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Intercultural Communication Series

胡文仲 主编

跨文化交际 面面观

**ASPECTS OF INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATION
— PROCEEDINGS
OF CHINA'S 2nd
CONFERENCE ON
INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATION**

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跨文化交际面面观

Aspects of Intercultural Communication
—Proceedings of China's 2nd
Conference on Intercultural
Communication

Edited by Hu Wenzhong

胡文仲 主编

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Preface

China's 1st Intercultural Communication Conference was held at the Harbin Institute of Technology in the summer of 1995. It was during this conference that the China Association for Intercultural Communication (CAFIC) was created and a leading body elected. Two years later CAFIC, Beijing Foreign Studies University and Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP) jointly sponsored the 2nd conference, which took place in Beijing from October 11 – 14, 1997. It was attended by more than 80 participants, some of whom came from overseas. In addition to some 70 papers presented there was a workshop run by Torrey Orton and his colleagues on trust, trustworthiness and reliability in Chinese-foreign business relationships. In spite of some inadequacies and shortcomings in arrangement and logistics, it was a successful and fruitful conference, which enabled intercultural communicationists in China and overseas to exchange ideas on theoretical issues as well as issues of immediate concern.

I was entrusted to edit for publication the papers presented at the conference. As any editor would know, the greatest difficulty lies in judicious selection. Since it was unrealistic to include all the papers I had to do the unenviable job of leaving out about half of them. To all those whose papers are not within the pages of this volume I offer my deepest apology.

I have classified the 32 papers under seven headings: 1) theoretical considerations; 2) language and culture; 3) cultural differences in discourse and communicative style; 4) international business and organizations; 5) value differences; 6)

English as an international language and 7) intercultural communication publications, etc. .

Compared with previous conference presentations the papers chosen here display some salient features. First, some papers have offered new insights or fresh perspectives on some aspect of intercultural communication. Ron Scollon introduces in his paper a new term 'reality set', which according to him is 'yet another level of analysis which encompasses both discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis.' He further argues that 'people may be culturally very different from each other and yet share in the same reality set while others may share in the same culture but bring totally different interpretive frameworks to understanding any particular situation.' He thus alerts us to the complexity of human communication. Gao Yihong applies the Chinese philosophical concepts *tao* and *qi* to the study of intercultural communication and she believes that such an approach will contribute to 'the long-term well-being of individual communicators and of the human race.' Li Zhanzi, a young up-and-coming scholar, challenges the oft-quoted Kaplan's analysis of discourse styles of different peoples and points out that some of his ideas are biased and unacceptable.

Second, many of the papers are based on data painstakingly collected. I was told that the writer of one paper spent several thousand *yuan* of his own money on postage alone in order to collect the data he wanted. In intercultural communication circles in mainland China it has been customary to write overview articles or articles of a general nature. (I must confess I have written some myself.) I do not mean to say they are not useful and should not be written. At some stage they do play a role in introducing the discipline to a wider audience,

but to develop intercultural communication studies further it is even more necessary to engage in data-driven research on a given topic. We are pleased to see more than one-third of the papers selected for this volume are results of investigation of authentic material.

Third, there are aspects of intercultural communication that previously received little attention such as cultural problems in international business and organizations, the Internet as related to intercultural communication and new varieties of Englishes. We have in this volume papers dealing with such issues. Of course there remain many areas in the discipline we have not explored yet. For instance, we do not have papers analyzing crosscultural issues from a psychological point of view.

We wish to see at our future conferences an increasing number of papers that are data-based, papers that offer challenging ideas and written from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Hu Wenzhong
President, China Association
for Intercultural Communication

Part One

Theoretical Considerations

Reconstructing Humanistic and Stylistic Traditions in Chinese Rhetoric ——A Contrastive Approach

Gu Yueguo (顾曰国)

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
& Beijing Foreign Studies University

Abstract

The paper attempts to show that the humanistic and stylistic traditions in Western rhetoric are also found in Chinese. The difference, however, lies in the fact that the Chinese stylistic tradition, unlike its Western counterpart, is not an offshoot of the humanistic tradition, which was lost in Han dynasties about two thousand years ago. It is the main objective of this paper to reconstruct this lost tradition by making a contrastive study between Chinese *shui* and Western persuasion. It concludes with a critical review of the interaction between the Chinese stylistic tradition and its Western counterpart.

1. What has gone wrong?

Since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, China has witnessed a boom of intense research on Chinese *xiuci xue*,

the term which is generally translated into English as rhetoric. Both national and regional associations of *xiuci xue* have been established and volumes of conference proceedings were edited and published at a dazzling speed. Moreover, four monographs on the history of Chinese *xiuci xue* were written and published within a short span of time (see references). This has taken the academic circle by surprise, for no historical study of the kind had ever been made for over two thousand years.^①

Chinese rhetoric has also attracted attention of western rhetoricians and sinologists (e. g. Crump and Dreher, 1951 Robert T. Oliver, 1971). Ph. D. theses were supervised and defended (e. g. Garret, 1983).

One of the big differences between West and East rhetorics Oliver (1971: 260)^② finds is that

[a] bibliography of Western rhetorical writings would be exceedingly lengthy and would be steadily increasing. The exact opposite has been true of the East. ... A bibliographic survey of Asian literature would seem to indicate that rhetoric simply did not exist in that part of the world.

