



BJC2212 Intercultural Communication French

By Wong Chun Kris S187452
Chan Chun Hang S186900
Chan Tsz Wing S197973
Hui Cheuk Ying S197936
Wong Yan Man S197828

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A high-speed train, possibly a TGV, is captured in motion at a train station. The train is silver and white, with a blurred American flag visible on its side. The platform is visible in the foreground, and the background shows the station's infrastructure.

What is your first impression about the French?

Introduction

Stereotype to French:

- Lazy?
- Enthusiastic?
- Romantic?
- Can't or won't speak English?



"Parisians React to Emily in Paris"

Official language: French

Romance language descended from the Latin

Language

A maximum of 17 vowels

Written with the 26 letters

Aa	(Àà)	(Ââ)	Bb	Cc	(Çç)	Dd	Ee	(Éé)	(Èè)	(Êê)	(Ëë)	Ff	Gg	Hh
Ii	(Îî)	(Ĩĩ)	Jj	Kk	Ll	Mm	Nn	Oo	(Ôô)	Pp	Qq	Rr	Ss	Tt
Uu	(Ôô)	(Ùù)	(Üü)	Vv	Ww	Xx	Yy	(Ỹỹ)	Zz					

Regional dialect: Walloon, Normandy, Lorraine...

Body Gesture (Non-verbal language)

"I don't know"/ "I don't care"/ "I'm not sure"



"Delicious"



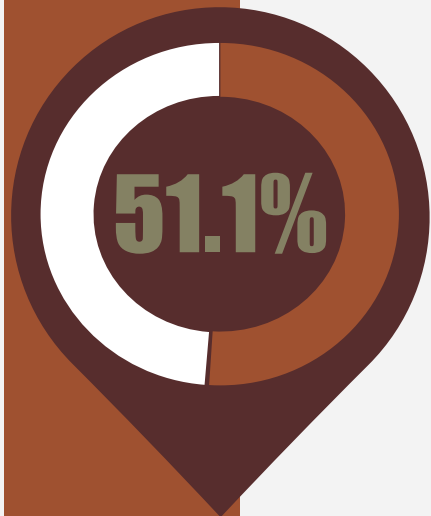
Lifestyle - Food



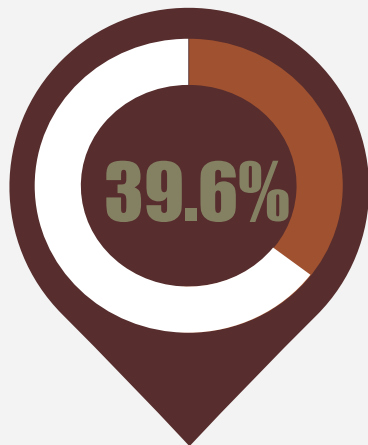
- French Cuisine
- Emphasis cooking method and dining etiquette
- Abound in wine and cheese

Religion

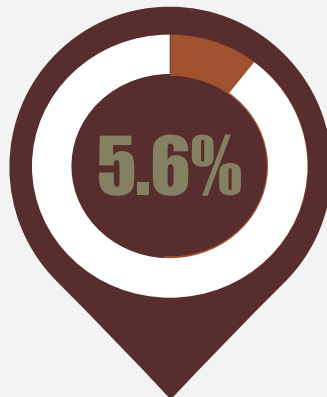
According to a survey in 2016 by Institut Montaigne and Institut français d'opinion publique (IFOP)



