

## An Exploratory Cross-Cultural Research Questionnaire: How Cultural Schemata May Disrupt Cross-Cultural Communication Between Japanese and English Speakers

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### Abstract

This research is the result of an exploratory cross-cultural questionnaire that aims to show how the background knowledge we use to communicate exists as dynamic sets of cultural schema that can disrupt the communication process. The goal of the research is to highlight how our culture based knowledge (schemata) is largely an unconscious psychological concept that needs to be raised to the conscious level via intercultural education and training so that misunderstandings and ethnocentric viewpoints can be addressed and thereby minimized for successful cross-cultural communication. The cross-cultural questionnaire was administered to native Japanese and English speakers and explored eight theme words, such as “competition”, “business contract” and “negotiation”, to see how these two groups of speakers valued them. In addition to the eight theme words, questionnaire participants were asked to fill in three cross-cultural conversations to see how they may apply these concepts in a particular context. Associative group methodology was used to analyze the questionnaire theme words with the aid of several Japanese translators. Differences were found in the way Japanese and English speakers applied their cultural schema that have the potential for cross-cultural conflict.

**Keywords :** intercultural communication, schema, ethnocentrism, stereotyping

### 1. Introduction

This paper shall present preliminary results of an exploratory cross-cultural research questionnaire. The main research goal was to highlight how our cultural schema, or background knowledge, can adversely affect communication between native Japanese and English speakers.

Particular emphasis was put on exploring how Japanese and Americans regard concepts central to business and government. This area of research is consequential because our cultural schema plays a significant role in communication and decision making where unrecognized misunderstandings can negatively affect the

outcome of business and diplomatic communication. Because we often fail to recognize the most basic communication values of our own cultural communication norms that, for the most part, smooth communication with people from the same culture, we are even less likely to be aware of how they affect the cross-cultural context. For example, American communication schema assumes “directness” and “equality” while Japanese communication tendencies are towards “indirectness” and “social hierarchy.” Such contrasting schemas are mostly unrecognized for each speaker so that communication can be accomplished with little time and mental effort. However, when speakers from two distinctive cultures interact in a particular context, these cultural schema are often the underlying cause of cross-cultural conflict. Further, highlighting the cultural schema is problematic because it is psychological in nature and in order to address it, it must be raised to the conscious level.

### 1. 1 Terms

*Schemas* can be defined as being, “...generalized collections of knowledge of past experiences which are organized into related knowledge groups and are used to guide our behaviors in familiar situations” (Nishida, 1999, p. 754). “Schema(s)” and “background knowledge” are used interchangeably to imply unrecognized culture-specific groups of knowledge that the

speaker uses to interpret a text or utterance.

“*Intercultural*” is used in a more general sense than “cross-cultural.” The latter shall refer to two specific national cultures such as Japan and the US. A *cross-cultural conflict* or incident is defined as a specific cross-cultural context where native and non-native speakers may have recognized or unrecognized misunderstandings due to the underlying beliefs, and value patterns of their cultural system.

Culture shall be understood to mean “...a learned meaning system that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, meanings, and symbols that are passed down from one generation to the next and are shared by varying degrees by interacting members of a community” (Ting-Toomey and Chung, 2005, p. 28). This definition is central to the premise that people at the national level have different value and belief systems which they rely on to communicate effectively.

### 1. 2 Research approach

Because researchers approach the concept of culture differently, it is worth noting that, for this cross-cultural research, culture is defined as both a stable phenomena (“passed down from one generation to the next”) and a dynamic one (“shared by varying degrees”) depending on context. Another focus of culture from this perspective is that we are looking for patterns of a cultures values, beliefs and norms in which members

share meanings due to similarities in upbringing, language, group memberships, religion, and educational systems as opposed to emergent behavior (i.e. personality driven traits) in small groups. Culture, by its shared values, beliefs and norms, is the glue that bonds individuals to help them interact in an efficient and harmonious way. This definition is central to the premise that people at the national level have different value and belief systems and these particularities, “can easily override the universality of human experience, and change our perception of one another in such profound and decisive ways” (Kurotani, 2009, p. 14).

This research takes a constructivist approach in an attempting to locate “...the nexus of cultural influence on knowledge structures (in this case “schemata”) that guide negotiators’ judgements and decisions” (Morris and Ho-Ying Fu, 2001, p. 324). This approach originates from cognitive psychology and attempts to incorporate both an etic and emic approach to interpreting data.