① There are of course research papers on the history of Chinese *xiuci xue* published much earlier, e. g. Hu Guangwei (胡光炜) 1923, 1924, “中国修辞学史略”(国学丛刊), “中国修辞学史”(see Yi Pu and Li Jinling, 1989: 556).

② A word about Oliver's research is in order here. Oliver sets out to “identify the rhetorical theories and practices of ancient India and China” (ibid., ix). As a Chinese I read his book with great interest and admiration for his pioneering endeavor. At the same time I felt it would be much better if he had distinguished three perspectives and had not mixed them up, namely (1) the issues, views and problems perceived by the contemporaries in history; (2) the responses to and evaluations of them by Chinese historians and researchers; and (3) an outsider's response and evaluation.

However, the references cited either in Zheng Ziyu's *A History of Chinese Rhetoric* or in Yi Pu and Li Jinling's *An Outline of Chinese Rhetoric* amount to over four hundred entries. From the Chinese side, Chinese rhetoricians are surprised, almost bewildered, to find that Burke's theory of identification, Booth's notion of aesthetic distance, and Scott's viewing rhetoric as epistemic, even body and muscle movements and gestures all fall under the rubric of rhetoric (see references)!

One's immediate reaction would be: The problem must be due to mistranslation, that is, the English word *rhetoric* and the Chinese *xiuci xue* are not equivalents. It is the objective of this paper to show that it is not a translation problem, and that the humanistic and stylistic traditions in Western rhetoric are also found in Chinese. The difference lies in the fact that Chinese stylistic tradition, unlike its Western counterpart, is not an offshoot of the humanistic tradition, which was lost in Han dynasties about two thousand years ago.

2. Two Western Traditions and Their Chinese Counterparts: A Historical Outline

2.1 Starting Point: Two Fundamental Verbal Activities

Language speaking man performs two fundamental verbal activities, which can be captured as follows:

A says something to B and B responds to A.

In using his/her language A makes choices.

These two may appear simple, and even naive at the first glance. It has, however, taken the most talented minds of both

East and West to ponder over them, to conceptualize them, and to explore their social and cultural implications.

The ancient Greeks conceptualized the first in terms of rational persuasion and called the study of this persuasive activity *rhetoric*. The ancient Chinese conceptualized it in terms of *zongheng shu* or *shui* (close to persuasion) and people who practised it were called *zongheng jia* (see details in Section 3 below).

The ancient Greeks conceptualized the second in terms of style, as one of five “arts” of rhetoric. The ancient Chinese conceptualized it in terms of *xiuci*, and treated it as part of verbal talent that made the writer immortal (e. g. Cao Pi, 《典论·论文》) (see details in Section 4 below).

2. 2 Two Traditions: Humanistic and Stylistic, Matching Zongheng Shu and Xiuci Xue

Historically, Western rhetoric can be argued to have two general traditions, humanistic and stylistic (in this connection see Hunt, 1983 [1955], Perelman, 1983 [1970], Gu, 1990). Humanistic tradition is prototypically concerned with human influence through persuasion, whereas stylistic tradition is occupied with stylistic features of discourse (figures of speech in particular), or styles of a writer or a period. It is derived from one of the five “arts” of classical rhetoric which is fundamentally humanistic.

In contrast, Chinese *xiuci xue* is close to the Western stylistic tradition. The Western humanistic tradition finds expression in Chinese *zongheng shu* or *shui*. Chinese *zongheng shu* or *shui* had its hay days during the Warring States era, which was about the time Corax of Syracuse worked out his

rhetoric in ancient Greece. The Chinese humanistic tradition lost its hold—much earlier than its Western counterpart—sometime in the Former Han (206 BC – 22),^③ and it was not until very recently that signs of revival are emerging (see Section 5 below), which came almost a century later than that in the West.^④

From the perspective of intercultural contact, Chinese stylistic tradition can be divided into two phases: Phase 1 covering from Pre-Qin times (starting from Lao Zi 570? – 490? BC) to the late Qing dynasty (ending with 汤振常, 1905);^⑤ Phase 2 from the late Qing to the present-day. Phase 1 can be described as a period of nativism with exporting ideas abroad if contact took place, and Phase 2 a period of nativism vs/plus foreignism. Western rhetoric, not of humanistic tradition, but of stylistic tradition, in the form of composition and rhetorical manuals, first came to China by way of Japanese scholarship in the late Qing dynasty. Chinese historians of xiuci xue, and some xiuci xue jia themselves hold that Chinese xiuci xue, that is, rhetoric of stylistic tradition as an independent discipline, had never been properly established until the publication of Tang Yue's book entitled *Figures of Speech* (1923)^⑥(see details in Section 4 below).

③ The Emperor Liu Che (刘彻 his reign 140 – 135 BC) banned all learnings except Confucianism.

④ Western revival of classical rhetoric of humanistic tradition took place in the 50's and 60's, with Burke's work and Perelman's as landmarks.

⑤ The years included here should not be taken as an accurate timing. Lao Zi and Tang Zhenchang are at best representatives with the former as effective practitioner of xiuci and the latter as among the first Chinese xiuci xue jia influenced by Japanese learning.

⑥ In the Preface, the author indicates that he has drawn inspirations from the British rhetorician Nesfield's work. I have tried to trace the original, but in vain.