

American versus Japanese Communication Styles

<http://foxhugh.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/american-versus-japanese-communication-style-table-resized.jpg>

Topic	American	Japanese
Criticism	Direct criticism (Nomura and Barnlund, 1983)	Passive withdrawing forms of criticism (Nomura and Barnlund, 1983)
Direct vs. Indirect	Americans have a more direct communication style than Japanese (Miyahara, 1992).	Japanese have a more indirect communication than Americans (Miyahara, 1992).
Eye Contact	Americans maintain more eye contact than Japanese and “shifty eyed” is a negative.	The eye contact of Americans may make Japanese uncomfortable.
Facial Expressions	Americans may have difficulty interpreting the facial expressions of Japanese and the subtle smile of the Japanese may seem wooden or even unfriendly.	Japanese attempt to maintain a subtle smile throughout the business negotiations and this is considered polite.
Figures	Business figures are important and should be dealt with soon in the business relationship since numbers may determine whether further communication is necessary. Numbers should drive business decisions and exactness about figures is preferable.	Business figures are discussed more indirectly in business situations especially in the beginning of the business relationship. The client not the seller should initiate talk about price, costs and profits. Timing is important when discussing business figures. Vagueness about figures is acceptable.
Gift Exchange	Gift exchange is not as common or important in the US and the etiquette of accepting the gift is not as formal.	Gift exchange (<i>temiyage</i>) is a formal process and generally communicates friendliness. The gift should be received with both hands, be accepted standing up and the receiver should say “Thank you”.
Low vs. High Context	Low context communication	High context communication
Business Card	For Americans business card exchange is less rule-governed and important.	For the Japanese business card exchange (<i>meishi</i>) has rules and is more important.
Silence	Extended silence can make Americans uncomfortable.	Silence can be a broader form of communication than for Americans.