence of spectacular incidents (cited examples: "*Indian assaults*", "*fight with Tigers*" or even "*giant snakes*"). Some preconceptions remain the same today, despite the well-known importance of the Brazilian economy. Those foreigners who may still imagine "*Indian arrows flying around and other exotic artefacts would be found on the pathways*" may get disappointed to know that, now and then, such things are "*expensive and not easily obtained*", as Ina

recognised on August 5th, 1882.

On May 5th, 1882, she wrote about differences in the use of formal and informal treatment, suggesting that: "*The way people treat each other here is pure science and, for me, much more complicated than among us*". Would it be then easier for Brazilians in Germany?

Normally, an expatriate has dubious opinions about the country that welcomes him. It can be difficult to change deep emotional opinions, even when analysing positive facts rationally. This clearly appears in Ina's letter from December 28th, 1882: "*I am thankful, sure, I must be so, after all everyone is being so endlessly kind to me, and the country is as beautiful as a fairy tale, though I cannot change this: it hammers in my mind the chorus of a music we sung recently: 'It's actually beautiful in a foreign country / but it will never become homeland'*".

Ina von Binzer commented her frequent lack of affinity with the Brazilians and with the physical environment, such as the vegetation or the style of the constructions, independent from any sort of judgement. In a letter dated June 20th, 1881, after describing her enchantment with Brazilian nature, she wrote: "*I am not able to entertain myself with these exquisite plants, I cannot recognise them, nor them to me. There is something wonderful about a homeland! So many things join to it! Also the flowers, the trees. At home, we immediately know what to sing under our splendid oak tree*".

Even by that time, she noticed difficulty urging punctuality from the Brazilians without leaving them annoyed. On February 12th, 1882, she pointed out the consequences of lack of punctuality: "*I wasn't able to discover a study programme nor a simple timetable until now; for me, so far, everything looks like chaos in a desert*". Although nowadays in business, people tend to be more punctual, this is still not the case in private events, such as parties.

Her precise comprehension of cultural differences led her to register in a letter dated June 9th, 1881, that the German "Bormann" educational method proved to be "useless" in Brazil, though she "trusted them so much". Facing such a fact, she even wondered that: "Often, Bormann himself wouldn't know what he should do here". Moreover, she tried to punish her Brazilian students using Bormann's pedagogic method, by telling them to "sit-and-stand" successively. However, "the children were far from understanding that that was actually a punishment, rather than a fun game", as she described on a letter dated February 21st, 1882. This fact strengthens the message that punishment effectiveness has a cultural component and depends on the sharing of opinions and perceptions between who punishes and those being punished. Thus, Ina von Binzer admitted on February 21st, 1882, that: "Bormann is definitely discarded for me, here in Brazil. I recognise that, if a pedagogic method is to be introduced here, it must be Brazilian and not German - Brazilian in the whole conception and in all assumptions, adapted to the character of the people and to their way of living". Such lesson is important for international managers, when setting organisational policies world-wide.

## 6.2 Learning Swiss German

At the age of 22, I arrived at Switzerland on August 1986, because a Swiss company sent me there. Despite the fact that I did not know anyone nor had been there before, I was aware that Swiss German was spoken, since my previous boss used to talk with his Swiss peers in their way. However, I did not imagine at all how Swiss German was so widespread in Switzerland. More amazing was to notice that people would talk in Swiss German and write in German. The difference between them is about the same as the difference which exists between Portuguese and Spanish. I wondered how would it be to daily speak Portuguese,

but read and write Spanish, thus having two working languages.

I quickly understood that my good knowledge of the German language, obtained in Brazil during an eight-term course, would allow me to communicate to everyone, but not in a closer way nor I would ever follow informal talks. Moreover, learning Swiss German was a way to respect a country where I was supposed to live many years. Who does not manage to speak Swiss German does have more difficulties to join Swiss Germans' groups. I also admit that learning Swiss German could be good for my job in a Swiss company. Nevertheless, Swiss Germans do not expect Foreigners to learn their language, which they consider to be a dialect, because the rules are not officially normalised and may change between towns and villages. However there is a sort of a more 'usual' Swiss German, which would be my new language.