Chen (2009) has divided intercultural communication competence (ICC) into three distinct areas-affective, cognitive and behavioral. He maintains that intercultural competence as a concept is too large and complex to try and investigate all three aspects with a single survey instrument.



Diagram 1  
Model of Intercultural Competence  
(Chen, 2009)

This research concerns the cognitive aspect of ICC model as we are attempting to raise intercultural awareness by highlighting the conventions that affect how we think and behave. In essence, it is a general attempt to draw a cognitive map of specific words or phrases that are cognitively loaded with culturally relevant meaning. In addition, the author of this paper contends that the cognitive aspect of the ICC model may possibly have a greater importance to cross-cultural interaction because participants may find it problematic to manage their emotions (affective) or apply ICC strategies (adroitness) if they have little awareness of why their own way of thinking and behaving differs in a cross-cultural context.

## 2.0 Questionnaires

An exploratory cross-cultural questionnaire (see Appendix A) was distributed to

both Japanese in Japan and American participants at a large public American university. The Japanese data was collected from students at the author's institution. 39 (N=39) American questionnaires were collected while 62 were collected from the Japanese (N=62). Originally 50 American questionnaires were collected but 11 were disregarded as the respondents indicated that (American) English was not their native language. All the Japanese respondents were native Japanese speakers. American participants' average age was 19.5 and the Japanese averaged 22.6 years old. There were more male respondents for the Japanese respondents (M=48, F=14) than the Americans (M=15, F=24).

### 3.0 Methodology

The cross-cultural questionnaire was originally created and written by the author in English. Afterwards, it was translated into Japanese by a team of two native Japanese speaker assistants. The Japanese results were then translated into English by the same team of Japanese assistants. Both questionnaires were distributed at approximately the same time period. All questionnaire participants were either native Japanese and (American) English speakers.

For the data presented in the paper as a practical example, AGA methodology was performed on each participants' results yielding a list of words that the participant

spontaneously associated with a given theme word. Some of the "theme words" were linked to the conversational situations in Part II and past research (Ryan 2006) to further investigate the concepts thought to be problematic in cross-cultural communication between Japanese and Americans. The example presented below is given as an example from Part I (question #1) that explored the concept "argument." To perform AGA methodology, the *theme word* "argument" was given to both cross-cultural participants yielding two correlated response lists (one in Japanese and the other in English) of words that each participant associates with it. The full response lists for each both groups of participants is listed in Appendix A. Starting at the top of each participant's word list, each word was ranked 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. For a word to be included in the weighting, it had to be generated on two or more participants' word lists. Thus, each theme, such as "funeral", generated two associative response lists-one Japanese and the other American. Each participant's list of responses is weighted according to the readiness that the word came to mind (rank-order). The weighting of was done empirically via differential stability of rank place using the test-retest method (Kelly 1985). This technique was modeled and adapted after Linowes, Mroczkowski, Uchida and Komatsu's 2000 study and which was also replicated in Ryan's 2006

study.

The total response list for each group yielded schemas linked to the theme word to give a “mental map” that measure the “dominant mindset” (Linowes et al., 2000, p. 71) of Japanese and Americans for the particular concept being tested. In addition, the salience of each theme is measured. Each national groups’ word list can be totaled yielding a weighted response list or salience of word associations for a given theme word.

“The salience of a theme is the total response score generated by all associations to that theme by all respondents. It is a measure of “meaningfulness,” in the sense that it reflects the total magnitude of associations linked to the theme in respondents’ minds and so serves as a measure of what is foremost in peoples’ minds” (Linowes et al., 2000, p. 78).

After all eight theme words and their response lists were collated and scored in Appendix A, they were put into a table showing the salience of each category word. Table 1 is an abbreviated example of

the response list (see Appendix A for full version) the Japanese responses were translated back into English.

Japanese respondents scored higher in total salience than their US counterparts indicating that the word argument held slightly more meaning for them or a broader range of schema that is drawn from when the term is used.

### 3.1 Limitations

There are several limitations to the study. One problem inherent with most cross-cultural studies is that translation between different languages is not always word-for-word translatable. That is, one word or phrase in one language may hold a different meaning or nuance than in the other language and putting the validity of the results in question. However, it could be also argued that culture affects our perception of how we regard language thus reinforcing the argument for attempting to highlight cultural schema used by both speakers. One limitation in the methodology is that the number of participants was not equal. 62 Japanese participated in the survey while only 39 Americans did so.

