

Interaction with a group of students from uae

Education



of the English of the Concerned 2 May Interaction with a Group from UAE I still vividly remember my experience with a group of students from UAE whom I met at the New York airport. They were accompanied by two professors from their university and I was with a group of friends. We were to board the same flight which turned out to be late by 3 hours owing to the bad weather.

Being a young person, I was getting bored and seeing a group of young people from the same age group as us, who seemed to be from a different culture, I decided to start a conversation out of curiosity. I initiated the conversation by introducing myself in a vivacious and enthusiastic manner. Though the young guys from the UAE did respond, they seemed to be a bit hesitant and restrained. It appeared that something was holding them back. In retrospect, now that I have accrued a little cultural literacy, I think that being from UAE, which is a nation with a high Uncertainty Avoidance Index, my initiating a conversation in a spontaneous and abrupt manner made them feel a little ambiguous and anxious (Geert Hofstede 2). In consonance with a their cultural dimensions, our friends from the UAE must have been a little startled to be accosted by a group of young strangers, who were trying to interact with them as if they were long lost friends.

However, as our interaction proceeded, things became a little more relaxed and comfortable. We learnt that the young people were students from a reputed business school located at Abu Dhabi and the two mature gentlemen accompanying them were their professors. We showed a great interest in knowing as to how they found the academic environment at Abu Dhabi, the subjects they liked and the careers they intended to pursue after finishing their degree in business. They warmly responded to our curiosity and

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proceeded to talk about the topics they found really interesting. In the meantime, my friend Steven, who was also pursuing an MBA, asked one of the professors about his opinion regarding an international business issue. The professor proceeded to talk about the issue with a smile. However, as he was talking, Steven interrupted him and candidly contradicted the gentleman regarding a specific aspect of the topic being discussed. Suddenly we felt that a foreboding sense of seriousness took over the entire group from the UAE. The professors seemed a bit irked and disturbed. Today, I think, UAE being a country with a very high Power Distance Index, the instance of Steven discernibly contradicting a senior professor, must have seemed disrespectful to our Arab friends (Geert Hofstede 2). However, before we could have done anything to clear that confusion, it was time to board our flight and we parted with our foreigner friends, mustering the best of our politeness and courtesy.

Today when I think of that situation at the New York airport, now that I am conversant with the salient cultural dimensions of the UAE, I think that things would have proceeded much better if I had started the conversation with a sense of formality and decorum. Besides, I would have saved my UAE friends much inconvenience by politely steering away Steven from directly contradicting a senior member of the group.

Works Cited

“ Arab Emirates”. GeertHofstede. com. 2012. 2 May 2012

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