

# ***The Impact of Translators' Cross-Cultural Communication Competence on Sustainable Trade Cooperation in Business Negotiations***

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**Abstract:** In the context of globalization, business negotiations on a global scale play a crucial role in the development of sustainable trade cooperation among countries. One of the most significant influencing factors in the success of business negotiations is the translator's cross-cultural communication ability, which directly impacts a country's prospects for foreign trade development. This study conducted an in-depth investigation and analysis, examining the influence of cross-cultural communication ability and cross-cultural communication theory on translators in business negotiations for sustainable trade cooperation, grounded in Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. The research utilized the Likert scale to assess the cross-cultural communication ability of translators, with a focus on analyzing the translator's understanding of the business practices and cultural backgrounds of both negotiating parties, as well as the importance of acquiring and mastering cross-cultural communication skills. The findings support the hypothesis that a translator's exceptional cross-cultural communication ability positively fosters sustainable trade cooperation in business negotiations. Furthermore, this research suggests that cross-cultural communication ability has a direct impact on sustainable business negotiations, with nationalism playing an intermediary role. Specifically, a significant positive correlation was found between cross-cultural communication, sustainable business negotiations, and nationalism. Based on these findings, this article proposes that a translator's strong cross-cultural communication skills in business negotiations contribute to the promotion of sustainable business cooperation.

**Keywords:** Business Negotiations, Translator, Cross-Cultural Communication Competence, Sustainable Trade Cooperation

## **1. Introduction**

With the development of globalization, English, as a widely used international language, carries the power and belief of cultural transmission. Today, trade exchanges between countries are becoming more frequent, and cultural communication is increasingly prominent. Translators, as the communicative link for the trade, economic, and cultural exchanges between countries, play an essential role. It is evident that the importance of the translator's role cannot be overstated. However, for translators, simply mastering the basic vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures of English is not enough. It is insufficient to bear the responsibility of cultural transmission. Translators need to

have a deep understanding and mastery of the cultural backgrounds of different countries to avoid miscommunication and omissions during the translation process.

The steady progress of the "Belt and Road" initiative has also injected new vitality into trade exchanges between countries [1]. Its purpose is to continue the legacy of the ancient Silk Road, advocating for a belief in peaceful development, strengthening economic cooperation with partners, and safeguarding the political, economic, and cultural development of all parties. At the same time, sustainable development emphasizes balancing economic growth with the sustainability and shared usage of natural resources. Focusing on sustainable development, the initiative injects vitality into international trade and cooperation by promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, the reasonable use of renewable scientific resources, and the protection of non-renewable resources.

This paper conducts a practical investigation and study on the importance of cross-cultural communication competence in business negotiations. The aim is to evaluate the role of the translator in cross-cultural business negotiations, especially the impact of their cross-cultural communication competence on sustainable trade cooperation. Existing research shows that, in addition to various negotiation strategies and techniques, cultural identity also plays an extremely important role during negotiations. Therefore, the core of this study lies in the positive impact of the translator's cross-cultural communication competence on sustainable business negotiations.

## **2. Theoretical Analysis and Hypothesis Development**

### **2.1. Cultural Dimensions in Sustainable Business Negotiations**

In the interactive process of business negotiations, the translator's cross-cultural communication competence enables both parties to better understand each other's corporate cultural differences, business traditions, and the underlying meaning of the negotiations [2]. Existing research based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory indicates that how translators identify and address cultural differences in business negotiations is crucial. These differences arise from various cultural aspects such as power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term vs. short-term orientation. For instance, when applying the concept of power distance to the workplace, cultures with low power distance are better at handling tasks that demand high initiative from subordinates, whereas cultures with high power distance excel in managing tasks that require strong discipline. In such cultures, the reliance on authority is more significant in the workplace. The contrast between "individualism" and "collectivism" refers to the degree of loose or tight relationships between individuals and the group. This fundamental issue of cultural orientation between the poles of individualism and collectivism is something every society must confront. The divide between "individualism" and "collectivism" also creates national cultural differences, which translators must address as part of their cross-cultural communication theory. Masculine societies emphasize work-centered values with distinct gender roles, while feminine societies focus on cooperation, care, and emotional well-being, valuing interpersonal relationships and improving quality of life. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory measures the scores of over 70 countries on a scale from 0 to 100, using these scores to determine each country's position on various cultural dimensions. Thus, the cultures of different countries are comparable and measurable [3]. For example, China's power distance score across five cultural dimensions is 80, while its uncertainty avoidance score is 30. In societies with low uncertainty avoidance, members are more tolerant and relaxed when faced with the unknown, and they tend to reject rigid societal regulations, viewing the establishment of rules as optional. Hofstede's long-term vs. short-term orientation dimension is particularly relevant to China's Confucian values, categorizing countries into two types: long-term and short-term. Long-term orientation values future-focused aspects such as perseverance, thrift, hard work, patience, and the pursuit of long-term rewards. In contrast, short-term orientation values