**Table 1 “Argument”**  
**Example of a Weighted Response List and Scoring**  
 Abbreviated scored responses to stimulus word “argument” (*giron* 議論)

American responses		Japanese responses	
fighting/quarrel	76	debate	126
disagreement	58	discus(sion)	105
yelling	37	the Diet	79
Total (Salience):	171		195

This number was balanced when computing total category salience scores as noted. Another limitation to the questionnaire involved the imbalance of gender as the Japanese respondents were predominantly male (M=48) while the American respondents as mostly female (M=15). Gender differences were not tested as this was not the goal of study, but there may have been some variation to the associations due to gender.

### 3.2 Content Analysis

The AGA method is intended to measure the participants' national cultural schema. Questionnaires (Appendix A) yielded a list of words for the following 8 stimulus words: argument, business, competition, contract (business), quiet person, democracy, negotiate and government. Only four of these theme words shall be analyzed in this paper.

These lists were then analyzed according to their rank order and a numerical total for each response was generated. This generated a ranked order response list for groups' stimulus word. Next, a team of two native English speakers analyzed the content of these ranked order lists and put them into a common set of broad-based categories (see Table 1) creating a "schema" for each stimulus word. Both groups' response lists are then compared and analyzed in the results in order "to determine the components of meaning for each word" (Linowes

et. al. 2001:78).

As a result of categorizing by content both the American and Japanese participants words into an appropriate schema, two numbers (American and Japanese) were generated for each content category by adding the weighted score for each word. Once all theme word responses are totaled for both groups, the salience of each theme word can be determined by adding the composite scores of each word list. In "argument" example (Table 1), Japanese participants recorded a total score of 244 versus 342 for the Americans after the number of participants was balanced. Thus, the salience or "meaningfulness" the word argument was greater for this content category for the Americans than for the Japanese.

After the content category point values have been determined, a "semantograph" (Linowes et al., 2000, p. 78) can be created visually showing the associations each national group makes in each content category or their cultural schema.

## 4.0 Results

In this section, selected results that were determined to have large cultural schema differences are presented and discussed. Complete results of the eight theme words are displayed in Appendix A.

### 4.1 Argument

The stimulus word "argument" (議論

*giron* in Japanese) appeared to hold large schema differences. In the content analysis below, you can see that only four schema categories were determined. Large differences appeared in the way both participants associated meanings. Americans associated some kind of oral conflict such as yelling or quarreling while the Japanese respondents associated it with talking and people. In addition, American respondents had a negative association with the word argument while the Japanese did not.

The word “argument” clearly holds a different meaning to both cross-cultural participants and may need to be redefined in most standard language dictionaries.

Although this difference may be mostly a semantic difference and not necessarily cultural based, when the American NNS hears the word “giron” in Japanese it can create a negative schema which can lead to a different perception of a particular communication event.

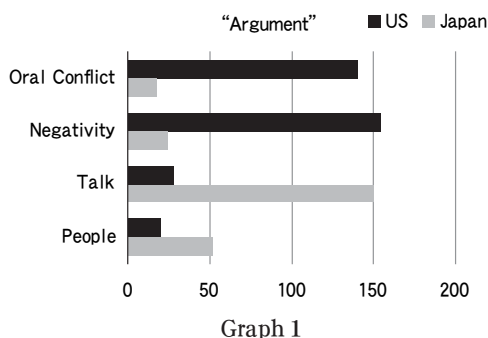
From the graph analysis, “argument” for Americans is an emotional, mostly negative, display of one’s opinion, while for Japanese, it is more related to group discussion and consensus making. Scores for Graph 1 below were balanced by the same number of respondents as indicated in parenthesis in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Components of perception and evaluation of the stimulus word “argument” (*giron*)

