跨文化沟通

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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前　言

　　《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》、《高等学校商务英语专业本科教学要求》、《大学英语课程教学要求》，以及2013年上海市教育委员会颁布的《上海市大学英语教学参考框架（试行）》均提出了注重培养学生跨文化交际能力的理念。四部教学大纲对学生听、说、读、写、译等英语交流能力提出了具体的要求，但均未对跨文化交际能力提出具体要求，只有《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》对21世纪外语专业学生在工作中的运用能力作了如下概述：外语专业学生在工作中的运用能力主要指能够从事不同文化间交流与合作的能力、交际能力、协作能力、适应工作的能力、独立提出建议和讨论问题的能力、组织能力、知人处事的能力、灵活应变的能力等等。笔者认为，这种能力不仅仅是指跨文化意识或跨文化适应能力，更是一种在实际的工作环境和社会环境中应对并解决由文化差异产生的文化冲突的能力，这就叫跨文化沟通能力。跨文化沟通能力已被美国劳工部认为是21世纪社会人们必备的一种能力；英国工业委员会2011年发布的题为《培养全球能力毕业生——全球能力领导者》的一项报告把与不同文化背景的人合作与共事的能力和沟通能力视为所有能力中最重要的能力；2013年2月欧洲委员会和欧盟委员会在爱尔兰召开的"跨文化城市里程碑盛会"呼吁提高全球公民跨文化能力以应对多元文化的挑战。

　　《跨文化沟通》是一本跨文化案例教材，注重跨文化交际的应用，是中美两位跨文化研究专家长期从事跨文化沟通教学、研究、培训与咨询的实际经历与经验的总结，所有案例、剖析视角、观点都是从跨文化实践中提炼与概括而成。本书共分为三大部分，12个单元。每单元主体部分由四大模块组成：What's Wrong, Reading 1 & Reading 2, Intercultural Lens,

Intercultural Case Study。本书最大的特色在于将跨文化学习视为一个过程，引导学生循序渐进，层层剖析，学以致用。

What's Wrong? 通过典型跨文化交际案例引发学生思考，即以全球化社会所面临的文化差异挑战为导向，提出一个反映时代性、全球性和实时性的跨文化综合案例，旨在培养学生以全球视野观察世界、发现问题的意识与能力。

Reading 1 & Reading 2 通过阅读材料引导学生思考问题背后的原因。该模块提供两篇与单元主题相关的文章，让学生通过阅读积累相关跨文化知识，并通过讨论培养学生的思辨能力。

Intercultural Lens 通过提供与单元相关的多种跨文化视角与观点，拓展学生的跨文化知识、提高学生的跨文化意识、培养学生的跨文化技能，旨在培养学生以跨文化视角思考问题与分析问题的能力。

Intercultural Case Study 通过案例培养学生跨文化敏感性，即在跨文化时代中文化差异或文化冲突无处不在、时刻发生在我们的身边。

在每单元最后，还专门设立了两个学习专栏：Learning Culture Through Proverbs和Online Research—Using Key Words。第一个专栏旨在引导学生通过学习谚语了解其传达的文化价值观，并通过分析其文化价值观，了解人们的行为特征，即学习谚语、了解文化、发现行为，三者融为一体；第二个专栏旨在培养学生通过搜集、整理信息，提高自主学习的意识与能力。

在现实的跨文化交往中，沟而不通的现象比比皆是，这不是因为一方未听懂另一方所说的话，也不是语言表达不妥所致，而是未能理解另一方所表达的背后的含义，这就造成沟而不通或无效沟通的现象。因此，《跨文化沟通》教材更注重职场中的沟通与沟通技能的训练，注重开拓跨文化思维、培养跨文化敏感性，注重培养以国际视野观察当今社会所面临的跨文化挑战的意识与能力、培养国际化教育环境下及跨文化职场环境中的跨文化沟通能力。

《跨文化沟通》一书得到了上海大学重点通识课程建设项目的支持，

该课程面向全校学生授课。

　　本教材编写得到了外语教学与研究出版社的大力支持。在此，我们表示衷心的感谢。

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　庄恩平

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Part Three   Applications of Intercultural Communication

Part One

Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication

Unit 1
Culture Behind Language

When you communicate with people from other countries, it is unlikely that they will have the exact same word or meaning in mind. That difference in thought, however tiny, sends shock waves throughout the communication process. All understanding, therefore, is at the same time a misunderstanding and all agreement of feelings and thoughts is at the same time a means for growing apart. Language plays an essential role in culture learning. Language is a reflection of the cultural environment and its values. Developing intercultural awareness usually goes along with learning a new language and being exposed to a new culture, though not always. In intercultural communication, the role of language is especially important.

What You Can Learn from This Unit

1. Understand how important it is to learn culture through a foreign language;
2. Know that culture gives meaning to words;
3. Understand the meaning behind words;
4. Understand that culture might be a hidden barrier in intercultural communication.

Questions for Intercultural Awareness

1. What is the relationship between language and culture?
2. When learning English, are you trying to understand what cultural values some English words or statements indicate? List some English sayings or proverbs and explain the values they transmit.
3. Can you list some barriers in intercultural communication? Share your view in class.