immediate gratification, consumerism, sticking to personal positions, the importance of face, and quick results from effort. China is a typical long-term orientation country, whereas countries like Venezuela, Canada, and the United States are examples of short-term oriented cultures. In business, short-term oriented cultures often evaluate individual performance based on immediate results, whereas long-term orientation focuses on sustained effort over time. Therefore, translators must be mindful of these implicit cultural biases when negotiating between countries with different orientations, as personal performance in negotiations involving these two types of countries is often difficult to evaluate.

It is important to recognize that the cultural dimensions theory holds profound significance for cross-cultural communication globally, helping to understand the differences that arise during business negotiations between parties from different cultural backgrounds [4]. Consequently, translators should conduct a deeper analysis of both parties' cultural and ideological backgrounds before undertaking translation tasks. This not only helps translators better integrate into the translation process but also provides theoretical support for addressing cultural conflicts between the source and target languages. Furthermore, promoting Chinese culture and values in business negotiations is essential. This not only helps the world better understand China's cultural ideas but also facilitates language learning and a deeper appreciation of Chinese customs and etiquette, ultimately fostering sustainable trade cooperation.

Based on the above analysis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Cross-cultural communication competence facilitates sustainable business negotiations.

## **2.2. Cultural Conflict in Sustainable Business Negotiations**

Cross-cultural communication theory recommends using cross-cultural communication competence as a key factor in successful communication. This theory studies communication processes, behaviors, and patterns in different cultural contexts. It holds that cross-cultural communication competence is essential for effective communication, encompassing language skills, cultural knowledge, and communication strategies. In sustainable business negotiations, the translator, as the communication bridge, directly influences the smoothness and outcomes of the negotiation. A translator with strong cross-cultural communication skills can accurately understand and convey cultural information, avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts due to cultural differences, thus steering the negotiations toward sustainable outcomes. Cross-cultural communication behavior focuses on cultural differences. Due to differing values and behavioral norms, communication participants may experience cultural biases that lead to misunderstandings or even conflicts, potentially causing the negotiation to fail. Therefore, translators involved in business negotiations must consider the cultural knowledge differences between both parties to avoid misunderstandings and biases caused by divergent viewpoints. Based on the above analysis, the following hypothesis is proposed: H2: The impact of cross-cultural communication competence on sustainable business negotiations will be mediated by nationalism.

## **3. Research Methods**

### **3.1. Survey Design**

Cross-cultural communication competence refers to the ability of an individual to effectively communicate and understand other cultures in a cross-cultural context. In international business negotiations, translators need to possess strong cross-cultural communication competence to ensure that cultural differences do not hinder the smooth progression of negotiations. The Likert scale is typically used to measure attitudes, beliefs, or opinions, so in this study, the Likert scale was applied to assess the translator's cross-cultural communication competence. The survey focused on analyzing

the translator's sensitivity to cultural differences, understanding of business behaviors in different cultural contexts, and other related aspects. The evaluation criteria for the respondents are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Measurement Dimensions

Measurement System	Problem Description
Intercultural Communication	IC1. The degree of agreement with the importance of cultural sensitivity.
	IC2. The importance of understanding the business practices and cultural backgrounds of both parties in the negotiation.
	IC3. The importance of understanding the differences in non-verbal expressions and values between both negotiating parties.
	IC4. The recognition of the importance of continuously learning cross-cultural communication skills.
Nationalism	N1. Nationalist sentiments lead to a defensive attitude toward foreign cooperation.
	N2. Nationalist positions may hinder the parties from reaching a common sustainable development goal.
	N3. National identity affects both parties' willingness to cooperate.
	N4. When nationalist sentiments are too strong, it may affect a country's ability to cooperate and its image in the global market.
	N5. The importance of balancing national interests with the cultural needs of other countries.
Sustainable Trade	ST1. The evaluation of the importance of cross-cultural communication competence in promoting sustainable trade cooperation.
	ST2. The evaluation of the importance of cross-cultural communication competence in establishing mutual trust for future cooperation.
	ST3. The evaluation of the importance of cross-cultural communication competence in maintaining long-term trade cooperation relationships.
	ST4. The evaluation of the importance of cross-cultural communication competence in solving cooperation disruption caused by cultural differences.
	ST5. The evaluation of the importance of cross-cultural communication competence in solving issues related to contract performance caused by cultural misunderstandings.

