

ANGLAIS

Durée : 1 heure

Coefficient : 1

Foreign Bodies

Understanding the 'body language' of different nationalities - the way they use gestures, eye-contact, and touching to communicate without words - is an important part of communication across cultures. In his book *Foreign Bodies*, Oxford University research psychologist, Dr Peter Collett, examines some of the differences among Europeans.

Dr Collette suggests that if we compare the way different European nations use gestures, they fall into three groups. In the first group are the Nordic nations - the Swedes, Finns, Norwegians and Danes - who use gestures very little. The second group includes nations such as the British, Germans, Dutch, Belgians and Russians. They use some gestures, for example, when they are excited, or want to communicate over long distances, or to insult each other. The third group includes the Italians, Greeks, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. They use gestures a lot, to emphasize what they are saying, and to hold the other person's attention. 'Even when they are silent' says Dr Collett, 'their hands are often busy sending messages through the medium of manual semaphore'.

People's sense of 'personal space' - the distance that separates them from another person - also varies between people of different nationalities. What feels right for one nationality may feel uncomfortable for another. British zoologist, Desmond Morris, has identified three 'personal space' zones in Europe. In countries such as Spain, France, Italy, and Greece, people stand close enough to touch each other easily. Morris calls this the 'elbow zone'. In East European countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Romania, people stand a little more distant. Morris calls this the 'wrist zone'. In Britain, Holland, Belgium, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries, people prefer to stand further away from each other, and they do not generally touch. This he calls the 'fingertips zone'.

Another cultural difference between nationalities is the amount of eye-contact between people. In countries where people stand close to each other, in Morris's elbow zone, eye-contact is more frequent and lasts longer. Mediterranean countries, says Dr Collett, are 'high-look' cultures. Children who grow up in a low-look culture learn that it is rude to look too long at another person. In a high look culture, eye-contact, like physical contact and gestures, is a natural way of expressing your feeling and relating to other people. This explains why, for example, northern Europeans visiting south European countries may feel uncomfortable at the way people look at them.

M Scott Peck
Oxford Practice Grammar

QUESTIONNAIRE A CHOIX MULTIPLE

Inscrivez la lettre qui convient (A B C D) dans la case correspondante

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