Content Category	American score	Japanese*
Underlying responses		
<b>Oral Conflict</b>		
A: fighting/quarrel(76), yelling(37), confrontation(17), loud(10)	140	18
J: argue/quarrel/confrontation(28), deny/contradict/object(12), assert/insist (5)		
<b>Negativity</b>		
A: frustrated(33), anger(30), bad(18), negative(9), headache(6), disagreement(58)	154	24
J: dispute(18), trouble(14), violence(11), hard/difficult(9), heated(8),		
<b>Talk</b>		
A: debate(17), discussion(11)	28	150
J: debate(126), discussion(105), meeting(54), conference(32), opinion(29), conversation/talk/chat(14), speech(12), subject(6)		
<b>People:</b>		
A: boyfriend(10), Mom(10)	20	52
J: the Diet(79), politics(18), many people(15), chairman(11), politician(7),		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>244*</b>

\*Japanese N=62 (total category score \*.63) to balance with American respondents American N=39



#### 4. 1. 1 Conversation

In part II of the questionnaire, Conversation #3 (see Table 3) was presented to participants to explore how they might deal with a potential conflict with someone from their own culture.

As expected, both cross-cultural participants followed their larger cultural norms in

dealing with this potential conflict. Most Americans employed a direct communication strategy by asking, "Does it bother you?" Since for western English speakers, the responsibility for making oneself understood rests with the speaker, it is expected that the speaker A will say clearly whether or not the noise is bothersome. Thus, the American participants try to clarify this ambiguity. In contrast, to the Japanese, only 8% of the Americans took this statement by A to be an indirect complaint and offering to stop their son from practicing while only 6% of the Japanese employed the directness strategy. The Japanese culture norm for communication is more context dependent and non-verbal. In

**Table 3 Part II - Conversation #3**

Situation: Two families who live next door to each other. Both families have two teenagers living at home.

A. Good evening Mrs. B. Your son, Tom, is entering the brass band competition, isn't he? I'm sure you are proud of his talent. He practices enthusiastically. I can hear him practicing his French horn until late at night.

B. \_\_\_\_\_

Japan (85%)	US (71%)
1. I'm sorry that my son makes so much noise late at night. 23%	1. Sorry, hope it doesn't bother you/ Does it bother you? 38%
2. I'll tell him not to make noise until late at night. I'm sorry about it. 23%	2. Yes, he is dedicated/passionate/excellent/hardworking 15%
3. I hope he does his best. 13%	3. Thank you, I'll tell him not to practice so late 8%
4. I'm sorry for the noise, but my son keeps it up, so please endure it until the contest 8%	4. Thank you. We are very proud/happy 5%
5. (compliments A's children) 8%	5. You should get earplugs/It's loud 5%
6. Is it bothering you? I'm sorry. 5%	
7. Do you feel annoyed about it? Does my son make too much noise? 5%	



contrast, the listener has more responsibility to interpret the speaker's intended message for the Japanese communicator.

## 4.2 Competition

The stimulus word "competition" generated large differences in cross-cultural participants responses. In Table 4, content

analysis was performed that resulted in nine schema. As competition is one of the pillars of American society and culture, it is not surprising that the American respondents had a mostly positive schema for it with such schema as, "win", "best" and "healthy". American respondents also associated individualism with competition.

**Table 4**

Components of perception and evaluation of the stimulus word "competition" (*kyousou*)

Content Category	American score	Japanese*
Underlying responses		
<b>Win</b> A: win/winner(61) J: victory/win-lose(29)	61	18
<b>Lose(r)</b> A: lose/loser(14) J:	14	0
<b>Sport</b> A: sports(52), game(31), (foot) race(26), Olympics(12), athletic(12) J: sports(101), (foot) race (70), contest/match/game(24), Olympics(18), relay/track meet/marathon (17), horse race (9)	133	150
<b>Positive Attribute</b> A: best/good(18), healthy(11), cheerleading(11), fun(11) award/ medal(10) J: make money(9)	61	5
<b>Negative attribute:</b> A: J: war/battle(33), hard/struggle(14), severe(10)	0	36
<b>Societal attribute</b> A: J: society (11), economy (15)	0	16
<b>Individual attribute</b> A: drive/determination(11), pride/dignity(5), opponent(11) J:	27	0
<b>Competitiveness</b> A: competitive/compete(22) J: competition(53)	22	33
<b>Examination</b> A: J: examination(25)	0	16
Total:	318	274*

\*Japanese N=62 (total category score \*.63) to balance with American respondents American N=39

Table 5 Part II Questionnaire: Conversation #2

Situation: A is asking B about his son's jr. high baseball game yesterday. B's son is one of the best hitters on the team and is only in 6th grade (Japan: 1st year junior high).

A: So, how was your son's game yesterday?