The sample for this study was selected from companies frequently involved in international trade, and a representative sample was drawn from these companies. The survey respondents included both translators and decision-makers. Decision-makers were defined as professionals who not only have decision-making power in international communication but also have translation responsibilities. This ensures that the responses from both groups reflect the overall behavior and attitudes of the company in cross-cultural business negotiations.

### 3.2. Methods and Data Validity Verification

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a statistical method used to study complex causal relationships. It can handle the interactions between multiple independent and dependent variables, making it highly suitable for testing the hypotheses of this study. SEM helps understand how cross-cultural communication competence influences sustainable business negotiations and reveals the mediating role of nationalism in this relationship. Ensuring the reliability and validity of the raw data is a critical step in verifying the effectiveness of the hypotheses. After a three-month survey period, 282 valid samples were collected. The reliability and validity of the samples were tested using the KMO value and alpha value methods. According to existing research, when the KMO value and alpha value exceed 0.6, the sample can be considered acceptable for further analysis. The test results of the 282 valid samples showed that the KMO value for the samples was 0.8956, and the alpha value was 0.8782. These values indicate that the sample has good internal consistency and reliability, thus confirming that the sample can be accepted and used for further analysis.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Structural Equation Model Analysis

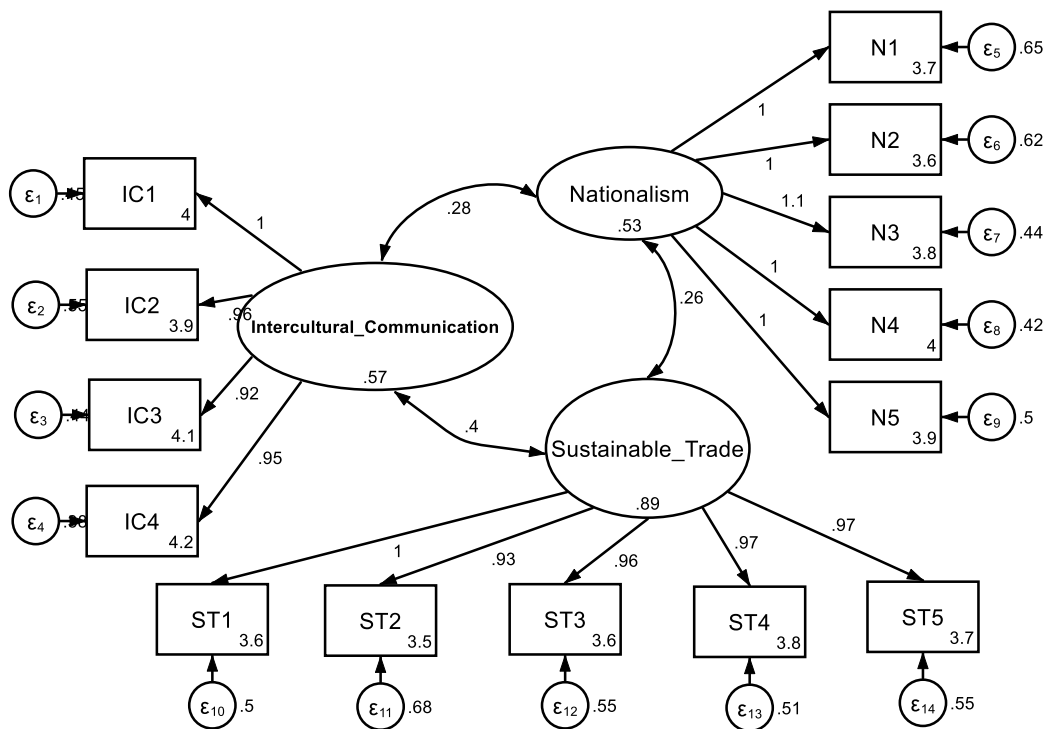


Figure 1: Structural Equation Model Path Analysis Diagram

Table 2: Structural Equation Model Path Coefficients

Path	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	z	P	[95% conf. interval]
IC→N	0.2840	0.0691	4.1100	0.0000	[0.1485,0.4196]
IC→ST	0.3977	0.0767	5.1800	0.0000	[0.2473,0.5481]
N→ST	0.2553	0.0643	3.9700	0.0000	[0.1291,0.3815]

Based on the path analysis results from Figure 1 and Table 2, it can be concluded that the structural equation model confirms Hypotheses H1 and H2. Specifically, cross-cultural communication (IC) is significantly positively correlated with sustainable business negotiations (ST) ( $IC \rightarrow ST$ , path coefficient = 0.3977,  $p < 0.001$ ), cross-cultural communication (IC) is significantly positively correlated with nationalism (N) ( $IC \rightarrow N$ , path coefficient = 0.2840,  $p < 0.001$ ), and nationalism (N) is significantly positively correlated with sustainable business negotiations (ST) ( $N \rightarrow ST$ , path coefficient = 0.2553,  $p < 0.001$ ). The analysis results of the structural equation model thus verify both the direct effect of cross-cultural communication competence on sustainable business negotiations and the mediating role of nationalism in this relationship.