What's Wrong?

How to Understand Invitation

Carmen and Judy are two mothers who live near each other. They often take their children to the park so that their children can play together.

Carmen: Hi, Judy.

(*Judy and Carmen's children are pleased to see each other and then begin playing together in the sand.*)

Judy: Hi, Carmen. How are you?

Carmen: Fine. I'm glad to see that our children like to play together.

Judy: Yeah, me too. I remember just a month ago they weren't sharing their toys.

Carmen: Now it looks like they're enjoying each other's company.

(*The two mothers continue chatting.*)

Judy: This has been fun. Maybe we could get together at one of our houses sometime. I'm sure the kids would enjoy that.

Carmen: Sure. That'd be nice.

Judy: Well, let's do it.

Carmen: OK.

(*Two weeks later in the park.*)

Judy: Hi, Carmen.

Carmen: Hi, Judy. How are you?

Judy: Fine. How about you?

Carmen: Pretty well.

Judy: I've been so busy lately, but I still want to get together soon. I know our kids would enjoy that.

Carmen: Yes. They would.

Judy: Let's do it soon.

Carmen: OK. That sounds like a good idea.

(*Judy and Carmen continue to talk for a few minutes.*)

Judy: I can't stay long. I promise my kids that I would take them to the library across the street.

Carmen: Yeah. I have to go, too.

(*Carmen and her children begin to get ready to leave.*)

Judy: Let's get together soon. I'll give you a call.

Carmen: OK. That sounds good. Bye.

Judy: Bye.

In the situations above, are Judy and Carmen really interested in getting together at each other's houses? Why or why not?

From a linguistic perspective, we can see that Judy invited Carmen to get together by saying "Maybe we could get together at one of our houses sometime. I'm sure the kids would enjoy that." And Carmen also accepted the invitation by saying "That'd be nice." Judy agreed by saying "Well, let's do it." This invitation was sent each time when they met. But they did not make an exact date to meet. Why did that happen? Was Carmen angry or disappointed with Judy for not making an exact time for the play-date?

From an intercultural perspective, the expression "Let's get together" in English does not have the same meaning as an invitation would have in Chinese. Instead, it may be a conversation closer—a way to end a conversation or an interpersonal encounter without using an abrupt departure expression which may hurt the other person's feelings. Examples of this might be "Sorry I have to go now" or "Sorry I have an appointment right now." Each time that Judy was about to leave, she would use the vague expression "Let's get together" to achieve her purpose of indicating that she needed to depart.

Ambiguous Invitations

In English, a number of expressions sound as if they are "invitations," but they are not. The following expressions are not real invitations because they are ambiguous statements to achieve the pragmatic function to leave.

A: Listen, I have a lot to talk to you about. I think we should try to have lunch together sometime soon.

B: OK.

A: I'll call you.

B: Sounds good.

A: Good talking to you. Let's get together sometime.

B: Sounds good.

A: I'll call you one of these days and we'll set up a time that's good for both of us.

B: Great. Talk to you soon.

Real Invitations

A real invitation should be specific; it has the activity, specific time and place. The following are examples of real invitations.

I would like to invite you over for my birthday party at my house at 8:00 this Friday evening. Can you come?

A: Jim, are you and Claudine free on Saturday night? We'd like to have you over for dinner.

B: Yes, I think we're free. That sounds nice.

A: If you can, let's make it for 8:00 after the kids are asleep.

B: Good idea. See you then.

Change Ambiguous Invitations into Real Invitations

Sometimes a friend is serious about the invitation, but he or she is not sure whether the other person would accept it. In this case he or she would not be specific in uttering a real invitation as stated above; instead he or she would send an ambiguous invitation as a hint to see the other person's response. This avoids embarrassment if he or she receives a refusal. If someone sends this kind of invitation to you, you can employ the following communication strategy to confirm your understanding.

A: Let's get together soon.

B: I'd like that.

A: Good. I'll give you a call.

B: I have got my notebook with me now. How about setting a date now?

A: Uh, sure. I'm free any day next week at noon. How about you?

B: Will tomorrow at 12:00 be OK?

Discussion

1. Are there any misunderstandings between the two mothers? If yes, what is the cause for these misunderstandings?
2. When you hear some expressions that sound like "invitations," will you interpret them as real invitations? Why or why not?

Reading 1

Language, Thought, Culture, and Intercultural Communication

Every language has its unique features and ways of allowing those who speak it to identify objects and experiences.[1] These linguistic features, which distinguish each language from all others, affect how the speakers of the language perceive and experience the world. To understand the effects of language on intercultural communication, questions such as the following must be explored:

- How do initial experiences with language shape or influence the way a person thinks?
- Do the categories of a language—its words, grammar, and usage—influence how people think and behave? More specifically, consider the following question: Does a person growing up in Saudi Arabia, who learns to speak and write Arabic, "see" and "experience" the world differently than does a person who grows up speaking and writing Tagalog in

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the Philippines?