B: Not so good. They lost.

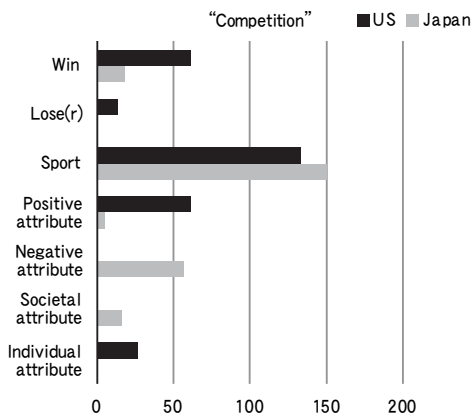
A: That's too bad. But, I hear that your son is the best hitter on the team. How did he do? I bet he hit a home run.

B: He didn't play of course.

A: Really, why not?

B: \_\_\_\_\_

Japanese (86%)	Americans (64%)
1. Because he got injured. 47%	1. He was injured 18%
2. Because he is in the 6th grade, seniority etc 27%	2. He was suspended 10%
3. He has been in a slump lately, so he could not play in the game. 3%	3. He was sick 10%
4. Because he caught a cold 3%	4. It was team politics/not coach's favorite etc 13%
5. Because he got in some trouble 3%	5. needed rest/pre-season game/didn't need him 8%
6. Because he had a fever 3%	6. seniority 5%



Graph 2

The Japanese respondents, on the other hand, had a negative schema of competition and associated it more generally with society and entrance exams. Unlike the US, the Japanese educational system requires junior high students to take high school entrance examinations to enter the school of their choice. This creates a highly competi-

tive and stressful atmosphere for students and parents because, in the Japanese system, the better high school one attends, the better university one can enter. So, it is quite natural that the Japanese respondents, who are university students, would have this schema. Graph 2 gives a visual interpretation to Table 4.

In Table 5, we can see the results' of conversation #2 of Part II of the questionnaire. This question explores how the schema for "competition" may be interpreted in actual communication. 86% of the Japanese respondents matched responses by association while only 64% of the Americans made an association with their answers. Americans participants typically had more variety in their responses. In Japan, it is usual for the underclassmen,

especially freshmen, to not play in games but support and learn from their “elders”. This is called, “sempai-kohai” in Japanese and is a very strong cultural determinant in interpersonal interaction in Japanese society today. This concept relates strongly to social hierarchy and extends to nearly every level of Japanese society that is based on group participation. It is highly in-

grained in the Japanese mind so much so that many Japanese are not aware of the cultural values and norms that it creates. Surprisingly, most of the Japanese respondents (47%) had a stronger association with “he got injured”, than lack of seniority (27%). This may be due to the fact that Japan is becoming more competitive-based in sports. Only 64% of the Americans made

**Table 6**  
Components of perception and evaluation of the stimulus word “Contract(business)”  
(*nigyounokeiyaku*)

Content Category	American score	Japanese* score
<b>Underlying responses</b>		
<b>Guarantee</b>		
A: binding/concrete/locked in(48)	48	21
J: promise(22), contract(12)		
<b>Money</b>		
A: money(22)	22	13
J: money(21)		
<b>Name seal</b>		
A:	0	20
J: name seal(28), fingerprint(3)		
<b>Signature</b>		
A: signature(29)	29	15
J: signature(24)		
<b>Legal</b>		
A: legalities(38), rules/regulations(23), lawyers(13), protection/safety(8), agreement(32)	114	6
J: law(9)		
<b>Interrelational</b>		
A: cell phone(12)	12	14
J: negotiation(15), partnership/association(8)		
<b>Role</b>		
A: work(9)	9	24
J: employment/job(10), company(17), responsibility(11)		
<b>Document</b>		
A: paper/paperwork/document(16), read/read everything(9)	25	9
J: document(15)		
<b>Negative attribute</b>		
A:	0	24
J: swindle/unscrupulous(22), difficult(16)		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>146*</b>

\*Japanese N=62(total category score \*.63) to balance with American respondents American N=39

an association in their responses and had various schemata to explain the lack of playing time with only 5% specifically mentioning seniority as being a mitigating factor.

#### 4.3 Contract (business)

The way Americans and Japanese participants perceived the stimulus words “Contract (business)” indicated there were differences in schema due to divergent cultural norms and values (see Table 6). American respondents had a strong schema of “legalities” and “guarantee” while the top Japanese respondents schema was “role”, “guarantee” and “negative attribute.”