Decided to learn it, I noticed immediately some rules that made a bridge between German and Swiss German. Inserting these rules into German and trying to reproduce Swiss' pronunciation, I started to speak a rudimentary Swiss German, which could incentive the interlocutor to go on speaking Swiss German. Then, I would try very hard to listen not only words but to check non-verbal communication and to consider the context as well. Sometimes I managed to actually guess what was said and this attitude increased my vocabulary. When my comprehension was really poor, I would ask my interlocutor to rephrase what had been said. In most cases, however, the conversation would naturally follow in German. After more than a year I found an excellent Swiss German language course at EPFL. This course did speed up my progress, which would have been definitively slower, if I did not have previous knowledge and was not really convinced of the importance of Swiss German.

The longer I lived in Switzerland, the better I understood that who has French as a mother tongue is not used to pronounce words using their throat. Therefore, Swiss French may find it

difficult or even impossible to pronounce correctly words in either German and especially Swiss German, what hampers their progress. My success in learning Swiss German results greatly from the fact that Portuguese is my mother tongue, which is a very complex language, with a lot of words with demanding pronunciation. Thus, I have a huge advantage to learn new languages, besides my dear interest in meeting new people and respecting their culture.

A pleasant additional advantage to speak Swiss German was the understanding of some dialects spoken in southern Germany, western Austria and in a part of France (e.g. Mulhouse). My language ability helped me to build a clear picture of life style in central Europe. Thus my expectations of Swiss German usefulness were surpassed. Strongly convinced of the importance of learning languages, when I returned to Brazil in 1992, I immediately joined a Spanish language course, even though Portuguese and Spanish are "very alike".

In short, using the IEA Model terminology, I perceived the importance of Swiss German and I changed my opinion that my German knowledge would be sufficient to live in Switzerland. As a result, I judged that a required mental effort had to be done each time I wanted to talk to Swiss Germans because something needed to be said or done. This attitude did increase my number of friends and such positive feedback from the society did stimulate my deep-rooted interest to learn more Swiss German and their culture.

## 7 Final remarks

A striking feature of the IEA Model is to point out clearly why several people with the same human needs may show world-wide numerous interests, expectations and attitudes, and accordingly different achievements' levels. Culture and its language do affect the way a message is sent or perceived even if this message

should correspond to a same need.

A group contributes to form the identity of its members. The majority does assimilate certain group values until they conform to the group, or they feel comfortable with the feedback they obtain from their attitudes, or they realise the importance of just being themselves. It may be challenging to find a suitable group to join, always and everywhere, without giving up certain abilities and personal features that could lead to useless or unacceptable attitudes.

Although the required discipline and hard work to learn a new language could suggest that the process is strictly rational, actually one should feel the culture and enjoy its language in order to learn it properly more and more, so as to carry out this challenge happily.

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The content of this article results from ideas in the book:

## CRISE E PROSPERIDADE COMERCIAL, FINANCEIRA E POLÍTICA

by Marcelo Henriques de Brito

PROBATAS, ISBN 85-89585-01-8

This original book is aimed at the reader interested in establishing the existing links between finance, business and domestic and foreign politics. Thus, the goals of the book are:

- to introduce new concepts applicable to daily life as well as new analogies between different fields of knowledge;
- to present in a systematic way information scattered in several publications
- to bring light to understand how a market economy works and why free international capital flow requires free international trade in all areas.

The book brings new ideas and models as: the **new Interest-Expectation-Attitude Model**, which points out how interests, expectations and attitudes are built and their consequences; the **new index iHdB** (in several versions with interest rates; with price variations; and a version for stock markets), which compares countries' attractiveness for foreign investment and consequently explains international capital flow; and the **new Emission-Inflation Equation**, which points out circumstances for deflation, inflation or stagflation (inflation with recession) and the importance of the interaction between the financial sector and all other industries.

These three models have already been presented in several different scientific conferences around

Brazil, since the book was released in February 2004 and new data have already confirmed their validity.

The text in the mentioned book was written without the purpose of evaluating specific aspects of a country or assessing the performance of a given government. The reader is not supposed to have background in finance or good knowledge of financial calculation, statistics or advanced calculus so as to understand the book. All terms and expressions that are not employed in the daily life are explained and there are many illustrations and tables to ease the reading. In order to link information in different parts of the book and to allow a reading that does not follow the proposed sequence, many footnotes indicate where interrelated and complementary ideas can be found (as in an e-book). Other footnotes detail some calculations and references. Appendix display tables with all data used in the calculations mentioned in the book or further some additional theoretical information.

In short, the book results from life experience and a thorough study of various disciplines in order to produce its 490 pages, including introduction, contents, list of illustrations, tables and equations; references, appendix and index.

More information about the book "Crise e prosperidade comercial, financeira e política" available at [www.probatas.com.br](http://www.probatas.com.br)