Although many scholars have advanced ideas and theories about the relationships among language, thought, culture and intercultural communication, the names most often associated with these issues are Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir. Their theory is called "linguistic relativity[2]."

The best-known example of vocabulary differences associated with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis[3] is the large number of words for snow in the Eskimo language. (The language is variously called Inuktitut in Canada, Inuit in Alaska, and Kalaallisut in Greenland.) Depending on whom you ask, there are from seven to fifty different words for snow in the Inuktitut language. For example, there are words that differentiate falling snow (*gana*) and fully fallen snow (*akilukak*). The English language has fewer words for snow and no terms for many of the distinctions made by Eskimos. The issue raised by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is whether the person who grows up speaking Inuktitut actually perceives snow differently than does someone who grows up in southern California and may only know snow by secondhand descriptions. More importantly, could the southern Californian who lives with the Inuit in Alaska learn to differentiate all of the variations of snow and to use the specific Eskimo words appropriately? The firmer version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests that linguistic differences are accompanied by perceptual differences so that the English speaker looks at snow differently than the Eskimo speaker.

Numerous other examples of languages have highly specialized vocabularies for particular features of the environment. For instance, in the South Sea Islands, there are numerous words for coconut, which not only refer to the object of a coconut but also indicate how the coconut is being used. Similarly, in classical Arabic thousands of words are used to refer to a camel.

Another variation in vocabulary concerns the terms a language uses to identify and divide colors in the spectrum. For example, the Kamayura Indians of Brazil have a single word that refers to the colors that English speakers would call blue and green. The best translation of the word the Kamayuras use is "parakeet colored." The Dani of West New Guinea divide all colors into only two words, which are roughly equivalent in English to "dark" and "light." The important issue,

however, is whether speakers of these languages are able to distinguish among the different colors when they see them or can experience only the colors suggested by the words available for them to use. Do the Kamayura Indians actually see blue and green as the same color because they use the same word to identify both? Or does their language simply identify colors differently than does English?

Do you think that you could learn to distinguish all of the variations of the object "snow" that are important to the Eskimos? Could you be taught to see all of the important characteristics of a coconut or the color? Such questions are very important in accepting or rejecting the ideas presented in the firm and soft versions of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

Researchers looking at the vocabulary variations in the color spectrum have generally found that although a language may restrict how a color can be labeled verbally, people can still see and differentiate among particular colors. In other words, the Kamayura Indians can in fact see both blue and green, even though they use the same linguistic referent for both colors. The evidence on color perception and vocabulary, then, does not support the deterministic version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

What about all those variations for snow, camels, and coconuts? Are they evidence to support the firm version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis? A starting point for addressing this issue is to consider how English speakers use other words along with essentially the one word English has for "particles of water vapor that when frozen in the upper air fall to earth as soft, white, crystalline flakes." English speakers are able to describe verbally many variations of snow by adding modifiers to the root word. People who live in areas with a lot of snow are quite familiar with *dry snow*, *heavy snow*, *slush*, and *dirty snow*. Skiers have a rich vocabulary to describe variations in snow on the slopes. It is possible, therefore, for a person who has facility in one language to approximate the categories of another language. The deterministic position of Sapir-Whorf, then, is difficult to support. Even Sapir and Whorf's own work can be used to argue against the deterministic interpretation of their position because in presenting all of the Eskimo words for snow, Whorf provided their approximate English equivalents.

A better explanation for linguistic differences is that variations in the

complexity and richness of a language's vocabulary reflect what is important to the people who speak that language.[4] To an Eskimo, differentiating among varieties of snow is much more critical to survival and adaptation than it is to the southern Californians, who may never see snow. Conversely, southern Californians have numerous words to refer to four-wheeled motorized vehicles, which are very important objects in their environment. However, we are certain that differences in the words and concepts of a language do affect the ease with which a person can change from one language to another because there is a dynamic interrelationship among language, thought, and culture.

Vocabulary

crystalline flakes　片状结晶
referent *n.*　[语] 语词所指的对象
spectrum *n.*　光谱

Notes

1. Every language has its unique features and ways of allowing those who speak it to identify objects and experiences.
   一种语言之所以区别于另一种语言，就是因为每种语言使用者感知和认识世界的方式不同。例如，东西方都有龙的传说，但却由于文化的不同，龙所代表的形象也有所不同。在中国文化中，龙是瑞兽；而在西方文化中，龙却是怪兽。中国人自称是龙的传人，龙是华夏民族的图腾；而西方文化中的龙一般带有恶毒、凶狠的意味，与东方的瑞兽完全不一样。所以不同语言中相同的词可以代表不同的含义，这种文化差异就造成了沟通的障碍。本句大意为：每种语言都有其特色和表达方式，让它的使用者可以确定语言所指的实物和事件。

2. linguistic relativity
   "语言相对论"有两层含义：第一，一种文化中的内容，只有用该文化中的语言才能得到充分表达；第二，发源于某一文化中的概念，如果用另一种文化中的语言去讲，意思就会有所不同，至少在人们心目中唤起的意象不同。