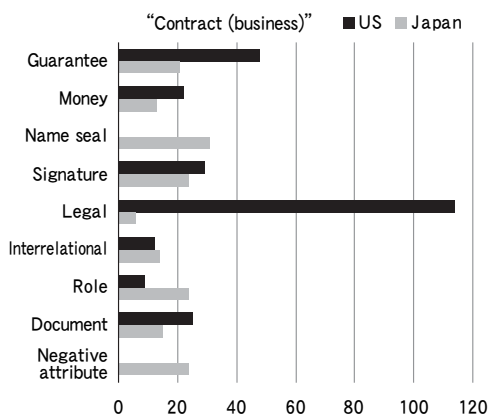
The US is a highly litigated society and the contract is believed to be a way of protecting the individual from liability. Therefore, it is often regarded as a necessary and indispensable fact of life in American business. An agreement is often not legitimized in the eyes of Americans unless it is written down and signed by

both parties. The Japanese participants, on the other hand, viewed the contract as something with a more specific role

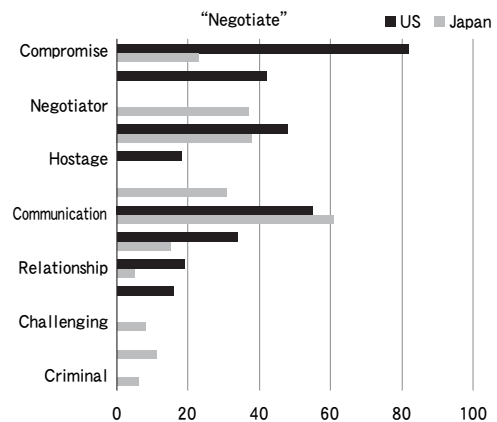
showing one’s responsibility (see Graph 3). Verbal agreements are often preferred in Japan because this puts emphasis on one’s role and responsibility to the group (“interrelational”) and shows that you are trustworthy to do business with in the future. In describing cross-cultural business relations, Elwood points out that “longer written contracts were associated with lower goodwill trust in Japan but not in the United States” (as cited in Sako and Helper, 2002). Because of this approach, Japanese business relationships take much more time to develop than binding contract preference of western cultures.

#### 4.4 Negotiate

Continuing to explore cultural schema for business concepts, Japanese and Americans respondents each had unique schema for the stimulus word “negotiate.” Content analysis



Graph 3



Graph 4

Table 7

Components of perception and evaluation of the stimulus word “negotiate” (交渉する)

Content Category	American score	Japanese*
Underlying responses		
<b>Compromise</b>		
A: compromise(82), agreement	82	23
J: compromise(22), common ground/fairness(14)		
<b>Agreement</b>		
A: agreement(16), settlement/deal/bargain(26)	42	0
J:		
<b>Negotiator</b>		
A:	0	37
J: negotiator/negotiation(59)		
<b>Haggle</b>		
A: haggle/debate(14), barter/trade(10), persuade/reason with(14), argue/challenge(10)	48	38
J: request(15), persuasion(13), dealing/barter(12) beat down/break down(20)		
<b>Hostage</b>		
A: hostage(18)	18	0
J:		
<b>Benefit</b>		
A:	0	31
J: discount/cut price(25), benefit/advantage(14), money(10)		
<b>Communication</b>		
A: discuss/talk(ing)/conversation(32), communication(23)	55	61
J: discuss/conversation/talking(37), negotiate with(36), diplomacy(24)		
<b>Contract</b>		
A: terms/stipulate(13), contract(10), business(11)	34	15
J: treaty/contract/promise(15), company(9)		
<b>Relationship</b>		
A: ties/connection(9), win-lose/winner(10)	19	5
B: kneel down on ground(8)		
<b>Flexibility</b>		
A: workable/pliable/not set in stone(16)	16	0
J:		
<b>Challenging</b>		
A:	0	8
J: challenging/hard(12)		
<b>People</b>		
A:	0	11
J: group/people(9), conference(8)		
<b>Criminal</b>		
A:	0	6
J: criminal(10)		
Total:	314	235*

\*Japanese N=62(total category score \*.63) to balance with American respondents  
American N=39

on the association of the word response list resulted in 13 associations.

