

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN SLOVAK AND UZBEK CULTURES

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Abstract. *This study investigates the unique characteristics of intercultural communication between Slovak and Uzbek cultures, with a focus on sociolinguistic features and cultural norms. Using qualitative methods, this research explores the direct and indirect communication styles, emotional expressivity, and politeness frameworks within each culture. Findings reveal that while Slovak communication often embodies a more individualistic, low-context approach, Uzbek communication aligns with collectivistic, high-context principles, impacting both verbal and non-verbal interactions. (Brown & Levinson, 1987) These insights provide practical implications for enhancing mutual understanding and effective communication in diverse settings.*

Keywords: *Intercultural communication, Slovak culture, Uzbek culture, Comparative study, Sociolinguistics, Communication styles, Direct vs. indirect communication, Emotional expressivity, Politeness frameworks, High-context culture, Low-context culture, Individualism vs. collectivism, Verbal and non-verbal communication, Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Hall's context theory*

INTRODUCTION

Intercultural communication plays a crucial role in today's interconnected world, particularly as people from various backgrounds engage in academic, business, and personal exchanges. For Slovakia and Uzbekistan, countries with distinct cultural backgrounds, these interactions highlight the need for a deep understanding of each other's communication styles to prevent misunderstandings and foster positive relationships (Hofstede, G. 1980). Despite a growing interest in intercultural studies, few comparative studies focus directly on Slovak and Uzbek communication dynamics. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the communication traits characteristic of Slovak and Uzbek individuals and how these may shape intercultural interactions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intercultural Communication Theories. To understand intercultural communication, this study draws on Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Hall's context theories. Hofstede's dimensions, including individualism vs. collectivism and power distance, provide a foundational framework to interpret Slovak and Uzbek communication styles (Hofstede, 1980). Hall's concept of high-context

versus low-context communication also sheds light on implicit versus explicit modes of communication, which is essential for interpreting the underlying nuances of each culture (Hall, 1976).

Comparative Studies on Eastern European and Central Asian Cultures. While research on Eastern European and Central Asian communication styles exists, comparative studies directly examining Slovakia and Uzbekistan are limited. Similar studies, however, suggest that Eastern European cultures often emphasize directness, whereas Central Asian societies prioritize relational harmony and indirectness. By focusing on Slovakia and Uzbekistan, this research aims to extend the understanding of these cultural differences and their implications for intercultural communication.

FINDINGS

Communication Styles. The findings indicate a significant difference in communication styles between Slovak and Uzbek cultures. Slovak communication tends to be direct, influenced by low-context, individualistic values, where clarity and efficiency are prioritized. In contrast, Uzbek communication is more indirect, rooted in high-context, collectivist values that emphasize harmony and indirectness in expressing opinions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights that Slovak communication is characterized by directness and a preference for explicit language, reflecting a low-context, individualistic orientation. In contrast, Uzbek communication exhibits indirectness and emotional expressivity, aligned with high-context, collectivistic values. These cultural differences underscore the need for intercultural awareness in interactions involving Slovaks and Uzbeks. This research was limited by sample size and geographic focus. Future research may consider broader participant demographics or explore how younger generations navigate these cultural norms in a digitally connected world.

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