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翁立平◎著

跨文化交际 文化过程论初探

Toward a Cultural Process Model
of Intercultural Communication

(英文版)



上海交通大学出版社
SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIVERSITY PRESS

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内 容 提 要

本书对已有跨文化交际理论模式进行综述评价,指出已有理论过于关注稳定有序的文化特征,是一种被动消极的理论模式,进而提出跨文化交际文化过程论这一动态和主动的理论模式,通过两项检测和一项案例对其进行论证。本书引证繁富,有破有立,多角度对该理论进行实证研究,具有一定的理论尝试和实践意义,适合专业人士阅读。

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Foreword

Steve J. Kulich

(Intercultural Institute, Shanghai International Studies University)

In the field of intercultural communication (IC), the long-held notion that cultural differences framed by a set of universal dimensions are responsible for cross-cultural differences in communication patterns has met both conceptual and empirical challenges in today's increasingly globalized world. Scholarly attention has gradually been shifted from the static, dimensional, and isolated constructs or characteristics of culture to account for more cultural integration and hybridization.

While the need is generally recognized in the field to reconsider conceptual and methodological approaches for describing the dynamic interaction between culture and communication, it seems the main reaction to the predominance of the social scientific approach focused on cultural variability is to move toward the humanistic and critical side. Though some might consider the scientific approach to be constrained by testable constructs and universal theories, there are now post-positivist researchers, especially among cultural psychologists, who are designing experiments to examine various aspects of causality or effect toward understanding some of the mechanisms that underlie cultural processes in communication (e.g., Hong, 2009). The hybridity arising from multilingualism or global migrations can also be studied in scientific, interpretative, and critical ways, and each lends important insights to different aspects of the varied processes, complex phenomena, or dynamic outcomes.

At Shanghai International Studies University (SISU), we've been working to try to meaningfully frame or map intercultural communication research and practice since 1994. Initially we followed the pattern used by most Chinese scholars as we formed the field in the 1990s, importing international authors' ideas, adopting those leading theories and relating our work to them, translating or reprinting key textbooks, highlighting the core constructs of the field, then applying those to the teaching and research here. But early on as our intercultural graduate program formed in 2002, we realized the limits of

sticking with static frameworks like the dimensions of Geert Hofstede's highly-cited and widely-applied work (*Culture's Consequences*, 1980; *Culture: The Software of the Mind*, 1991). Though we are in agreement that culture does play an important and influential role in how we are socialized, we have been wrestling together for some time to identify ways or mechanisms that better explain the dynamic and multi-level aspects of "culture" that we see functioning in various types of social interaction.

This book, by one of our key collaborators over the past decade, Dr. Weng Liping, has helped us break through some of these conceptual barriers by paying equal attention to the human agency that is exercised in culture-related behavior. Here, in *Toward a Cultural Process Model of Intercultural Communication*, he highlights that no communication occurs in a cultural vacuum, i.e., how we perceive communication and how we interact with others are always under cultures' influence. Yet we are by no means passive recipients of our cultural environment; we may and often do actively use our varied (or hybrid) cultural repertoires as resources to solve real-time real-world communication problems. This fundamental change in viewing the dynamic, processural relationship between culture and communication underscores the importance of this book's contribution to the field of IC.

The approach that Dr. Weng has adopted is primarily social scientific, but the process model he proposes encompasses elements that address possible inequality of power between cultures, thereby providing helpful tools as well for critical interpretive work as was demonstrated in the book. The process model provides a substantial contribution to the understanding of culture dynamics (especially the agentic aspect of culture) in intercultural research in the context of globalization and cultural hybridization. This model is based on the dynamic process view and intergroup dimensions of intercultural communication, stressing the process of selectively applying cultural knowledge of multiple cultural heritages to serve the communication purposes. The application of cultural knowledge follows the principle of knowledge activation that is moderated by communicators' cultural identity management and motivation to accommodate in communication.

His process model thus moves beyond the traditional deterministic view of culture's impact on communication to consider communicators as cultural agents in order to address the consequence of cultural hybridization. This model is significantly important to the field both in China and abroad and its validation

using culture priming and case analysis is scientifically credible. Dr. Weng brings in important new sources such as culture priming and human agency into the discussion of intercultural communication in China, resources that need to be further considered and integrated into our development of the field here. They should also stimulate further work in the related fields of values studies, identity studies, and contrastive culture and media studies.