Graph 4 summarizes the level of association for each content category in Table 7 and highlights the differences between the two schemas.

The American schema had a strong association for “compromise” and “agreement.” “Contract” was also highly associated with these terms and for Americans in business, a contract provides a formal method for achieving clarity and mutual understanding. The Japanese schema had a strong association for “communication”, “negotiator” and “benefit.” Both participants’ schema included “haggle” as a strong association. “Hostage” is often collocated with “negotiation” in the English language. Interestingly, both respondents had schema that the other did not. The American three unique categories were, “agreement”, “hostage” and “flexibility.” Categories particular to the Japanese were “negotiator”, “benefit”, “challenging”, “people” and “criminal” which seems to indicate a more human element but also some distrust. In negotiation, the American mindset seems to be, “*we can reach an agreement if we stay flexible enough to find a compromise in our demands of each other.*” The Japanese mindset seems to say, “*although it is challenging to take the role of a negotiator, we can receive some benefit if we communicate honestly.*” Both approaches are drawn from cultural norms of the US

and Japan. In US society, to be able to reach a compromise, clarity and the ability to be flexible are valued. Of course, these concepts are also valued in Japanese society but more so in the context of interpersonal harmony because decision making in a business context is done by group consensus. Therefore, Japanese culture highly values maintaining long-term interpersonal relationships and avoiding conflict avoidance in order to maintain social harmony. Thus, “negotiate” may be perceived as a threat to the disruption of social harmony and one’s face because it may only bring about a benefit to one side. In sum, the schema for “negotiate” for Americans reflected the American preference for flexibility so a compromise can be reached and clarified by a contract. In Japan where non-verbal agreements are more common, the schema seems to be concerned for the lack of clarity in the role one would play in a negotiation to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships.

## 5.0 Discussion

This cross-cultural research analyzed culture specific background knowledge that both Americans and Japanese may apply when they interact in a business or government context. For this short paper, only four themes were discussed and analyzed, and there were numerous limitations to the study. Future research is needed to address these shortcomings

before any concrete conclusions can be made. However, tentative research results presented here does lend some support to the two major premises of this work. First, our culturally based schemata are largely unrecognized and often disruptive in cross-cultural contexts. Second, cultural schemata cause differences in perception and, in turn, interpretation of fundamental concepts that both Americans and Japanese on the surface appear to be in agreement. Finally, further research in the cognitive area of intercultural competence is needed to highlight cultural differences in specific and consequential contexts such as intercultural business and health care.

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## Appendix A -Questionnaire (English)

This is a confidential research questionnaire that will be used for research purposes only. It does not reflect the views of the institution where it is given. Please answer as truthfully as possible.

Is English your native language?      Yes              No

Gender:              F              M

Age:              \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your cooperation!



## Part 1 of 2

**Directions:** What do you first think of when you hear or read each word below? Write as many words or phrases as you like under each word. Please do not change any answers after you have written them down.

argument

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competition

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government

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quiet person

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(business) contract

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democracy

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negotiate

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business

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## Part 2 of 2

Directions: Complete the conversations with any natural response.

### Conversation #1 (Adapted from Storti, C. 1994)

Situation: B is a well-known and highly respected architect discussing the possibility of taking on a large project.

A. Well...I understand that you and your company are one of the best architectural firms in this part of the world.

B. Thank you for the invitation.

A. It's our pleasure. Now it says here that you've had a very successful business for over 30 years.

B. Yes, we've had some success. Have you spoken with Mr. C?

A. Yes, I did. He said that your buildings have won several awards, and you have a lot of experience with office buildings. But, do you think you can handle a project of this size?

B. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Conversation #2

**Situation:** A is asking B about his son's jr. high baseball game yesterday. B's son is one of the best hitters on the team and is only in 6th grade.

A. So, how was your son's game yesterday?

B. Not so good. They lost.

A. That's too bad. But, I hear that your son is the best hitter on the team. How did he do? I bet he hit a home run.

B. He didn't play of course.

A. Really, why not?

B. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Conversation #3

**Situation:** Two families who live next door to each other. Both families have two teenagers living at home.

A. Good evening Mrs. B. Your son, Tom, is entering the brass band competition isn't he? I'm sure you are proud of his talent. He practices enthusiastically. I can hear him practicing his French horn until late at night.

B. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.