Catholic



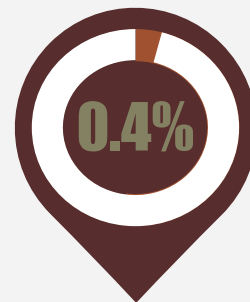
No religion



Muslims



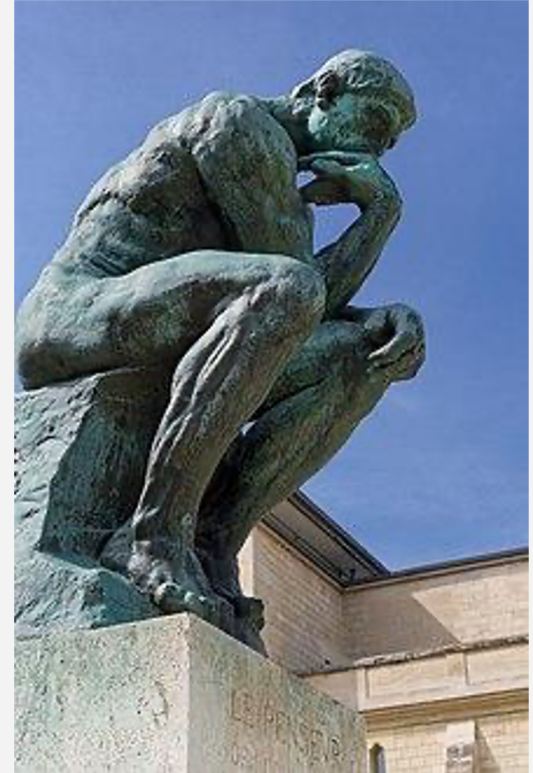
Other faiths



Undecided

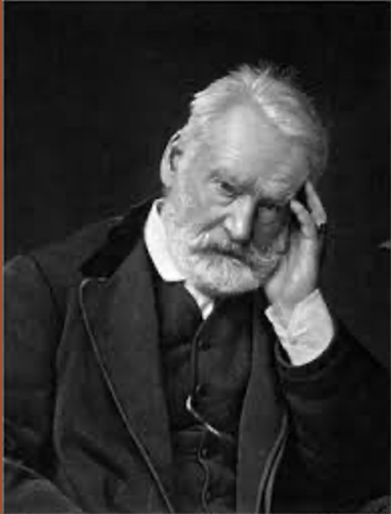
Arts

- The French Revolution brought a big change on art.
- Neoclassicism is a trend at that time, one of the famous example is "The Thinker".
- Many museum in devoted to sculptures and painting works.
- **The Louvre Museum**
- Famous collection: **Mona Lisa**



Literature

- Charles Perrault
- Fairy tale: "Sleeping Beauty", "Little Red Riding Hood", "Cinderella"



- Famous novel Les Misérables also wrote by France Victor Hugo
- One of the greatest novels of the 19th century.



A high-angle, wide shot of a busy street in Hong Kong. The street is filled with cars, a large white bus, and pedestrians. Tall buildings line both sides of the street, with various signs and advertisements visible. The sky is overcast.

ABOUT THE Interviewee

Nationality: French

- Married to a local.
- Have 3 children.
- Has been living in Hong Kong for 17 years.

Got the opportunity to have an internship during his last year of Engineering school in a company in Hong Kong



Has been employed once he got his diploma later



Immigrant

Interview Questions Analysis



Interview Question 2: What was your feeling or emotion when you started living in HK at the beginning few weeks?

- He was excited but anxious : As it was a big difference between Hong Kong and France, like people's pace, food, communication styles, working patterns and living environment
- He felt great about the lifestyle and the activity in Hong Kong very quickly.

He experienced **culture shock**.



Interview Questions Analysis



Interview Question 3: When and how did you really recognise the cultural differences between France and Hong Kong?

So fast, just when he landed, the difference was already significant....

	The French 	The Hongkonger 
Eating habits/ food preference	» enjoy eating slow » prefer food like ham and cheese, bread, salad and steak, etc	» eat fast » prefer hot food, rice and noodles
Greeting styles	» sometimes he tried to give out friendly hugs or high-fives, HK people get scared	» usually just knotting heads, waving hands or simply say 'hi'
Living pace	» enjoy walking slow	» walk ridiculously fast

Interview Questions Analysis



» He especially mentioned an experience to a Wong Tai Sin Temple, where he really felt out of place: the strong smell of smoking sticks, the processions, the prayers, everything hit him at once, showing that there are so much here that he would never understand, and he was not part of this culture.

Ethnicity style conflict

Interview Questions Analysis



Strategies: Assertive Separation

Has a conscious choice to maintain space between dominant(Him) and co-cultural group members(Hong Konger)

Interview Questions Analysis



Interview Question 4: What would you do if you encountered difficulties in adapting to the HK local culture? (e.g. language barrier, cultural difference etc.)

1. Observe

Recognise the difference.

**Cultural
Adaptation**

2. Accept

Accept that he is not from this culture.

intercultural identity

3. Adapt

Not the way around.

4. Try.

Generally, being friendly with people always ends well, trying to speak a couple of words, use body language, ease the potential tension that local could have with foreigners not speaking Chinese, and things flow from there.