To prepare readers for these new research developments, Dr. Weng devoted a considerable amount of space in the book to charting the landscape of how culture has been conceptualized both historically and paradigmatically. His critical review of diverse views of culture, especially the static structural view, is exceedingly thorough. Related to this, we also recommend consulting his and my co-authored article on the “culture paradox” of fixed-traits versus dynamic culture (Weng & Kulich, 2014, in Chinese) as well as two Sage encyclopedia entries on “*hybridity*” (Weng & Kulich, 2015) and “*individualism and collectivism*” (Weng, 2015).

At the cutting edge of helping us rethink “culture” and dynamic aspects of intercultural interaction, I’m also grateful to Dr. Weng for being at the vanguard of our formalizing both our MA and PhD programs. I was invited by the graduate school in 2002 to develop a program in IC, and started by supervising 7-16 students annually and teaching three intercultural courses each year as a sub-“major” under the “Culture” direction (our first 31 “IC” MAs graduated under that designation). In 2005, when we were asked to upgrade and expand the program to 5-10 courses and formalize “Intercultural Communication” as the 6th independent “research direction” in the College of English Language and Literature (CELL) [now the School of English Studies], Weng Liping entered as the top qualifying candidate among 21 and also graduated with the top thesis in 2008 (Honors *Youxiu Lunwen*).

In 2010, SISU launched its doctoral program in Intercultural Communication Studies. For the first intake under my direction, nine applicants signed up hoping to enter this program, several of them former graduates from our MA program, and others with solid intercultural foundations from other universities across China. Five came for the entrance exam, but only one of them passed all the rigorous test components with flying colors — the author of this volume.

Dr. Weng has been a pioneer, along with his classmate and friend, the late Prof. & Dr. Wu Baixiang (who passed away in a tragic bicycle-car accident on

October 8, 2014 — he had joined us as a “*Tongdeng Xueli*” candidate in 2011). In the preface to Wu’s dissertation (Zhejiang University Press, 2014, *On Representations of Cultural Heroes through Comparative Cultural Newspaper Analysis*) I extensively reviewed the intercultural work at the doctoral level that had been developing at SISU over the years. In equal measure I’m pleased to build on that tradition and write this “Foreword” for our first full-time intercultural communication doctoral graduate from SISU!

Grateful as we are for all those foundations laid, Dr. Weng has steadily been our persevering pioneer, the “older brother” mentor to each of our doctoral students since, and a scholar not content to just take the status quo of intercultural communication research in China at face value. He has continually sought to concurrently connect IC to its historical roots abroad, reconsider it in its indigenous contexts in China, and link the study of culture to exciting new work from cultural psychologists, many of them are of Chinese origin seeking to account for the dynamic aspects of intercultural interaction. These ideas and preliminary studies are thus presented in this cutting edge work, providing an important update from his May, 2013 dissertation.

His research has taken a big step forward, important enough that Dr. Weng was invited to join our institute in September 2013 as our fourth “Research Fellow”, a position in which he now serves capably. In this new role, he has made a great contribution as co-editor of two of the most international and significant volumes in our institute’s flagship series, *Intercultural Research*, Vol. 4 and Vol. 5 on “values studies” (Kulich, Prosser & Weng, 2012, nominated for an international best book award; and Kulich, Weng & Prosser, 2014, nominated as the best representative work of this series for a Chinese national best book award). He also represented our institute in contributing four entries to *The Sage Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence* (2015) edited by Janet Bennett. We eagerly look forward to his ongoing advances to scholarship, of which this volume serves an important role.

Therefore it is my great pleasure to recommend to you Dr. Weng’s work. He is not only our first full-time SISU IC PhD (whose dissertation was also awarded the “Honors” designation), but with this publication is getting that foundational work updated and into print for a wider audience in order to enhance the further development of research and applications of this ever-growing and increasingly-important field of intercultural communications.

Shanghai, April 22, 2015

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Preface

Globalization has brought about cultural integration and hybridization and multiplicity of communicators' cultural identities. This poses a great challenge to some traditional scientific approaches to intercultural communication that focus primarily on the stable and orderly characteristics of culture and culture's deterministic influence on human communication. The primary goal of this book was to develop a cultural process model focusing on dynamic cultural processes and human agency and conduct initial tests to confirm its viability and utility in intercultural communication research. A historical review, critical analyses, and integrative syntheses based on interdisciplinary bibliographic and empirical data were involved in the theoretical exploration. The psychological experimental method of priming was employed in two empirical studies. Case analysis was conducted in the third study.