#### 4.2. Robustness Test

To further test the robustness of the structural equation model analysis results, this study used Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to reduce the dimensionality of the measurement variables. Additionally, the three-step regression model was used to verify the mediating role of nationalism in Hypothesis H2. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Mediating Test Results after PCA Dimensionality Reduction

Variable	Sustainable Trade	Nationalism	Sustainable Trade
Intercultural Communication	0.4993*** (0.0648)	0.4347*** (0.0647)	0.4353*** (0.0710)
Nationalism			0.1471** (0.0696)
R-squared	0.2262	0.1815	0.2429

Note: The constant term represents the regression coefficient, and parentheses denote standard errors. \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , and similar notations apply in the following tables.

From the analysis results in Table 3, we can see that the regression coefficient for the impact of cross-cultural communication on sustainable business negotiations is 0.4993, with  $p < 0.01$ , indicating that cross-cultural communication helps promote sustainable business negotiations. The regression coefficient for the impact of nationalism on cross-cultural communication is 0.4347, with  $p < 0.01$ , showing that nationalism has a positive effect on cross-cultural communication. In the third column, both cross-cultural communication and nationalism positively impact sustainable business negotiations, suggesting that nationalism plays a mediating role between sustainable trade and cross-cultural communication. This further validates the robustness of Hypotheses H1 and H2.

#### 4.3. Heterogeneity Analysis

In business negotiations, the combined effect of roles and negotiation experience can be more complex. For example, experienced decision-makers and less experienced coordinators may react very differently when faced with the same cross-cultural communication situation. Experienced decision-makers may be able to balance emphasizing sustainable trade while maintaining nationalist sentiments, while less experienced coordinators may be more prone to cultural misunderstandings or an overemphasis on nationalism, which could affect the negotiation outcomes. Based on this, this study further introduces negotiation roles and negotiation experience as categorical variables to analyze the impact of roles and negotiation experience on cross-cultural communication competence.



Table 4: Heterogeneity Analysis Results

Variable	Role		Experience		
	Translator	Negotiator	$\geq 10$ years	6-10 years	3-5 years
Intercultural Communication	0.0186*** (0.1358)	0.0960*** (0.1425)	0.2697*** (0.2283)	0.2581*** (0.2236)	0.2826*** (0.2296)
R-squared	0.2448	0.0960	0.2503	0.2476	0.3078

Table 4 demonstrates the differences in cross-cultural communication competence among groups with different roles (translator vs. negotiator) and varying years of experience. By observing the size of the regression coefficients, an interesting finding emerges—those with more extensive experience ( $\geq 10$  years) may face greater communication challenges. Existing research suggests that professionals who have been engaged in cross-cultural negotiations or translation for a long time may develop their own communication patterns and methods, which, in some cases, can become overly rigid, reducing their ability to adapt to emerging cultural contexts [5].

## 5. Conclusion

This paper reflects on the role of a translator's intercultural communication competence in sustainable trade cooperation during business negotiations. Based on the empirical analysis results, it argues that the broader the translator's understanding of the business practices and cultural backgrounds of both parties in a negotiation, the more stable the cooperation outcome will be. In other words, intercultural communication competence plays a key role in maintaining long-term trade cooperation relationships. Firstly, translators should enhance their understanding of the business practices and value differences between cooperating parties from different cultural backgrounds. Translators should not limit themselves to simply converting language; they should aim to become a more solid bridge and link, driving the development of sustainable trade cooperation and promoting the steady and continuous progress of the negotiations. At the same time, translators should leverage the positive elements within nationalism to enhance mutual trust and recognition between the negotiating parties. For enterprises, when selecting and training translators, it is crucial to place significant emphasis on their intercultural communication competence. A comprehensive training program should be designed, incorporating the study of cultural knowledge, professional training in intercultural communication skills, and multidimensional improvements closely related to business negotiations. This program will help translators fully demonstrate their capabilities in the context of business negotiations, accurately understand the characteristics of different cultures, convey information effectively, and eliminate misunderstandings and misjudgments caused by cultural differences. The ultimate goal is to maximize the smooth progress and success of business negotiations. Secondly, at the national level, strengthening and enhancing the intercultural communication competence of translators is a vital pillar for a country in global trade negotiations. Accurate interpretation of other countries' cultural backgrounds allows a nation to seize the initiative in communication, leverage its advantages in intense negotiations, attract more high-quality global resources, and become an indispensable force in the construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative and the sustainable development of the global economy.

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