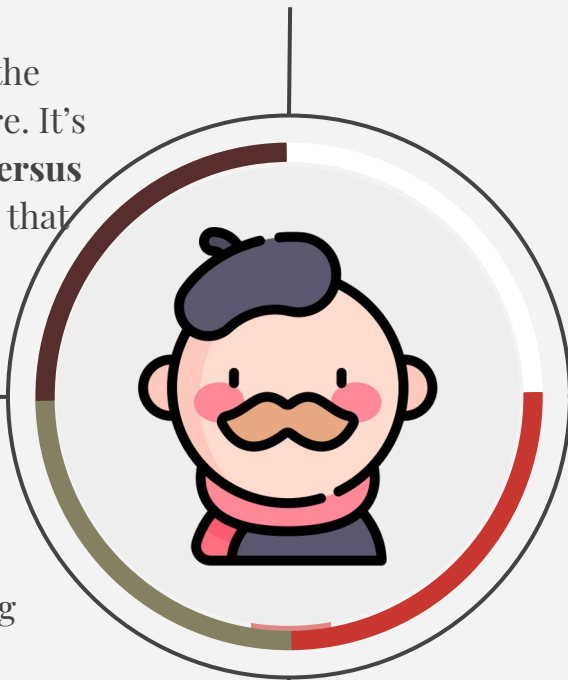


Interview question 5: In what ways have you tried to explore the HK local culture in the first year you moved to HK?

‘Going out with friends that are locals is the only way to grasp the difference of culture. It’s like **reading a book or watching movie versus living the story.**’ he said, it perfectly tells that interaction helps him explore a lot.

He even ends up marrying a local.

Visiting many famous places in Hong Kong.



Listening to some local famous singer songs like Eason Chan.

He even enjoyed the Karaoke with a lot of local friends.

Trying a lot of Chinese local food.

Questions 4-5 Strategies



Non-assertive Accommodation:

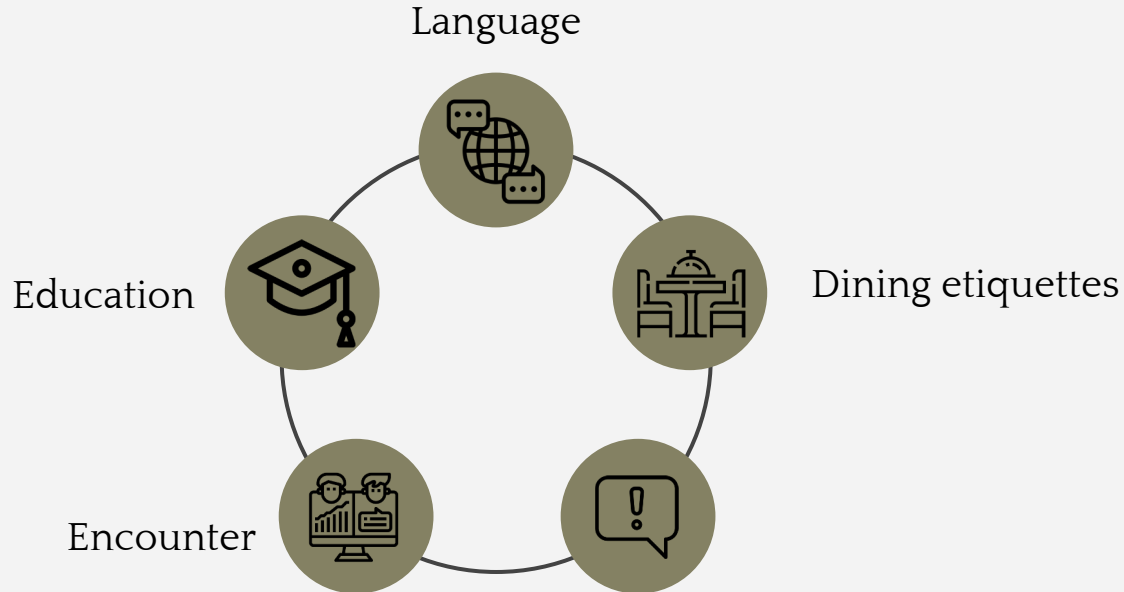
He is blending into the dominant culture and recognize co-cultural

For example: Listening to some Cantonese local songs.

Interview Questions Analysis



Interview Question 6: Do you think you integrated Hong Kong and French culture in daily life? Can you list some examples?





Interview Question 6: Do you think you integrated Hong Kong and French culture in daily life? Can you list some examples?

1. Language

His wife speaks Cantonese to the kids, he spoke French to them, and they speak English with their classmates, so the whole family are fluent in Cantonese, French and English.

2. Education

More on the French side, even their kids go to a local school, they still let the kids try and fail, even if they get hurt, they try not to protect them from anything that could happen to them and let them learn to stand up again.



Interview Question 6: Do you think you integrated Hong Kong and French culture in daily life? Can you list some examples?

3. Encounter



French are very sensitive to the “please-thank you”, even in friendly encounter, whereas in HK, it is more flexible, and it is not considered impolite with friends not to use it.

However, he doesn't try to shake hand or kiss with new people he met, as he understands it is not appropriate in Hong Kong. He can situationally switch his encounter style.