The book set out to map out the diverse ways of conceptualizing culture in the current field, explore their philosophical foundations, and provide evidence and explanations for the prevalence of the fixed-traits view in contemporary intercultural scholarship. This view has three distinctive features: first, culture is defined in terms of its static and orderly characteristics; second, culture is internalized by individuals in their socialization and becomes guidance principles for their behaviors; and finally, culture's behavioral influence is seen as linear and deterministic. This view was then historically reviewed and critiqued from a functionalist perspective with both its conceptual and empirical challenges explored.

Following the critique was a critical analysis of some improvements for this view across related disciplines and a review of the emerging dynamic process view of culture along with issues of cultural identity management and motivation to accommodate in communication. Based on these reviews and a critical discussion of selected key intercultural models, a cultural process model of intercultural communication was proposed. This model, departing from the assumption that culture is a coherent meaning system, sees culture as a coalescence of loosely-connected knowledge systems. It posits that the role of

culture takes the form of applying cultural knowledge, which follows the principle of availability (certain cultural knowledge is available in the communicator's mind), accessibility (certain cultural knowledge is accessible in the communicator's mind), and applicability (the accessed knowledge is only applied when deemed applicable to the immediate context) (Chiu & Hong, 2006, 2007; Hong, 2009). The application of cultural knowledge is moderated by one's cultural identity and motivation to accommodate. This model, which stresses multiple cultural origins of communicators' knowledge repertoire, contextual constraints on cultural functioning, and communicators' selective use of their cultural knowledge, seeks to establish some kind of cultural causation in intercultural communicative settings.

Three studies were conducted to test the model. Study I investigated how temporary accessibility of cultural knowledge (some "Chinese" and "American" conditions) influences social attribution and how cultural identity moderates this process. Ninety-nine three-year diploma (vo-tech) sophomore English majors were randomly assigned to three priming conditions (Chinese, American, and neutral) and completed the exact same attribution task. Significant differences in situational attributions were found between the Chinese and American primed groups. Specifically, the Chinese participants gave contrastive responses to the primed culture (e.g., they used more situational attributions when primed with American culture than when primed with Chinese culture, a tendency contrary to the empirically established cultural differences in social attributions between North Americans and East Asians).

Study II examined how contextual cues influence the chronic accessibility of cultural knowledge in an intercultural situation and how cultural identity and communication accommodation moderate this process. One hundred and sixteen Chinese university students were randomly assigned to two priming conditions (Chinese and American experimenters as the culture prime) and were asked to write down eight proverbs and sayings that guided their action. Findings suggest that the participants generated a more converged sayings pool before an American experimenter than before a Chinese experimenter, suggesting that high intergroup salience in the American priming condition led to the affirmation of Chinese cultural identity and hence a collection of more traditional and more widely circulated sayings. Furthermore, in terms of sayings content, a relatively stronger individualistic value orientation was found in the Chinese priming condition than in the American priming condition. Taken

together, the participants seem to have given contrastive responses in the task.

Study III was a case study aimed at understanding the nature of the over-tuning effect in intercultural communication using the process model. Human agency in culture and communication, cultural identity management, motivation to accommodate, dynamics between the assumed cultural knowledge applicability and communication appropriateness were all highlighted.

The three studies thus have initially confirmed the viability and utility of the model in framing intercultural communication. The principles of cultural knowledge application was revealed in the tests, demonstrating the fact that culture's impact on communicative behaviors is not deterministic, that one's cultural identity and motivation to accommodate do moderate the application of cultural knowledge, and that one key factor influencing communication effectiveness is whether the assumed cultural knowledge applicability is consistent with socially established appropriateness in its application. Overall, the three tests have uncovered human agency in culture and communication and enabled us to establish some kind of causal link between cultural knowledge and individual communicative behavior. The present research has implications for developing dynamic approaches to intercultural communication, reframing cultural differences, reconsidering intercultural competence research, and enriching research methodology.

We can no longer see cultures as static entities defined by certain prevalent shared values. It is preferable to see them as dynamic entities within which certain ways of construing oneself and others are constantly being reciprocally primed.

(Peter B. Smith, 2009:159)

... [W]e [should] reframe thinking of cultures in isolation to the manner they interact dynamically with each other, and... we [should] move from looking at mean tendencies that distinguish one culture conveniently from another to tackling the contact zone of living with and committing to multiple cultures.

(Kimberly A. Noels et al., 2011:60)

Culture does not rigidly determine human behaviors, nor are individuals passive recipients of their cultural environment. Instead, individuals flexibly shift their responses and use culture as a cognitive resource for grasping their experiences.

(Ying-yi Hong, 2009:9)

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