French is adapting **contact culture,
while HK is adapting **non-contact
culture**.**



Interview Question 6: Do you think you integrated Hong Kong and French culture in daily life? Can you list some examples?

4. Dining etiquettes

Dining manner at home are more on the French side: it is not polite to make noise while eating for French, while not making noise is not a problem for Hong Kong. However, when they eat in a Chinese restaurant, they follow the local rules: not playing with chopsticks, not sticking the chopsticks vertical in the bowl of rice, etc.



We can say that the interviewee has attained the **integration mode**, given the circumstances which he has been married to a local and spending 17 years in a foreign country. He can maintain his French culture with his families and friends, but meanwhile he can adjust to Hong Kong culture situationally to **accept and accommodate others' culture**.

Questions 6 Strategies

Strategies: Assertive Accommodation

He trying to strike a balance between the concerns of co-culture and dominant group members.

Including: Teach his children both Cantonese and French

Strategies: Non-assertive Assimilation

He trying to fit and be accepted by the dominant group.

For example: Try to not shake hand or kiss with new people he met

Observation



» We had both Chinese hotpot and ham & cheese after interview with his family at home. There was a lot to be observed. Not only specifically that day, throughout our normal interaction, some difference can be noticed.

» He doesn't enjoy the food in hotpot, but he tried to eat udon noodles and cheese balls, which is the closest substitute to French food. But his kids enjoyed both cuisine.

Observation



➤ We all enjoyed drinking wine, chatting casually about anything, like studies, work and any random thing, we did not rush through dinner. During dinner, French, Cantonese and English were all over the table. Usually, he tries to speak as much Cantonese as he can and a bit English to assist.

➤ His kids, who are 12, 10 and 3, all enjoyed playing with toys, drawing and playing violin.

Difficulties -Five Stages of Culture Shock

Honeymoon

01

02

Disorientation

Shock

03

04

Adaptation

Adjustment

05



Difficulties -Five Stages of Culture Shock

1. Honeymoon

When he came to Hong Kong in the very beginning, he felt exciting and curiosity about Hong Kong's culture.

2. Disorientation

He felt anxious, insecure and stressed as he was out of his environmental bubble.

He is overwhelmed by the requirement of the new cultural. E.g using chopstick, not to give out friendly hugs or high-fives (inappropriate).

Difficulties -Five Stages of Culture Shock

3. Shock

He started to feel stress and anxiety towards the new culture.

E.g the experience that he go to Wong Tai Sin Temple, he hate the temple's environment where is full of the smell of smoking sticks and the processions, the prayers made him annoyed, he felt very shocked in that moment. > cultural (religious) conflict

Difficulties -Five Stages of Culture Shock

4. Adaptation

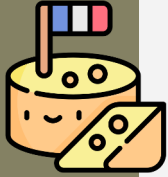
Our interviewee tried to adapt the Hong Kong's culture too. He increasingly sees the bad and the good elements in both the new culture and the home culture.

For example, although he does not like hotpot, he tried to eat udon noodles and cheese balls. He does not think that hotpot is an unappetizing things, he tries to adapt it, but not reject it.

5. Adjustment

He had become comfortable in both the old and new culture. He will teach his children both Cantonese and French. He enjoyed the cantonese songs and Karaoke.

Difficulties - Contact Culture vs Noncontact Culture



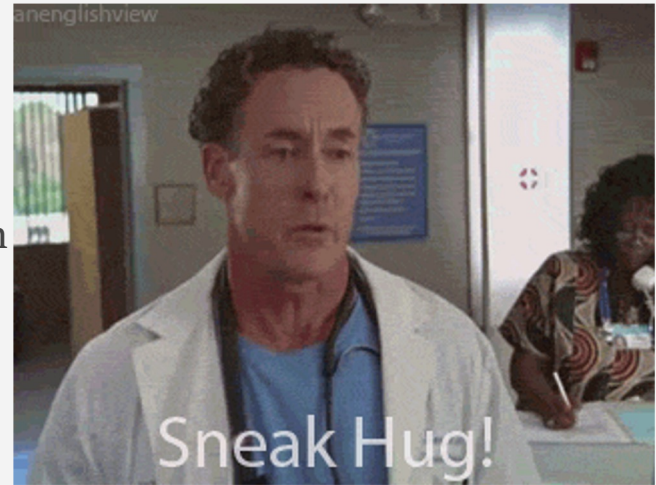
In France, people tend to stand close together and touch frequently when they interact.



In contrast, Hong Kong people tend to maintain more space and touch less often than people do in contact culture.

In the interview, our interviewee said that people may shock and feel that it is inappropriate.

It makes him felt confused about what is an appropriate manner in Hong Kong.



Difficulties - Language Barrier



He was born and raised in France, and french is his mother language.

He acquired his second language (English) in school, but he had never learnt chinese language before coming to Hong Kong.

He can only use English to communicate with some of the locals.

E.g. difficulties in ordering food in traditional restaurants, asking for directions, communicating with colleagues, and even chit-chatting

However, He engaged in different activities to help himself increase exposure to the local culture.

Difficulties - Different perception of politeness

Another interesting fact that he mentioned during dinner is the usage of the word “Please” .

E.g. In french, the usage of “please” is very sensitive, even in friendly encounter. He felt confused and uncomfortable at the beginning. → Sincere? / Sarcastic?

- *Je t'en prie* (polite begging with the notion of "please" included)
- *Je t'en supplie* (a bit more urgent, but the "please" is still probably understood)
- *Je t'implore* (serious begging and the "please" is probably not understood)
- *Je te pleure* (serious begging, no "please" at all)



Difficulties - Different perception of politeness

However, the usage of “please” is comparatively flexible and common in our daily life.



France (-ve)

- Avoid using it, may regard as impolite
- Pay heavy emphasis on the tone and the timing of usage



Hong Kong (+ve)

- Often used to express our politeness and gratitude

Difficulties - different perception of time (chronemics)

Monochronic ?

Polychronic ?

Regarding his work, he mentioned that he is sensitive to time and planning, while Hong Kong seems less.

He was not adapt to this intensive workplace culture at the beginning.

He shared an experience that his business client in HK sent multiple emails to him on a Friday night and expected him to reply on weekend (private time).



Difficulties - different perception of time (chronemics)

In fact...

	 France	 Hong Kong
Working hours (e.g. engineering office work)	- Fixed working hours - Not encourage overtime working. (Mon-Fri: 9am-6pm, include 2 hours long lunch break)	- Long working hours - Have to reply business messages or answer phone calls in non-working hours.
Business meeting schedule	- Appointment usually made one to two weeks in advance. - Strong sense of time commitment - Stick to plans.	- Mostly 1-3 days in advanced only. - Subject to change easily.

Recommendations-More face-to-face communication



Face-to-face communication include 2 parts which are both high context and low context communications

This will help reducing the misunderstanding during communication with each other

Both verbal and non-verbal communication (body gesture) are involved. This will increase the accuracy of what others want to bring out.

Reducing misunderstanding would also help to lower the possibility of stereotype arising and so as discrimination.

Recommendations-How to lower language barrier

There are also a few things we can aware of during verbal communication.

The pace of speaking- try to keep it slow which would decrease the error of translation.

Avoid slang, dialect and idiomatic expressions- it is hard for people from other countries to understand one country specific slang.

Therefore, avoiding using slang and slow down the pace of speaking would prevent misinterpretation.

(eg. try to use more words that can show politeness (please and thank you))

Try adapting into the Hong Kong culture (Cantonese)

Recommendations- Ask for feedback

Asking for feedbacks can avoid being subjective of how you performing in the communication process.

Stay open minded to ask for feedbacks would help improving your communication skill.

Stand on the other side of people would give you a different view.

This would enhance your verbal communication and lower the chance of errors occur.



Recommendations-open mind



Stay open-minded

Understanding cultural differences between Hong Kong and France

By understanding cultural differences, it would be easier to accept others behaviors

(eg. Hong Kong people always keep certain social distance with others while French do not.)

Recommendations-open mind



Therefore, avoiding being too hot to Hong Kong people which may cause antipathy

Stay in a positive attitude would help accepting cultural differences and further

Help respecting others

Try to follow the pace of Hong Kong people (tight schedule)

Recommendations

Entering into dialogue

- a) Sharing and reciprocity
- b) Listening rather than talking
- c) Giving voice and engage in true dialogue

Recommendations-Interpersonal allies

1. Try to identify how gender, age, history affect Hong Kong power
1. Know the importance of history (British Hong Kong)
1. Value and appreciate differences between French and Hong Kong people

Recommendations-Building coalitions

1.To enforce or to shift your identities (French->Hong Kong)

2.To navigate identities

This can help to build a positive relationship with different people

Then , we can perform social justice and acknowledge what is black and white in different culture.

Final Recommendations

Try to emerge in
the culture.

Don't afraid of learning

Learning different
language and
culture

Read more, know
more and learn
more

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Lecture11 notes -Chapter 11- Striving for Engaged and Effective Intercultural Communication_Students.ppt

Q&A